

Where to Invest Your Time: Making Better Decisions in Business Development

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By May, most business development professionals aren't struggling with a lack of activity. If anything, it's the opposite. Calendars are full, conversations are happening, and new opportunities continue to come in.

The real challenge isn't creating activity. It's deciding where to focus it.

It's easy to assume that more activity leads to better results. More meetings, more outreach, more connections. But over time, it becomes clear that growth rarely comes from trying to stay connected to everyone. It comes from making thoughtful decisions about where your time and attention will have the greatest impact.

Not every relationship develops in the same way. Some connections build naturally. There is mutual interest, consistent engagement, and alignment in how you think and work. For example, one contact may consistently respond, share updates, and suggest ways to stay connected. Others remain more surface-level, engaging only when you reach out, with conversations that rarely move beyond general updates. Both are connections, but they serve different roles.

At a certain point, the question shifts. It becomes less about "Who should I meet next?" and more about "Where should I be investing more consistently?"

That shift changes how you use your time. Instead of spreading efforts evenly, you focus on relationships already showing signs of depth. That might mean spending more time with a client who has introduced you to others in their organization, rather than continuing to pursue a prospect who has been unresponsive despite repeated outreach. Over time, stronger relationships lead to better conversations with less need for context and more space for discussion.

New connections still matter. They always will. But without focus, it's easy for new activity to take priority over existing relationships with more potential. When that happens, progress can slow without being obvious.

There is also judgment involved. Not every promising conversation will develop further, and not every relationship needs to be pursued. In practice, this might look like recognizing that a stalled relationship is unlikely to move forward, while another that developed slowly has become a steady source of dialogue or introductions. Being selective is not about limiting opportunity. It's about creating space to invest where there is real alignment.

Consistency still matters, but it becomes more targeted. Staying engaged with the right people through conversations, shared insights, and simple touchpoints reinforces relationships over time. Often, the simplest actions are the most effective.

Technology can help organize your network, but it does not determine where your attention should go. That still comes from

experience and a clear understanding of what meaningful progress looks like.

As the year continues, it's worth stepping back and looking at your relationships differently. Not just who you know, but where you are seeing real engagement and forward movement. Those patterns often show where your efforts will have the greatest impact.

In business development, results are not driven by activity alone. They come from focusing your time on the right relationships and investing in them consistently over time.