Client Development in a Nutshell

Strategies to Do Now to Make and Become a Successful Partner

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CORDELL PARVIN LLC

ABOUT CORDELL PARVIN

Cordell Parvin practiced law for more than 36 years, beginning with a small firm in Roanoke, Virginia and ending with a large firm in Dallas, Texas. He was a Practice Group Leader and developed a highly successful national construction law practice. During his career, Cordell taught, mentored and coached young lawyers on their careers, professionalism, client development, and work-life balance.

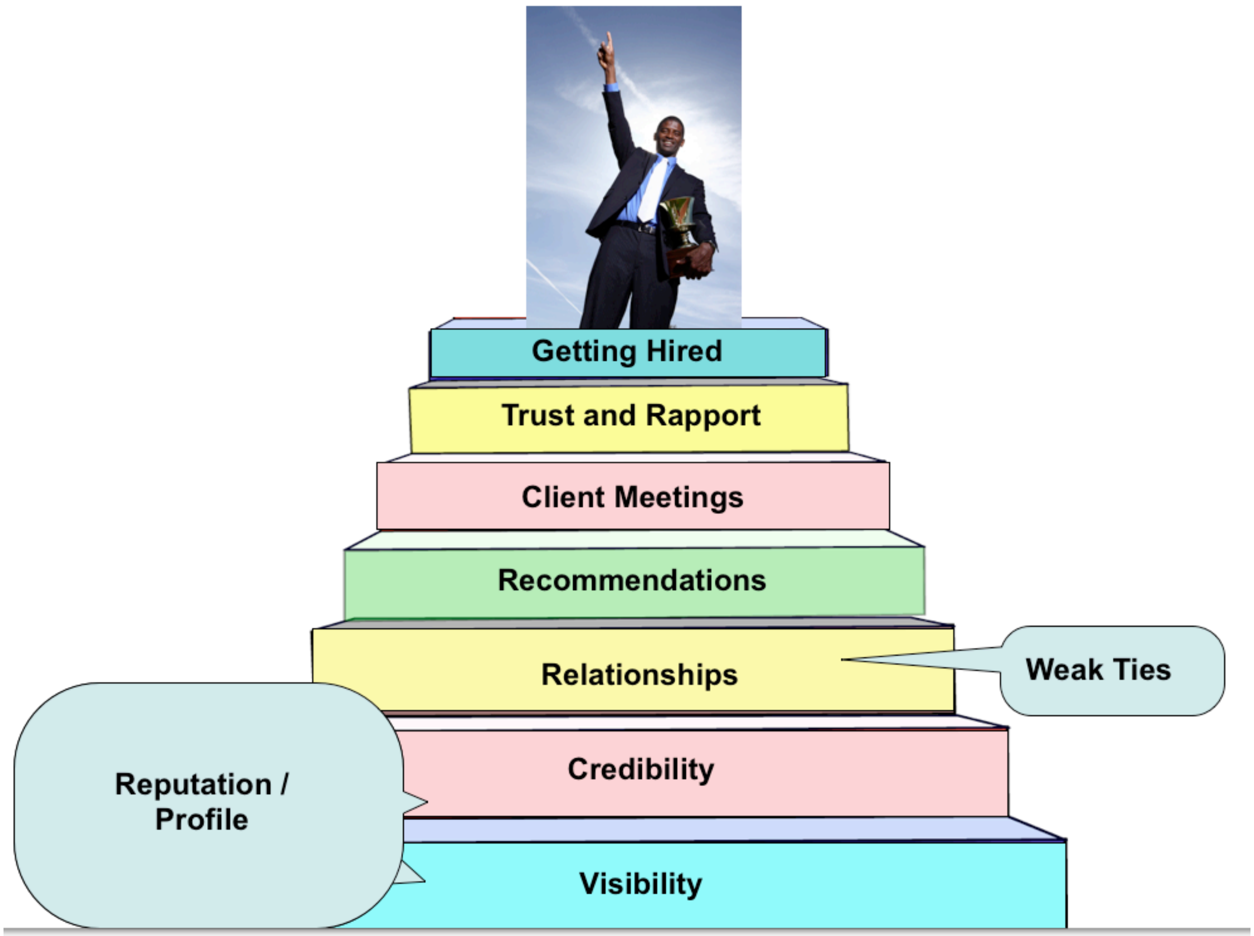
At Jenkens & Gilchrist, PC, Cordell initiated and directed the firm's Attorney Development Program. He created a comprehensive program for associate development focused on skill development, mentoring, shadowing and career planning. Cordell also coached senior associates and junior partners on client development.

