



Helping smarter professional service firms grow 10½ things we learned while working from home that'll help us back in the office

How can you do BD when you can't do BD?

Pt 4: Working from home

1. There's always a Plan B

Most people haven't worked from home before so they'll have been forced to make some major changes to the way they usually work.

Alternatives to face-to-face meetings have had to be found and this flexibility – this ability to find a viable Plan B - will have much broader applicability when we're back in the office.

2. It's never either/or

Some people are evangelising about videoconferencing and the increased part it will play in our working lives once we're back to normal.

A word of caution – it's never black and white. Judge every conversation on its own merits and choose the most suitable way to progress each.

3. Review and refresh

At the moment you probably have a bit more time to tackle the things that have never managed to rise to the top of your 'to do' list. You may have realised that your marketing materials, reports or standard emails could do with a lick of paint. I know I have!

Rather than wait until the next crisis, find time to review and refresh what you know needs attention and schedule time to revisit your changes when it's a bit quieter, perhaps in the Summer or across the Christmas period?

4. Identify your most important professional relationships

Pareto's 80/20 rule means that 80% of your results will come from just 20% of your relationships. If you can identify that 20%, you'll be able to focus on the clients and contacts that will really make a difference to your practice.

5. Find out who your friends are

Some of my contacts have become friends over the past few weeks because of the care and concern they've shown during such a difficult time.

Regrettably (though probably predictably) in one or two cases, the opposite is true.

6. Listen to your clients

Every firm claims to do this on their websites and in their marketing collateral but how many really do? Only investing in independent client listening programmes demonstrates beyond doubt that your claims and your commitment is true.

Even during the most volatile and unstable periods, there will be success stories.

At Tenandahalf the past two economic downturns have proved categorically that the firms who listen to their clients and follow up on what they learn grow.

Instead of hiding behind battened down hatches until things get back to normal, strive to improve by asking the people who buy your services how well you currently meet their needs and what else you need to do to score the perfect 10.

7. Communicate, communicate, communicate

People worry unnecessarily about over-communicating. That's only the case if all your communications stick and they never will.

While we're all a bit more isolated, try to communicate more (more frequently, more practically, more relevantly and more valuably) across more channels.

Then keep it up once we're back in the office.

8. You can use technology

Many professionals shy away from technology but if we've learned anything over the last couple of weeks it's that Zoom, Teams and Skype are actually very easy to use and can improve our productivity if they're used properly.

9. The occasional reset is good for you

Current events have forced us all to question what we do, where we shop and what we actually need to exist. And again, we've adapted quickly to what's available and what's permissible.

But it shouldn't take a crisis to force us take that kind of action.

Once we're back in the swing of things, why not make a real effort to elevate the status of your annual away day. Give your firm's leaders a real opportunity to work on what you need to adapt to meet new opportunities away from all the usual day-to-day pressures.

10. It's not all about work

Spending so much more time with family and friends has been a timely reminder that while work is important, it's not everything.

10%. Listen to more music

Music really is good for the soul. It can keep you company and it can pick you up and put a smile back on your face.

Try and find some new sources to keep you fresh.

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