



**District Meeting
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The Four Pillars of MarketingSM: Effective Strategies for Growing your Insurance Business

Presented by:

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PROFESSIONAL SERVICES MARKETING, INC.

Targeted Strategies for Business Growth

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Strategies to Effectively Market Your Insurance business: Growing your Business Using the Four Pillars of Marketing SM

By Terrie S. Wheeler, MBC
President, Professional Services Marketing, Inc.

There are really just two areas you need to focus on as you market your insurance business: having a well-balanced marketing plan built around marketing best practices for insurance agents, 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.

Marketing for Insurance agents: Today's Reality

In today's marketplace, as an insurance agent you own your own business, and all businesses must attract new customers to survive and thrive. Most agents know that in order to pay the rent and utilities, meet payroll, and run a profitable insurance business, they must balance the activities of serving clients with those activities required to generate a constant stream of new business.

Call it business development, new business origination or sales; insurance agents need to attract new clients to sustain and grow their business'. Some agents market well, while others rely on their strong reputation with the hope it will provide a steady stream of new clients. (This marketing approach used to work but is not as effective today.)

Having worked with service professionals for over 20 years, I know that busy agents do their best to get out and develop new relationships, especially with clients and referral sources. But in reality, they often wish clients would simply hear of their expertise and call— and that their telephone and inbox would provide a steady stream of new clients who are loyal, refer them to others, and on and on the cycle would continue. But for those agents 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!

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

Pillar I: Retaining and Growing Relationships with Existing Clients

Pillar II: Attracting New Clients and Developing New Business

Pillar III: Increasing Name Recognition and Awareness

Pillar IV: Utilizing Targeted and Effective Communications

Pillar I: Retaining and Growing Relationships with Existing Clients

At least 70% of next year's revenue will come from your base of existing clients. Don't overlook them! Growing relationships with your existing clients is at the core of your success or failure as an insurance agent. To do this, clients must be delighted, not simply satisfied with your services and your approach to client service. One of the single greatest things you can do to continue developing professionally is to commit to nothing less than providing exceptional service to your clients.

Many of my clients will ask, "How much time should I spend marketing?" The answer, while not as simple as most agents would like, is as much time as it takes. Successful professionals develop a "marketing mentality." They are always marketing and providing exceptional service. They view marketing as part of their business and look for subtle opportunities to attract additional clients from those they talk with every day. Always remember, if you wait until you have time to market, it will likely be too late.

The core of client service is found in a client's satisfaction with you, your office staff, and the services provided. If you wonder what your clients think about you, ask them! As an insurance agent, your clients are your greatest source of information on how you're doing in the area of providing superior service as well as how you can improve. If you want to maximize your potential as an insurance agent and are willing to take steps to transform the ways in which you deliver services, consider conducting a client survey. It can provide a detailed roadmap on how to better serve the needs of your existing clients.

Pillar II: 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? Do they hail from a particular area, are a certain age, or have other characteristics in common? Proactively seek to develop new relationships and business opportunities with those individuals and referral sources that meet your A-level criteria.

You never know where clients may turn up (seated next to you on an airplane, at your child's school function, at your church or synagogue). Always be prepared to have a response to the question, "So, what do you do?" Your answer should be clear, concise and offer benefits to the prospective client or referral source asking the question. Make sure you define the value you bring to your clients.

Two of the best tools in business development are listening and asking questions. Use active listening skills to uncover how you can help the person. Asking questions shows you care about them and their needs and gives you an opportunity to gather background information necessary to continue building the relationship.

One of the best strategies for finding, starting and building relationships is to become active in trade or professional associations which attract your prospective referral sources and clients. Just like you, other professionals (lawyers, CPAs, bankers) will refer clients to those they know and trust. Once you've initiated a relationship, remember to nurture it by keeping your referral source in the loop on her/his client and the insurance recommendations you are making.

In many cases, you will find trade associations not only provides a wealth of information on an industry you are interested in, but also attract the referral sources with whom you want to do business.

Pillar III: Increasing Name Recognition and Awareness

People must know who you are in order to utilize your services or refer you. Focus on increasing your personal name recognition in the marketplace through public relations and community involvement. The creation of a personalized, strategic, proactive public relations campaign can lead to increased clients and pique the interest of prospective clients and referral sources. Though often confused with advertising, public relations tactics are often more substantive and are certainly more cost-effective. Public relations techniques, if carefully designed, are meant to educate, inform and influence key audiences through credibility building, image-enhancing third-party media endorsements.