In 2005, Cordell left Jenkens & Gilchrist, PC and began teaching and coaching lawyers throughout North America.

On my Blog, http://www.cordellblog.com/, I write about client development five times a week. There is a place on my Blog where you can subscribe to my blog or choose to receive the blog through RSS feeds. .

I am also on LinkedIn, Twitter, and I have a coaching group page on Facebook. I use the coaching page on Facebook to post materials I think you will find helpful. This way there is less in your email in-box. Here are links to my social media pages.
http://www.linkedin.com/in/cordellparvin
http://www.facebook.com/cplawyercoaching
http://twitter.com/cordellparvin

Client Development



Client Development Myths

Many associates buy into client development myths that stifle their efforts. Below are the most common myths I see and my response:

1. You either have it (skills to develop business) or you don't. I can tell you from personal experience that I did not naturally have it. Knowing that drove me to work at it and develop my skills. So, you can learn to successfully attract clients if you are open to ideas and willing to work at it.

2. Just do good work, get a Martindale A-V rating and wait for the phone to ring. I was told that when I was an associate. The problem is there are thousands of lawyers in your city or state who do good work. Client development is a contact sport. It is about building relationships and adding value beyond the good work.

3. You have to do client development “my way.” Senior partners sometimes make that point and an associate may not see himself or herself to be like that partner. I know from coaching over 1000 lawyers that each person has their own unique skill set and strengths. I encourage them to figure out what will work best for them and then do it that way.

4. I’m “too young, and inexperienced to…” You are never too young to start learning client development skills. You may not bring in business right away, but that is ok. This is a marathon not a sprint, you are building towards doing so later. If you wait until you are a partner to start making the efforts, you may have the same learning curve.

5. You have to be an extravert and know how to work a room. I know lawyers who are very outgoing and do poorly because they talk about themselves and do not listen. I know introverted lawyers who ask great questions and listen who do very well.

6. You have to “ask” for business. Some lawyers are good at asking for business. Others who ask come across as needy or greedy. I, personally, was uncomfortable asking so I tried to be the “go to” lawyer who would be sought by clients in my target market.

7. Associates in big firms do not need to learn client development. At the very least, associates in big firms with institutional clients need to learn about those clients and find ways to become more valuable to those clients. In the current economy institutional clients are no longer loyal and they are looking more for value in their outside legal expenditure. As a result, learning the skills to get new clients is more important today than before.

It is not what you know or who you know,
It is who knows what you know.

Client Development: Where to Start

1. Identify clients' problems, opportunities and changes.
2. Draw clients to you by identifying problems and providing creative solutions.
3. Become visible and credible to your target market.
4. Define your target market.
5. Decide what you want your target market to hire you to do?
6. Become visible and credible by adding value.
7. Join, lead, and speak at client organizations.
8. Determine your best referral sources.

Planning

Why have a plan?

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What is an incredibly ambitious goal that will energize you?

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Plan using your strengths. When you create a plan and put it into action based on your strengths, client development becomes easier and in many cases becomes more fun. Plus, focusing on your strengths gives you the opportunity to "become incredible."

Find your top 5 strengths using Gallop's StrengthsFinder 2.0. The assessment is available online at https://www.gallupstrengthscenter.com/Purchase/en-US/Product.

Prioritization Matrix

High Return / Low Investment Do first and do often	High Return / High Investment Break down into smaller pieces
Low Return / Low Investment Do when you have time	Low Return / High Investment Say NO graciously!

Decide how many hours to invest in your own development

______ Substantive Law

______ Client Industry / Business Knowledge

______ Business – Marketing and Relationship Building

Decide how many hours to invest in client development

______ Reputation / Profile Building

______ Relationship Building

90 Day Goals (Action Items)

GOAL / ACTION ITEM

What steps can you take to hold yourself accountable?

