

## For want of a nail...

*...the shoe was lost.  
 For want of a shoe the horse was lost.  
 For want of a horse the rider was lost.  
 For want of a rider the kingdom was lost,  
 And all for want of a horseshoe nail.*

This proverb neatly described the central tenet of 'Chaos Theory' and 'The Butterfly Effect' centuries before they were proposed, namely that small and apparently irrelevant actions can have huge (and nasty!) consequences.

And the same central tenet also underpins HuthwaiteFleming's campaign on Living Business Development. Its starting point is that everyone from your firm who comes into contact with a client, at any point and by any means, will leave that client either more positively or more negatively disposed towards you. It's almost impossible for them to have a neutral effect.

This means that, as we say at HuthwaiteFleming, 'Business Development' is not a department. It's a philosophy that must guide every action in every part of the firm, across every function and from top to bottom. Anyone who interacts with a prospect or client can either advance a sale or damage it, however inconsequential their actions might seem at the time.

A poor response on the telephone, a badly worded letter, an aggressive accounts clerk – ultimately, all these could lead to you losing the business.

A Living Business Development firm is one where everyone knows this and acts accordingly. They recognise that, however excellent a firm's other operations are, they all play a part in avoiding a fundamental business equation:

### **Service delivery – Sales = Lost opportunity**

Sadly, Living Business Development firms are few and far between. If yours is one of them, congratulations. But to check, do any of these apply?

**All fee earners have been trained to uncover and develop customer problems and needs. But all the marketing messages and collateral that are supposed to support their efforts emphasise firm or service capability.**

**Proposals and presentations rely on customising 'boilerplate' examples. Firm and service features dominate the content and there's little room for the customer issues they might solve.**

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Junior fee earners and secondees are ideally placed to pick up or generate leads for further business, but don't recognise them or know the right questions to ask. Despite their regular and frequent contact with clients in their day to day business dealings, they fail to report competitor activity.

The people who help to implement your solutions – back office, finance, and administrators – think that 'business development' is a dirty word and see it as someone else's responsibility.

If any of these *do* apply to your organisation, you need to speak to us. We don't just train front line fee earners to interact effectively with clients. We have a long history of **helping those who support them** to do the same. That's what makes for a 'joined-up' organisation that is truly Living Business Development.

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