Community involvement should also be part of your overall plan because it allows you to make a contribution of great value to others and also helps you build name recognition in the community. When making the decision to become more involved in your community, make sure you focus on organizations that align with your core values. Making decisions with a conscious nod toward your core values creates a higher level of personal effectiveness and greater overall satisfaction in your community activities.

Pillar IV: Utilizing Targeted and Effective Communications

Know what makes you unique as an insurance agent, then capitalize on your skills and communicate timely, relevant information to your contacts and clients. Whether you are

developing external communications directed at your clients and referral sources or internal communications for your colleagues and staff, it is critical that both the content and its presentation reflect your key messages and present you and your office in a positive and professional light. While face-to-face relationship and trust building are often an agent's most powerful business generating tools, of equal importance is how others perceive you through your written, printed and electronic communications.

When faced with the desire to create effective communications, increase your familiarity with various marketing communication tools and understand when and how to apply them. In addition, develop powerful ways to create and integrate key messages about yourself and your business into all that you do.

Marketing Tips - - by Pillar of Marketing

Keep a copy of the following marketing best practices - - organized by Pillar - - on top of your desk (and top of mind). Commit to implementing just one tactic each day. Use these handy reminders between phone calls, while on hold, or even while waiting for a document or application to print.

Pillar #1: Retaining and Growing Relationships with Existing Clients and Referral Sources

- Good relationships are the key to any successful business, and the telephone is still one of the most personal ways to connect. So 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.
- When you've got a satisfied and happy client, don't be afraid to ask them to refer you to others. Clients don't recognize that you may be looking for additional business. So, ask them for referrals. Timing is everything. Ask some questions to determine the level of your client's satisfaction. If they are appreciative and grateful for your advice and services, they are likely willing to refer you to friends, neighbors and colleagues.
- From time to time, you will inevitably have clients that choose to end their relationship with you. But don't write them off. Instead, contact them to determine what happened; communicate to those on your team (or to the corporate office) to prevent future client defections.
- Though you may think clients know all the services you provide, the average client only knows what you did for them (yesterday, last week, last month, last year.....). Take a minute near the end of the client visit to share a brief "commercial" about your business and the clients you serve. Be brief and conversational. Focus on something you want to promote.
- When a client or referral source makes a new referral, personally thank him or her. They will enjoy your thanks and attention. Chances are they'll also continue to refer others to your office.
- One way to stay top of mind with referral sources is to watch for them 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.
- Networking is another good way to deepen your relationships with current referral sources. Start by contacting two referral sources whose business's or interests may compliment one another and introduce them.

- Do your clients seek you out no matter what insurance needs they have? You may not be able to handle all of their needs, but when they turn to you for advice because they trust you, you have the opportunity to develop a deeper relationship with them. Encourage your clients to come to you for all of their insurance advice.
- Spend time cultivating your “internal” relationships on behalf of your clients. Tell your assistant how much you appreciate his or her role in helping you serve clients

Pillar #2: Attracting New Clients and Developing New Business

- As you begin to develop new ideas to grow your client base, take a moment to note what your best clients have in common (age, gender, geographic area, lines of insurance, from whom they were referred). Focus on attracting the highest caliber clients with insurance needs that utilizes your best and highest levels of expertise.
- Use this information to create a Top Ten list of referral sources you know would be a great fit with your business, your office, and its services. Then, make it a point to call someone on your Top Ten list to meet for lunch each week.
- It's also important to spend time assessing your networking and relationship-building practices. Develop a plan to become more involved in events which attract your “best” clients and referral sources. For example, 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).
- Take a few moments to 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. While you're at it, don't forget to 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

- As you begin the process of building awareness for you and your office, you will soon realize that you aren't alone in your quest for more exposure. That's why it is so important to identify a substantive area of insurance in which you have a high level of expertise. Then, develop an outline for a presentation you could give on the topic. Make sure to identify the ideal target audience for your presentation and contact the appropriate organization with your idea.
- Along the same lines, create an outline for an article you would like to have published and identify where you would like to see the article in print. If you're not sure where to start, review some of the insurance trends published in insurance journals and in the consumer media. This should get some ideas flowing so you can develop your own story pitch for the media. Go ahead and contact a few local business news or community editors to persuade them your story idea has merit.
- Another strategy is to reflect upon where (and how) you are spending your time in the community. 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