Become Visible and Credible

Find Your Business Development Style

Has a mentor/senior lawyer in your firm told you how to develop business? Has the suggested approach felt uncomfortable? That is natural because one size clearly does not fit all. There are several ways that you can approach client development.

In *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* by Malcolm Gladwell, he discusses the "law of the few". The marketing activities that will work best for you will depend in part on whether you are a (1) **Connector**, (2) **Maven** or (3) **Salesmen**.

Connectors know lots of people. You know the type. No one is a stranger to them. They know people in different worlds. Connectors are masters of "weak ties," meaning many relationships that are not deep ones. If you are a connector, more that anything else you need to spend your marketing time out from behind your computer. Want to determine if you are a connector?

Mavens accumulate knowledge. They do the research most of us don't want to do and they find joy in passing along what they learn. If you are a maven, you figure out things that impact your clients before other lawyers. You should spend your marketing time staying on top of what is impacting your clients and writing or speaking about those topics.

Salesmen are charismatic people who can persuade others even when the others are not convinced of what they are hearing. They can sell anything. Based on two studies, Gladwell notes that little things can be as important as big things. Second, non-verbal clues are as important; or, more important than verbal clues. Finally, persuasion works in ways we do not fully appreciate. It is not always the obvious eloquence; it can be way more subtle. Great salesmen connect with their clients in a variety of non-verbal ways including non-verbal enthusiasm, confidence and emotional expressiveness. If you are a salesman, you should spend your marketing time speaking to groups and in one-on-one meetings with potential clients and referral sources.

Build Internal Profile

1. Develop niche practice.

2. Become an industry expertise.

3. Become the "Go-To" lawyer in your practice group.

Build External Profile

1. Website bio. Keep your bio current and include:

    a. Photos.

b. Industry expertise.

c. Experience.

d. Articles and presentations.

e. Downloads of articles or presentation.

f. What makes you unique?

g. Integrate social media and links.

h. Downloadable v-card.

2. Bar and community service.

Do something that you are passionate about so that you are motivated to participate and stick with it long enough that you ascend to a position of leadership within the organization.

I do not recommend that you get involved in community service or charitable organizations to get business. I believe you should get involved because of the joy you feel serving the cause. You may get business because members of the group get to know your character and your leadership skills, but that should not be your motivation.

3. Writing.

Studies show that business client representatives expect lawyers to understand their industry, their business and them. Writing gives your clients a glimpse of your grasp of their industry. It builds their confidence. It conveys the depth of your understanding of their challenges.

What are the problems, opportunities, internal changes or external changes that your clients are encountering?

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Identify at least 4 potential article topics?

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What is in it for your clients?

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When writing take Trey Ryder's approach:

Identify and explain target's problem
Prove a problem exists
Identify one or more solutions
Prove the solution works
Build yourself into the solution

1. Identify the problem

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2. Prove the problem exists

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3. Identify the solution

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4. Prove the solution works

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Blogging Tips

- ♦ Make the most of good titles and headlines; think of your target market; what would cause them to read your post?
- ♦ Don't bury the lead, grasp your reader's attention;

- Anticipate your clients needs before they even have one;
- Don't write a blog post that looks like the New York Times; keep it to 250-300 words and make one point
- Engage your audience;
- Write down 4 to 5 questions and interview your clients; ask about projects, challenges they face;
- Write in a conversation tone, as you would over coffee; and
- Reference a good article and it's reporter from NY Times and start a conversation; offer to be source

Guides/Ebooks

You will be considered by a new client based on recommendations or something you have written or presented. Therefore it is important to find ways to reuse your content. In marketing that is called repurposing.

Have you handled a complex matter recently? If so, how can you reuse materials you created to educate other potential clients, referral sources and weak ties? I have always urged lawyers to create content (books, guides, articles and presentations) and find ways to reuse the content. Let me share an example.

