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If you are like the thousands of BD folks in the A/E/C industry right now, you are struggling to fnd ways to stay relevant and connected to your clients and project management teams. Depending on the state you live in and the day of week, your situation varies. For example, on March 17th, the City of Boston shut down selected non-essential sites for at least two weeks, San Francisco imposed the strictest shutdown regulations in the country along with a shelter-in-place order and on March 27th, New York has halted most construction statewide excluding some crucial work, including infrastructure, hospitals, and afordable housing, along with emergency repairs.

In a Google search for best Business Development quotes, it was amazing at how many apply to our current situation. For example:

"Out of your vulnerabilities will come your strength." Sigmund Freud

"Every problem is a gift — without problems we would not grow." Anthony Robbins

"All progress takes place outside the comfort zone." Michael John Bobak

We are certainly outside of our comfort zones right now, so how do we conduct business NOT as usual?

Sourcing the 2016 Society of Marketing Professional Services (SMPS), Domain 3, Client and Business Development, we learn that business development has a nine-stage process from the client's point of view. The A of America BD Forum Steering Committee has collaborated on a few of the most critical steps to formulate ways your BD approach can still follow these guidelines even at your most vulnerable times, or as we now call it, "social distancing.

Awareness: This is the very frst step (and most logical). Your client has recognized the need/demand for the next project and will be looking for a solution provider. In typical times, you would be staying top-of-mind via networking events, cofee meetings and other face-to-face opportunities. In today's climate, there are still ways to maintain your credibility and visibility:

Strategize: Be sure to come right out of the gate as an industry thought-leader. Show a solid understanding of the situation and prepare your messaging accordingly. Don't become tone-deaf to your clients' (and everyone's) situation.

Leverage digital formats: Schedule weekly posts that provide relevant information and value targeted to the client. Reach out and invite clients, industry experts and association executives to group platform meetings and cofee hours.

Snail mail: Send fun and interesting articles and images focusing on the clients' interests—cooking, crafts, sports

and animals are all great topics that can lift spirits. Don't be afraid to incorporate a little appropriate humor every once in a while-we all need the relief!

Knowledge: Whether your client or potential client is familiar with your frm or not, they will need to be updated on the entirety of the services you provide. Take the opportunity to conduct in-depth research of the type of work they have done in the past and tailor your message to align with their doals.

Get creative: Work with your marketing team to capture your clients' attention with a dynamic 2-minute video highlighting your organization's services and culture.

Social proof: Share social media posts that thank and recommend your industry partners and suppliers highlighting the work you have accomplished together (be sure to tag them!).

Ask for a referral: Reach out to those industry partners and suppliers and ask for referrals and recommendations based on successful project examples.

Association with the entity: As a result of your hard work, the client begins to see the link between hiring your construction frm and achieving their goal. It is particularly critical to stay sensitive with the current environment. Realistic conversations on deliverables and timelines need to be addressed up front.

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Keep it real: DRRKBWBHDR BBBQQ DBED

more is needed from you to seal the deal. Follow up!

Stay safe, stay home.

"No matter what has transpired over the past weeks, our goal hasn't changed; the goal has always been to help solve

of assistance, to help solve the problems of today and be prepared for tomorrow." Julie Brown, Founder JB | BD

Resource: 2016 Society of Marketing Professional Services (SMPS), Domain 3, Client and Business Development, p. 1

AIL, AL,

With more than 20 years in the communications arena, Lisa's experience includes spearheading internal and external communications via a balance of online and of ine channels engaging clients and members, driving awareness and analyzing eforts through qualitative and quantitative methods.

Lisa's role at AGC MA is to increase engagement with member CMs, GCs, Subcontractors,

Interested in writing a future one-page article for the Business Development Best Practices Series and marketing yourself and your company to thousands of readers? Contact Paige Packard at paige.packard@agc.org.