- Your professional biography is a dynamic marketing tool that helps clients discover who you are. Review and update this document regularly—enlist your assistant to automatically add accomplishments to keep your biography fresh and relevant.
- Similarly, develop as many substantive examples of representative experience as you can and add them to your biography – for use on your website or to give to prospective clients and referral sources. Include things such as: The Client's Situation (the problem), Your Approach (the solution), and The Result Achieved.
- Keep in mind that client communications don't have to be long or contain flowery speech to be effective. Case in point: send a quick email to a few of your clients to let them know of changes in insurance regulations that may impact them. Keep it short and sweet, but let them know you are looking out for them.
- While it's tempting to get sidetracked with a variety of marketing ideas, don't neglect the "housekeeping" tasks that help your office stay nimble. For example, review your office's website and make a suggestion on enhancing the site. Or, ensure your client contact information is updated in the database; initiate a process for making additions. Finally, look at what you're working on... if an assistant or someone else in your office can do the task for you, delegate, delegate, delegate!

Building strong and enduring client and referral source relationships 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 business—so commit to doing something proactive to market your insurance business each day. Remember, if you wait until you "have time" to market, it will likely be too late! By doing something small each day, you will reap the rewards of having loyal clients and referral sources who will go out of their way to refer others to you.

Components of a Marketing Plan

A marketing plan is a critical component of any business growth strategy. The plan helps to define measurable marketing goals and objectives, to identify target audiences, to develop key messages, and to create a timeline and a tactical implementation plan. In addition, a budget is created to ensure marketing strategies occur on time and within budget. A well written marketing plan will directly reflect and augment the business's overall business plan and growth goals. Marketing plans differ significantly from business to business, reflecting the key points of differentiation found within various companies. However, the main components of a strategic marketing plan are fairly consistent, as outlined below.

Executive Summary

The executive summary of the marketing plan should provide a high-level overview of the information contained in the plan. It will allow someone interested in a summary of the plan, to review the information quickly, without having to read through the whole document. This section should be written last, once the plan is completed.

The Situation Analysis: Where are We Now?

As its title suggests, the situation analysis offers a summary of the current situation – a snapshot of the business today – and should answer the question, "Where are we now?" Let's assume a marketing plan is created for an insurance office. A number of questions need to be answered including: Who are the key clients and how were they attracted to American Family? How many clients are businesses versus individuals? With whom does the agency compete, and in which areas? Does the agency have a business plan? What kind of client feedback have we received? What are the growth goals by office (financial, staff, clients, etc.)? What are the strengths of the agency? What are its weaknesses (be objective)? What are the key marketplace opportunities? What are the demographics of your "ideal" clients (describe them)?

Statement of Marketing Objectives: Where Do We Want to Be?

Once a thorough situation analysis has been completed, the next step is to identify the marketing objectives by asking, "Where do we want to be?" This involves identifying where the agency would like to be in terms of revenue, client base, service offerings, etc. Marketing objectives should be broad sweeping statements of the businesses overall growth and client service objectives and should cover areas including:

- Fully serving existing clients (cross marketing)
- Attracting new clients to the business
- Increasing the business's overall name recognition and awareness in the marketplace
- Ensuring that client needs are being fully addressed by the business (type and level of service, responsiveness, overall client satisfaction)
- Expanding the services offered to clients

Target Audiences

After the marketing objectives have been determined, it is important to summarize who the target audiences are – who you want to "hear" the marketing messages and hire the business. Successful services marketing requires the existence of very targeted messages which will be delivered to a highly targeted group of current or prospective clients or referral sources. For example, target audiences for an insurance agency may include:

- Existing clients
- Small business owners

- Households in close proximity to your office (5 mile radius)
- Members of industry-specific trade associations attracting prospective clients and referral sources
- Other businesses with whom yours can develop strategic alliances
- Referral sources like bankers, lawyers, consultants and CPAs
- Trade/business media

Key Messages

For each target audience, identify key messages (based upon the strategic objectives of the agency). Think about the agency's key points of differentiation from competitors. What makes your agency unique and a better choice than other similar agencies? Key messages should clearly and concisely communicate why your agency should be selected over other agencies offering similar services (your competitors).

Tactical Implementation Plan: How Will We Get There?