In the early 90s, the Federal Highway Administration received permission from Congress to "experiment" with Design-Build construction of complex bridges and highways. I knew the experiment would lead to states wanting to construct more and more projects by design-build contracts. I also knew contractors were unprepared for this change. I decided to do workshops across the country to educate contractors. About 100 contractors attended. I had taken many hours to prepare the detailed handout materials. I offered those materials to 100s of other contractors. When it became possible, I had my marketing department put the materials on my website where they could be easily downloaded. Next, I broke out sections of the handout materials and created several articles that were published. The net effect was I reached a much wider audience by repackaging the materials I had worked so hard to create. In some cases I put materials in front of perspective clients three times.

Later I was hired by a state in New England to help draft their first design-build contact. A couple of years after that, I was hired by the contractor to help put together a proposal to install a very complex electronic toll collection system in the Northeast. Because of the writing and presentations I did on design-build, I was hired by several contractors to handle disputes arising from design-build contracts. All of these opportunities and engagements came as a result of creating content and reusing it.

Think about how you can reuse materials you create.

4. Speaking

How do you select a topic?

How do you decide which group to speak to?

Suppose you know who is attending the presentation, what do you do in advance?

What do you do when you arrive at the venue where you are to speak?

Practical Success

Cordell M. Parvin

Practical Tips On How To Get Industry Presentation Opportunities

I am frequently asked, "How can I get speaking opportunities at industry association meetings?" The year I was trying to wind down my law practice, I was asked to do presentations and programs for several national and state construction industry associations. At that point I had more opportunities to speak than I wished to fulfill. But it all started long ago, and I think I can help you find opportunities by sharing with you what happened way back then.

Before I get to the story, I want to let you know you will be amazed how many associations there are. Many firms have a copy of the *Directory of Associations.* If your firm does not have a copy, you can frequently find a copy in public libraries. You can learn more about it online. I recently sent the website link to lawyers I am coaching. Here is the link: http://www.marketingsource.com/directories/associations/us/.

In the late '70s, the ABA Public Contract Law Section decided it wanted to expand the membership to include more lawyers who did state and local government contract law. I had been practicing law for nine years and had been out of the Air Force and in private practice in Roanoke, Virginia for five years. Since my practice was at that point focused on state and local government contracts, I was asked to speak at the 1980 ABA Annual Meeting on a state and local government contract issue of my choosing. I remember being on a conference call and when I told the moderator of my panel my topic would be highway construction claims and disputes, he replied, "No one will be very interested in that topic." I knew right then that I had picked a niche industry practice I could develop.

I spoke at the ABA Annual Meeting as planned and quickly realized that it was the wrong forum for me. The clients I hoped would hire me were not attending ABA meetings. They were attending construction industry association meetings.

By 1981, a VP from my largest client at the time became the President of the Virginia Road and Transportation Builders' Association (VRTBA). I knew it was my chance to get an opportunity to speak to the members. But, I couldn't just go to Cliff and say: "Invite me to speak." Instead, I created what would later become my written handout material and I gave it to Cliff. I asked: "Cliff do you think VRTBA members would be interested in learning about this?" They were interested and that

Cordell M. Parvin built a national construction practice during his 35 years of practicing law. In 2005, Mr. Parvin left the firm and started Cordell Parvin LLC. He now works with lawyers and law firms on career development, planning, and client development. You can subscribe to his Blog at http://www.cordellblog.com/, connect with him on LinkedIn at http://www.linkedin.com/in/cordellparvin, join his Facebook Fan Page at http://www.facebook.com/pages/Cordell-Parvin-Lawyer-Coaching/222291473905?ref=ts, and follow him on Twitter at http://twitter.com/cordellparvin.

is how I got my opportunity. I was asked to speak on Saturday morning in between Chuck Robb and Marshall Coleman, the two candidates running for Governor. I didn't think that was a particularly great slot, but at least I knew the members would actually be there.

I cannot begin to tell you how nervous I was the night before my presentation. I could not sleep a wink. I was visualizing my presentation. I could actually see the audience in my half-sleep. I must have given the presentation 10 times to myself that night. I was well prepared and still energized when I finally was introduced the next morning.

