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Low Cost, High Impact Strategies to Market Your Law Practice – Even If You Only Have Five Minutes!

By Terrie S. Wheeler

Business doesn't always fall in your lap. To ensure consistent revenue, develop and follow a balanced marketing strategy. Start by following these Four Pillars of Marketing and making a check list to do something proactive to market your law practice each day.

Having worked with lawyers for over twenty years I know that while busy attorneys do their best to get out and develop new relationships, in reality, they oftentimes wish clients would simply hear of their expertise and call – and that their telephone and inbox would provide a steady stream of legal work from clients who pay on time, refer them to others and on and on the cycle would continue. But for those attorneys who aren't exactly sure what to do when someone says, "you need to get out there and do more marketing," this article is for you!

There are really just two areas you need to focus on as you market your law practice – having a well balanced marketing plan built around marketing best practices for lawyers, and making the personal commitment to actively implement your plan. Simply stated, if you do these two things consistently over time, you will be successful.

So let's talk about the need for a balanced marketing strategy. Make sure your marketing activities are equally spread under each of The Four Pillars of Marketingsm:

- **Retaining and Growing Relationships with Existing Clients** – At least 70% of next year's revenue will come from your base of existing clients and contacts. Don't overlook them!
- **Attracting New Clients and Developing New Business** – Know the criteria of your best clients and referral sources (A-level people). What traits and characteristics do they have in common? Then, proactively seek to develop new relationships and business opportunities with these individuals and companies.
- **Increasing Name Recognition and Awareness** – In order to hire or refer you, people must know who you are. Focus on increasing your personal name recognition in the marketplace through public relations, community and association involvement.
- **Utilizing Targeted and Effective Communications** – Know what makes you unique as a lawyer, then capitalize on your skills and communicate timely, relevant information to your contacts and clients.

Keep a copy of the following marketing best practices on top of your desk (and top of mind). Commit to implementing just one tactic each day. Use the check list between phone calls, while on hold or even while waiting for a long document to print!

Pillar #1: Retaining and Growing Relationships with Existing Clients

- Pick up the phone and call a client or referral source you have not talked to recently. Touch base and check in to simply see how the person is doing; consider inviting them to have coffee with you.
- Call a client for whom you have recently completed a transaction or case just to see how well their expectations were met.

- Schedule a meeting with a client to review how the relationship is going and address any concerns your client may have (.....and don't bill them for the time!).
- Contact a client who recently ended their relationship with the firm and determine what happened; communicate to those on your team to prevent future client defections.
- Conduct a mini-audit of your billing practices to ensure the invoices your clients receive clearly communicate the value you bring to the client (not just 'Fee for Services Rendered'). Remember, clients generally appreciate more detail rather than less.
- Proactively provide a status update to one of your current clients of your work on their behalf.
- Watch for your clients in the news. If you see them referenced in an article, featured on television or interviewed on the radio, send them a personal note of congratulations.
- Tell your assistant how much you appreciate his or her role in helping you serve clients.
- Take an associate or a partner to lunch and find out more about the work (s)he is doing with a goal of introducing them to other clients you have.
- Contact two clients whose businesses or interests may compliment one another and introduce them.
- Identify five clients of yours who you would like to introduce to one of your colleagues with a goal of expanding the firm's overall business with each.
- Create a grid with your top clients listed down the left side, and the services you/your firm offer across the top. Look for gaps where the client needs services the firm offers and take action to introduce the client to additional services the firm can provide.

Pillar #2: Attracting New Clients and Developing New Business

- Take a moment to note what your best clients have in common (traits, characteristics, type of individual or company, from whom they were referred). Focus on attracting the highest caliber clients with legal work that utilizes your best and highest levels of expertise.
- Create a Top Ten list of prospective clients you know would be a great fit with your expertise, your firm, and its services; Call someone on your Top Ten list to meet for lunch.
- Make a list of your top referral sources; call one of these people and schedule coffee or lunch just to reconnect.
- Spend time assessing your networking and relationship building practices and develop a plan to become more involved in events attracting your clients, prospective clients, and referral sources.
- When you are reading the daily paper or an industry journal, select an article that would be of interest to someone you know and send it with a personal note.
- Identify a trade or professional association that attracts your ideal clients or referral sources and become a high profile member of that organization (offer to write articles or speak to members).
- Reflect upon what has led to your success to date. If you found yourself with no clients tomorrow, what would you do first? Revisit the marketing behaviors that have led to your success.
- Keep your sales pipeline up to date. Who are you working on right now to attract as a client?

Pillar #3: Increasing Name Recognition and Awareness

- Identify a substantive area of law in which you have a high level of expertise. Develop an outline for a presentation you could give on the topic; identify the ideal target audience for your presentation and contact the appropriate organization with your idea.
- Create an outline for an article you would like to have published and identify where you would like to see the article in print.
- Review industry trends for your biggest clients. Develop a story pitch for the media, and contact a few local business, legal or community editors to persuade them your story idea has merit. They will either ask you to write a bylined article, or may even assign a reporter to "cover" the story.
- Revisit and reflect upon where (and how) you are spending your time in the community and seek to involve yourself in organizations you are committed to and passionate about.
- Consider serving on a non-profit board of directors; identify which organizations mesh with your interests and begin investigating the process of becoming a board member.

Pillar #4: Utilizing Targeted and Effective Communications

- Review and update your biography – enlist your assistant to automatically add speaking engagements, published articles, new professional affiliations, etc.
- Develop as many substantive examples of representative experience as you can and add them to your biography – for use on your website, in proposals, or to give to prospective clients and referral sources. Include:
 - The Client's Industry
 - The Client's Situation (the problem)
 - Your Approach (the solution)
 - The Result Achieved
- Send a quick email to a few of your clients letting them know of changes in their industry that may impact them.
- Review your firm's website and make a suggestion on enhancing the site.
- Review your contact list from the database and scan it for accuracy; make corrections and additions and have your assistant enter them for you.
- Look at what you're working on. If an associate or paralegal can do the drafting or research for you, delegate, delegate, delegate!

Building strong and enduring relationships with clients and contacts takes time and needs to be implemented consistently over time. Make sure you have a system in place to track your marketing efforts and to keep yourself accountable to generating results. Marketing is something you must weave into the fabric of your practice. Commit to doing something proactive to market your law practice each day. Remember, if you wait until you "have time" to market, it will likely be too late! If you do something small each day, you will reap the rewards of having loyal clients who will go out of their way to refer others to you.

About the Author

[Terrie Wheeler](#) is founder and president of Professional Services Marketing, Inc. (PSM), and recently launched a unique web-based tool for lawyers, www.MarketYourLawPractice.com, comprised of hundreds of assessment, planning, implementation and measurement tools and best practices. The site provides focus and discipline for lawyers interested in taking their marketing efforts to the next level. Prior to founding PSM in 1996, Terrie spent 13 years as a marketing director in three large Twin Cities law firms, and, through her consulting firm, has provided outsourced marketing services to law firms, and worked one-on-one with lawyers through PSM's *Your Personal Marketing Coach*sm program. You can contact Terrie by calling 651-633-2711.