Once the plan has been defined, the agency needs to identify which tactics and marketing programs will be pursued to meet the stated marketing and growth goals. This portion of the plan addresses, "How will we get there?" For every category of your plan (i.e., client retention, attracting new clients, client satisfaction, increasing name recognition, etc.), identify cost-effective, results-oriented tactics. Generally, a tactical implementation plan for a professional services business will include activities in areas such as:

- Advertising
- Client Satisfaction and Retention Strategies
- Contact Management and Individual Marketing
- Competitive Market Research
- Corporate Identity and Branding
- Individual Marketing
- Direct Mail (announcements, newsletters, invitations)
- Cross-marketing (selling additional services to existing clients)
- Internet Web Site Planning, Development and Promotion
- Marketing Information Systems (client and contact database management)
- Marketing and Sales Materials and Brochure Development
- Industry Marketing
- Proposals and Presentations for New Business
- Public and Media Relations
- Referral Source Marketing
- Association Marketing Strategies
- Sales Strategy
- Client Seminars
- Trade Shows

Action Plan

Once the tactical implementation plan has been agreed upon, create a detailed timeline to ensure you manage the progress of each marketing tactic pursued. The report will contain a summary of the activity being pursued, person responsible, next steps and deadlines, and most importantly, results generated. You may also want to track the cost of each activity to help measure the results from a cost versus return on investment perspective.

Measuring the ROI of Marketing

Determining return on investment of marketing initiatives is a constant challenge. Not every marketing initiative will directly result in a new client. Therefore, in addition to attracting new

clients, marketing success can be measured by:

| Marketing Strategy | Measurement Techniques |
|--|---|
| Advertising | Circulation; call to action in ad; client survey |
| Client Satisfaction and Retention Strategies | Client survey, interviews, focus groups |
| Competitive Market Research | Current files on competitors and key prospects |
| Corporate Identity and Branding | Client survey; marketplace perception research |
| Individual Marketing | Number of client and prospect meetings per week |
| Direct Mail (announcements, newsletters, invitations) | Attendance at events; readership surveys |
| Cross-marketing | Amount of new business generated with existing clients; clients using multiple services |
| Internet Web Site Planning, Development and Promotion | WebTrends and other statistical web usage software packages |
| Marketing Information Systems (client and contact database management) | Everyone uses the technology; data is current |
| Marketing and Sales Materials | Visual identity more sophisticated than competitors |
| Industry Marketing | New industry-specific clients |
| Proposals and Presentations for New Business | Number of RFP's Received; number won |
| Public and Media Relations | Media impressions; key messages conveyed; number of viewers/readers/listeners; comparative cost for advertising |
| Referral Source Development | Number of new referral source relationships; tracking where business came from |
| Association Marketing Strategies | Creation of a high profile; attend meetings; write and speak for organization |
| Sales Strategy | Tracking target clients; meetings scheduled; proposals created; work attracted |
| Client Seminars | Number of attendees, right type of attendee; follow up efforts; tracking inquiries and new business |
| Trade Shows | Number of attendees overall; opportunity to speak to group; follow up initiatives |

Budget

Any good marketing plan should tie dollars to the strategies being pursued. How much of your overall budget are you willing to allocate to marketing initiatives? There is no magic formula for dollars spent versus marketing success. However, marketing is an investment in the future growth of the business. Generally speaking, the more a business is willing to invest in results-oriented marketing strategies, the more likely it is that those tactics will pay off in additional work from existing clients, attracting new clients to the business, increasing name recognition in the marketplace, ensuring the satisfaction of your current clients, and, most importantly,

increasing total revenue.

In summary, a good marketing plan will address:

- Where we are now (situation analysis)
- Where we'd like to be (objectives, target audiences, key messages)
- How we will get there (tactical plan, action plan – with measurement components – and budget)

The Pros and Cons of Various Marketing Strategies

You're off to the races - you have identified your strategic marketing objectives, determined who your target audiences are, and have nailed the messages that make you unique as an insurance agent/agency. You are now ready to move into the world of tactical implementation. But before you jump in, consider some of the reasons to pursue (or not) a number of different professional services marketing activities.