After my presentation I discovered something that was very important. I knew that the VRTBA was the Virginia state chapter of the American Road and Transportation Builders' Association (ARTBA). What I didn't know is that one of the ARTBA executives had heard my presentation. Harry approached me after I spoke and asked if I would be willing to give the same presentation for the ARTBA members. I could hardly contain myself. I never dreamed that as a 10-year lawyer from Roanoke, Virginia I would have the opportunity to speak to a national association of contractors — my target market.

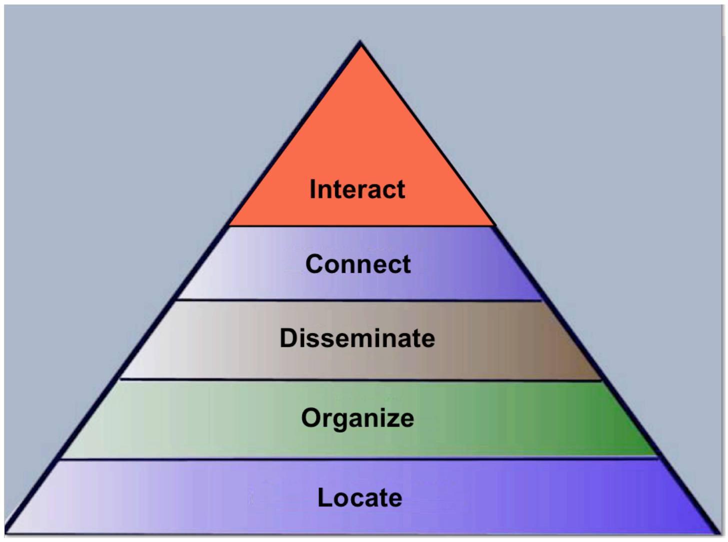
During the summer of 1982, I spoke at the ARTBA summer meeting. After that presentation, I was approached by the state executives of other state highway contractor associations who asked if I would be willing to come speak at their industry meetings.

What can you learn from my experience?

- Find out which trade associations your clients belong to. Those are the ones you want to focus on for getting opportunities to speak.
- If one of your clients is a board member, an officer, or otherwise active in the association, approach him or her about speaking to the group. But before you do, figure out a topic that members of the association will want to hear about and create materials to show to your client representative and for him or her to pass on to the board, the association executive, or whoever is tasked to find speakers for their meeting.
- When you get your chance, prepare like it is the most important thing you will ever do in your career. It just might be that important. I actually practiced in front of a mirror and gave my presentation to my wife several times.
- Focus on how you will begin and how you will end your presentation. In the first 90 seconds, your audience will think, "What's in this for me?" If you haven't given them a good answer, they'll pay little or no attention to what follows. End your presentation with a call to action.
- Finally, have a good handout that includes how to reach you. I think I still have my handout from this presentation long ago.

The Internet

How has the Internet changed client development?



Client Relationships

List and focus on your contacts.

1. Make a list of all of your contacts.
2. Rate them 1-10 three ways: How often in contact; nature of contact (email only is a 1, in-person is a 10); how important they are (someone who you will never do business with is a 1, a client is a 10).
3. For each contact, what do you know about him or her on a personal level?
4. Who are your "strong ties?" (close friends, family)
5. Who are your "weak ties?" (friends of friends, family)
6. Who are your "dormant ties?" (people you know, but have not been in contact in some time)
7. How can you create more "weak tie" relationships with people who will learn what you know?
8. How can you reconnect with your "dormant ties?"

Your clients do not care about what you do or how well you do it. They only care about how effectively you help them solve their problems or get them closer to their goals. Business clients want you to understand their industry, business and them. Potential business clients generally cannot determine whether you are a fine lawyer. They will rely on recommendations. They can very easily determine whether you understand their industry and their business.

In addition to understanding your client's industry, business and them, deepen relationship with your clients by:

1. Focusing on client service.
2. Building rapport.
3. Building trust.
4. Exceeding your client's expectations.

Client development is a long-term process. Most lawyers work at it without success and give up too early. It will take you time to build your profile and develop relationships. Remember to have patience, persistence and perseverance.

