

# Traffic Building Activities that Will Develop Your Lead Stream

By Andrew Sobel

“Traffic Building” is the term I use to describe the activities that help you to build your professional brand and create an inquiry stream from new clients. There are at least five categories of Traffic Building activities you should consider, which are set out below. But above all, lower your threshold for a client meeting. Get in front of current and potential clients more often, and you will invariably see more potential opportunities.

1. **Intellectual capital development.** This includes conducting primary research, doing surveys, and developing and codifying new service offerings. Many of the best professional firms invest heavily in intellectual capital development, but it is equally if not more important for individual practitioners who don't have the name recognition of a McKinsey or Ernst & Young.
2. **Publishing.** Compared to even just a few years ago, your options for publishing have grown immensely. They include:
  - Commercially published articles in magazines and newspapers
  - Books or book chapters
  - White papers
  - Web-based content (articles, commentary, or anything else housed on your or someone else's website)
  - E-newsletters, e-zines, and e-bulletins
  - Blogs
  - Podcasts
  - Web-based video

Do you need to survey 25,000 managers in order to publish something? Of course not. I've written very popular, commercially published articles based on interviews with a handful of executives.

3. **Speaking.** Again, there are many opportunities to get in front of prospective clients by speaking. These include industry and professional conferences; events that your firm may organize for a single, large client or a group of clients; and other thematic conferences. Becoming a paid speaker is more difficult, and for this you usually need to have authored a book or perhaps have been a CEO, Olympic medalist, or celebrity.
4. **Networking.** There are so many ways to network that you really need to focus on a platform that makes sense for your particular goals and personality. Here is just a partial list of networking opportunities you might consider:
  - Industry and professional association leadership

- Non-profit leadership
- University/graduate school involvement
- Personal events (e.g., networking dinners)
- Social/cultural events
- Content-based events (private seminars)
- Media and journalists
- Collaborating firms
- “Brokers” (banks, private equity, VCs, etc.)
- Alumni
- Academics
- Retired executives
- Advisors/advisory boards

5. **Other channels.** These could include:

- Media interviews (print, TV, radio, etc.)
- Targeted mailings
- Third-party endorsements
- Capability alliances
- Academic alliances

Each year, you should pick a few activities out of this list and commit to specific goals. Obviously, the best way to create leads with existing clients is to do great work and invest in a broad set of relationships in the client organization. A steady inquiry stream results from a strong personal brand and a steady investment in traffic-building activities that put you in touch with prospective buyers on a regular basis.

The graphic on the next page summarizes the range of traffic building activities available to you.

# Potential Traffic-Building Activities

## INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

- ✓ Primary research
- ✓ Surveys
- ✓ Service offering innovation & codification

## PUBLISHING

- ✓ Commercial articles (newspapers & magazines)
- ✓ Books or book chapters
- ✓ White papers
- ✓ Firm publications
- ✓ Web-based content
- ✓ E-newsletters or monthly bulletins
- ✓ Blogs

## SPEAKING

- ✓ Industry/practice conferences
- ✓ Client-specific events
- ✓ Firm-sponsored conferences
- ✓ Media events

## NETWORKING

- ✓ Industry and professional associations
- ✓ Non-profit leadership
- ✓ University/graduate school
- ✓ Personal events (e.g., dinners)
- ✓ Social/cultural events
- ✓ Content-based events (private seminars)
- ✓ Media and journalists
- ✓ Collaborating firms
- ✓ “Brokers” (banks, private equity, VCs)
- ✓ Alumni
- ✓ Academics
- ✓ Retired executives
- ✓ Advisors/advisory boards

## OTHERS

- ✓ Media interviews (print, TV, radio, etc.)
- ✓ Targeted mailings
- ✓ Third party endorsements
- ✓ Capability alliances
- ✓ Academic alliances