Professional Services Marketing and Business Development: Thought Leadership and Pursuits

7 – 11 December 2026
Paris - Right Bank business hotel



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Introduction:

Consulting, engineering, facilities management and advisory firms often rely on a few partners' personal networks for new work, so pipelines swing between feast and famine, proposals are written for tenders the firm cannot win and fees are cut to match rivals. Professional services marketing and business development replaces this with a planned approach: clear practice positioning, insight-led thought leadership, key client programmes, disciplined pursuit decisions and value-based fee models. This Core Concept course equips partners, directors and business development staff to run it. Participants produce a Practice Marketing and BD Plan for a case firm.

Course Objectives:

- Diagnose how target clients select and appoint expert advisers and where the firm's current work originates
- Define a practice positioning, differentiation and brand architecture that clients can recognise and recall
- Design a thought leadership, events and speaking programme tied to sector client problems
- Manage a weighted pursuit pipeline and apply go/no-go criteria before committing proposal effort
- Select fee models and cross-selling and referral routes that raise fee income per client
- Build and measure a Practice Marketing and BD Plan with performance indicators for a case firm

Target Audience:

- Partners and directors who own practice revenue and senior client relationships
- Business development managers who run pursuit pipelines and coordinate proposal teams
- Marketing managers who plan firm brand, insight content and events
- Practice and sector leads responsible for growing a service line
- Bid and proposal managers who coordinate multi-discipline submissions
- Client relationship managers who lead the firm's most important client accounts

Course Outline:

Day 1: How Clients Buy Expertise and the Firm's Growth Baseline

- Credence Qualities in Buying Expertise: Skill, Reputation, Capacity and Ethics Signals
- Professional Firm Types: Classic, Neo-Professional and Technology Developer Models
- Adviser Selection Routes: Direct Appointment, Framework Panels, Competitive Tenders and Referrals
- Work Origination Analysis: Repeat Clients, Referred Work and New Client Wins
- Current-State BD Audit Scorecard for a Practice

Day 2: Positioning, Practice Branding and Thought Leadership Models

- Expertise Positioning Canvas: Target Sectors, Client Problems and Proof Points
- Differentiation Tests: Specialist Versus Generalist Firm Choices
- Firm and Practice Brand Architecture: Masterbrand, Endorsed and Service-Line Names
- Thought Leadership Programme Design: Insight Themes, Research Reports and Point-of-View Papers
- Events and Speaking Plan: Client Roundtables, Webinars and Conference Slots

Day 3: Client Development, Pursuit Pipeline and Fee Strategy

- Key Client Plan Template: Relationship Map, Service Penetration and Growth Targets
- Client Listening Programme: Post-Project Reviews and Relationship Health Interviews
- Pursuit Pipeline Stages: Lead, Qualified Opportunity, Proposal and Award with Weighted Values
- Go/No-Go Decision Matrix: Fit, Winnability, Resource and Margin Criteria
- Fee Models Compared: Fixed Fee, Time-Based Rates, Retainers and Success Fees

Day 4: Growth Levers, Digital Presence and BD Performance Pitfalls

- Cross-Selling Between Practices: Service Adjacency Map and Introduction Protocol
- Referral Network Development: Intermediaries, Alliance Partners and Alumni Contacts
- Firm Website and Search Presence: Expertise Pages, Project Case Studies and Insight Hubs
- Proposal Win Themes, Fee Discount Traps and Loss Debrief Method
- BD Performance Dashboard: Win Rate, Pipeline Coverage, Fee Realisation and Cost of Sale

Day 5: Case Firm Practice Marketing and BD Plan

- Case Brief: Engineering, Facilities Management and Advisory Firm Profiles with Revenue Data
- Case Positioning Statement and Thought Leadership Calendar
- Case Target Client List, Key Client Plans and Go/No-Go Screening
- Case Fee Strategy and Cross-Selling Targets by Practice
- Practice Marketing and BD Plan Presentation to a Partner Panel

Skills You Will Gain:

- Expertise Positioning
- Practice Brand Architecture
- Thought Leadership Planning
- Key Client Planning
- Pursuit Qualification
- Fee Model Selection
- Referral Network Building
- BD Performance Measurement

Why Attend This Course:

- Leave with a Practice Marketing and BD Plan for a case consulting, engineering or facilities management firm
- Stop spending proposal effort on tenders the firm has little chance of winning
- Turn partners' expertise into insight content and speaking slots that bring clients to the firm
- Compare BD practice with peers from consulting, engineering, project management and advisory firms

Conclusion:

Professional firms grow steadily when expertise is positioned, made visible and turned into client work through a managed process rather than chance introductions. The course moves from how clients buy expertise and where the firm's work comes from, through positioning, practice branding, thought leadership and events, to key client plans, pursuit pipelines, go/no-go decisions and fee models, then cross-selling, referral networks, digital presence and BD measures. The final day applies these methods to a case firm and produces a Practice Marketing and BD Plan ready for partner review.