

Meridian West Skills Development Programmes



1. How to position yourself in your client's changing world

How the client's world is changing and what this means for professional firms. The programme is based on extensive Meridian West research amongst Board Level buyers from around the world, including some of the largest banks and multi-national corporates.

Topics:

- Shift from being reactive technical expert to proactive business risk adviser.
- How legal and finance departments are embracing technology and new delivery models. The rise of the department COO.
- How departments are struggling with talent management.
- New approaches to procurement and non-traditional providers.
- What clients now want from their professional firms. The type of added value services they want. The type of advice they want.
- How to identify your value proposition and position your brand.



2. Client acquisition and retention

The programme covers the skills needed to win new clients, cross sell better and develop deep relationships.

Topics:

- Managing your personal sales pipeline.
- Building relationships with clients and prospects.
- Uncovering needs and understanding problems.
- The good business conversation.
- Asking questions and exploring motivations.
- Scoping out potential solutions, without seeming to be too much of a salesperson.
- Pitching for work.



3. Pricing and project management

How to use project management techniques to improve client satisfaction and improve profitability.

Topics:

- How to scope out a project.
- Assessing the impact of using different pricing mechanisms on project profitability, i.e. fixed vs. hourly vs. success.
- How to manage a fixed fee matter.
- Using financial and operational systems to track profitability in real-time.
- Managing your team and the client's team.
- Identifying and managing project risk.
- Dealing with scope creep.



4. Delivering commercial advice

Clients say they want lawyers to be "Commercial" and to be "Trusted advisers" not just technical specialists. The workshop will help professionals deliver commercial advice. It is based on the 7 habits of a commercial adviser framework developed by Meridian West and Kommerzialis. <http://www.commerciality-hub.com>.

Topics:

- Habit 1 – Understand your client's desired outcomes – what do we mean by outcomes; how to stay focussed on the end result.
- Habit 2 – Understand the business – how to get to grips with the wider business and market context.
- Habit 3 – Understand the economics – understand financial jargon and apply financial models.
- Habit 4 – Understand the people – stakeholder mapping and people management.
- Habit 5 – Agree the scope – manage client expectations and deliver profitability.
- Habit 6 – Build practical solutions – create lasting change for the client.
- Habit 7 – Communicate for impact – the art of persuasion.



5. Running professional services firms better

Many fee earners have a rudimentary understanding of the financial drivers of profitability. As a consequence they make decisions about pricing, scoping and client management that leak profitability. This programme helps heads of department, partners, and those preparing for partnership to become financially astute and more effective managers. This programme uses a case studies approach.

Topics:

- An introduction to professional services finance terminology and methodology, e.g. PEP, leverage, gearing, utilization.
- Understanding the drivers that make one professional services firm more profitable over another.
- Showing the links between a firm's business strategy and economic model.
- Demonstrating the link between the way a fee-earner prices and manages a project and a firm's profitability.
- Understanding talent management including recruitment and culture.
- Understanding resourcing and how to utilise LPOs, free-lance professionals, off-shoring and collaborating with other firms.



6. How to position yourself as a thought leader

Aimed at partners, this programme teaches how to use thought leadership to establish yourself as a thought leader and how to use it to build on existing client relationships and commence new ones.

Topics:

- Using thought leadership to spot new opportunities.
- How to use thought leadership as a door-opener with potential clients.
- How to utilise the material to engage in wider businesses conversations.
- Reusing and getting the most out of existing material.
- Gaining a presence as a thought leader on the seminar circuit and online.



7. Taking Account Management to the next level for marketers

To understand the benefits of good account management skills and how to apply them to your key clients.

Topics:

- How client expectations are shifting. What benefits really add value.
- What others are doing industry wide.
- How does your practise compare to other firms.
- Action planning session to agree improvements to your programme.



8. How to conduct client feedback interviews for marketers

To learn and practice effective interviewing skills:

Topics:

- Designing an effective topic guide.
- Preparing for the interview.
- Interviewing skills:
 - Opening statements – objectives and ground rules.
 - Active listening.
 - When to probe and when to move on.
 - When and when not to use leading questions.
 - Closing the interview.

- After the interview – writing up the report, action planning and follow up



9. Running thought leadership and content marketing campaigns for marketers

This programme reviews trends in content marketing and thought leadership and teaches how to use it effectively to drive business development.

Topics:

- Trends in thought leadership – legal sector and industry wide.
- The benefits of Thought Leadership and how to use it effectively.
- How you can improve the thought leadership material you produce and better use it to drive business.
- Developing the content, including how to pick themes and research techniques.
- How to make use of the content, including applying it online.
- How to achieve partner buy-in and ensuring partners make full use of the content.