RECOMMENDED READING

Business

"Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies" by Jim Collins & Jerry Porras
"Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap….and Others Don't" by Jim Collins

Business Development

"Creating Customer Evangelists" by Jackie Huba and Guy Kawasaki
"Making Rain: The Secrets of Building Lifelong Client Loyalty" by Andrew Sobel
"Power Questions" by Andy Sobel & Jerold Panas
"The Trusted Advisor" by David Maister, Charles Green & Robert M. Galford
"Who's Got Your Back" by Keith Ferrazzi

Interpersonal Skills

"How to Talk to Anyone: 92 Little Tricks for Big Success in Relationships" by Leil Lowades
"Never Eat Alone" by Keith Ferrazzi
"Likeability Factor" by Tim Sanders
"The 29% Solution" by Ivan R. Misner, Phd and Michelle R. Donovan

Leadership

"Aligning the Stars" by Jay Lorsch & Thomas Tierney
"Drive" by David H. Pink
"First Among Equals" by Patrick McKenna & David Maister
"It Takes a Team" by Cordell Parvin and Brice Voran
"The Leadership Challenge" by James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner
"Managing the Professional Service Firm" by David Maister
"Principle-Centered Leadership" by Stephen Covey

Life

"The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People" by Stephen Covey
"A Whole New Mind" by Daniel H. Pink
"Getting Things Done" by David Allen
"Give and Take" by Adam M. Grant
"The Power of Full Engagement" by Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz
"The Power of Habit" by Charles Duhigg
"Succeed: How We Can Reach Our Goals" by Heidi Grant Halverson

Emotional Intelligence/Personality Profiles

"Selling with Emotional Intelligence" by Mitch Anthony
"StrengthsFinder 2.0" by Tom Rath

Marketing and Sales

"High Trust Selling" by Todd Duncan
"Linchpin: Are You Indispensable?" by Seth Godin
"Made to Stick" by Chip Heath & Dan Heath
"The Sales Bible" by Jeffrey H. Gitomer
"Spin Selling" by Neil Rackham
"To Sell is Human" by Daniel Pink

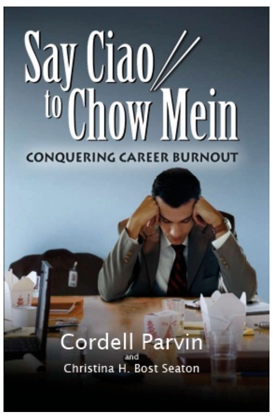
Presentation Skills

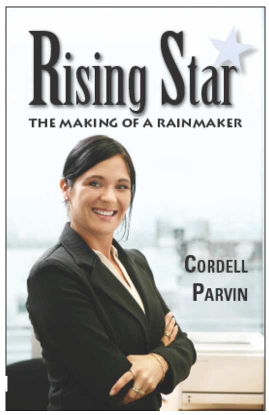
"10 Simple Secrets of the World's Greatest Business Communications" by Carmine Gallo

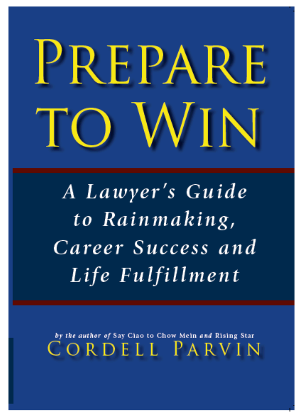
"Beyond Bullet Points" by Cliff Atkinson
"Give Your Speech, Change the World: How To Move Your Audience to Action" by Nick Morgan
"Presenting to Win: The Art of Telling Your Story" by Jerry Weissman
"The Presentation Secrets of Steve Jobs" by Steve Jobs

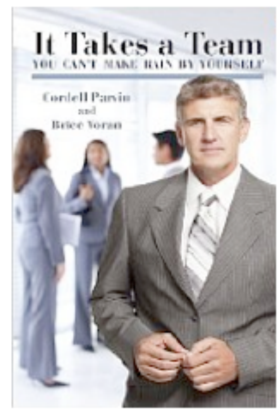
Social Media

"The Anatomy of Buzz Revisited" by Emanuel Rosen
"Crush It" by Gary Vaynerchuk
"Groundswell: Winning in a World Transformed by Social Technologies" by Charlene Li and Josh Bernof
"The New Rules of Marketing and PR" by David Meerman Scott
"World Wide Rave" by David Meerman Scott









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