

# Business Development Executive

## Rachael

Hi everyone. My name is Rachael. I am a Business Development Executive at Cleary Gottlieb.

The overall aim of Business Development (otherwise referred to as BD) is to help grow the business by strengthening ties with existing clients and to generate potential new clients and business prospects in order to increase company revenue and maximize profits. How BD works varies greatly across industries – it depends on the products you are trying to sell, and to whom you are selling them.

In the context of an international corporate law firm like Cleary Gottlieb, our role is to promote the expertise of our lawyers and to encourage them to build strong relationships with their clients. To do this, we work with lawyers to write pitches and proposals, carry out research and analysis on business targets, identify and communicate new business opportunities, develop marketing collateral, organise events and webinars, and manage social media and online content.

Like many of us who work in Legal BD, it wasn't a career I was even aware of while in school. From studying International Business and Spanish at the University in Liverpool, I developed a better understanding of how a business operates as a whole, and the relevance of Marketing and BD within any given industry. It was then that I realised I wanted to pursue a career in this field. I loved the idea of project-based work, which allowed me to be creative and people-focused.

After I graduated, my first job was as a Database Administrator for three months at a law firm in the city of London. Whilst this specific job wasn't of particular interest to me at the time, it served as a great way for me to get my foot in the door, having had no prior experience in Professional Services. Soon after I joined, I was given the opportunity to transfer in to the Marketing and BD department, where I spent three years, before making the move to my current role at Cleary Gottlieb.

Over the years, I have learnt a lot from working in the legal industry: I have had the opportunity to work with some of the most intelligent and diverse people from a variety of cultures and backgrounds across the firm and had the chance to get involved in a variety of projects and initiatives, from delivering events and webinars, to working on pitches and marketing materials, and helping drive our social media and online presence.

One of my favourite things about my job is that no two days are the same. As the legal market is becoming increasingly more competitive and clients are becoming more cost conscious, the need for effective BD is becoming increasingly more prominent. Our team is consistently having to adapt and develop our skills to in order to meet the increasing demand for our work.

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There are many skills which you can build on in order to increase your chances of having a successful career in BD, but in particular I would emphasize the importance of having excellent oral and written communications skills (in order to communicate your ideas to colleagues and clients), time management skills, the ability to multi-task and – last but not least – the ability to build relationships with a wide range of people, as this is a role that requires great teamwork in order to reach the desired results.