| Marketing Strategy | Pros | Cons |
|---|--|---|
| Advertising | Builds name recognition; builds brand of company; establishes presence in marketplace | Expensive; clients don't hire service providers because of advertising |
| Client Satisfaction and Retention Strategies | Keeps company focused on its clients; early problem spotting; good will generated; need client's perspective to do business planning | May not like what you find out (which is better than the alternative - the client just leaves) |
| Competitive Market Research | Stay smart on who you're playing with; intelligence on competitors; to spot new trends and opportunities | Must know what you're looking for; must know what to do with information you find; can be way too time consuming if you don't have a pro do the searching |
| Corporate Identity and Branding | Establish brand in marketplace; consistency in visual presentation; helps firm "become known"; must look "on par" or better than competition | Expensive to do it right - hire a top notch graphic designer; invest in high quality printing |
| Individual Marketing | Take control of career; provides focus to marketing efforts; allows you to set goals; ability to be objective and strategic about growth of business | Takes time to implement a marketing plan |
| Direct Mail (announcements, newsletters, invitations) | Keeps company and its products/services in front of current and prospective clients; conveys important information | Cost of graphic designer, copywriter, printing, postage, distribution; may not be as effective as electronic communications |
| Cross-marketing | 70% of next year's revenue will come from current clients; start with clients who already use your business; | Takes cooperation between groups, business, divisions; can cause competition and turf battles; |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | satisfied clients are easier to expand than new clients are to attract | compensation system may not reward |
| Internet Web Site Planning, Development and Promotion | It's a must have in today's business environment; more cost effective and timely than printed materials; easily updated with new information; every reason to have one | Involves making an investment to "do it right" for website planning, design, technical development, copywriting, maintenance, hosting, tracking visitor logs - and must promote the site to current and prospective clients! |
| Marketing Information Systems (client and contact database management) | MUST have accurate, current information on current and prospective clients and referral sources; enables targeted (timely) communications | Investment in the "right" contact management or database software for your business; must invest in keeping the data current; learning curve to get everyone onboard |
| Marketing and Sales Materials | For a "leave behind" after a sales call; to show visual identity of equal or greater quality than competitors; to convey important information on the company | Become outdated quickly; people today prefer web-based communications; costly to design, write, print and distribute |
| Industry Marketing | Leverages past experience in industry; clients more likely to hire you if a perception of expertise of their industry exists; very targeted initiative; creates entrée to write and speak for organization; provides targeted follow up opportunities | Must make a time commitment to becoming active in an industry association; need to become a high profile member for industry marketing to be most effective; if national, you must cover travel cost to attend conferences |
| Proposals and Presentations for New Business | To win new business!; to show focus on client; to show how you think; to convey understanding of client needs and approach to meeting needs first (before bios and company information); to reinforce firm identity; allows creativity in pricing options | It takes time to go above and beyond and not use the cookie cutter approach; requires creativity in how to price products or services - not the same old approach |
| Public and Media Relations | Cost effective; more credible than advertising; Extremely strong way to build name recognition and awareness; provides strong content for website, proposals, marketing materials, lobby reading | Must be done consistently and professionally; takes time to meet with reporters or create story pitches; MUST be responsive to reporters and dedicate the time to be available |
| Referral Source Development | Entrée to hundreds of clients; good networking; opportunity to pull a team of providers together for one group or industry; mutually beneficial | Takes time; risky if you make a referral who bombs with a client; trust between professionals develops over time |
| Association Marketing Strategies | Captive group of prospective clients and/or referral sources; opportunities to write and speak; perception of the tie to the group making you better choice to work with; opportunity to let your knowledge shine! | Time and money involved with meeting attendance, travel to national conferences, willingness to follow up and make things happen (rather than hoping because your name is in the directory that clients |

| | | |
|-----------------|---|--|
| | | will be calling you) |
| Sales Strategy | Must have sales strategy to stay in business; must be strategic about who you approach; to meet your business growth goals | Need confidence; ability to consistently follow up; ability to handle rejection; takes time, patience and faith |
| Client Seminars | Credibility with clients; highlight particular service, product or area of expertise; ability to partner with referral sources; makes you look smart! | Logistics intensive, requires tenacious follow up for success |
| Trade Shows | May provide a way to reach a large target audience; always try for a speaking gig; opportunity to network with others in your industry; may actually result in sales! | Very time intensive; mired in with your competitors; expensive to print materials; time consuming to follow up; forced to offer a gimmicky take-away |

Tips for Growing your Business in a Tight Economy

By
Terrie Wheeler, MBC, President
Professional Services Marketing, Inc.

Tip #1- Keep Your Eye on the Ball.

Develop a strategy for your business that allows you to set realistic goals – and to support those goals with cost-effective marketing and communications strategies. We have all heard the adages, “If you fail to plan, you plan to fail” and “It is better to attempt great things and fail than to attempt nothing at all and succeed.” These statements reinforce the importance of knowing where your business is going – to plan for the future. Take the opportunity to step back from the day-to-day operations of your business and reassess what has made you successful to date. Analyze your business by taking an in-depth look at your previous year’s revenue. How does your revenue compare to past years? From where did your revenue come? What services are most profitable for you? What industries and individuals are you serving?

Tip #2 – Know the Criteria for your “Ideal” Client.

When building a services business it is important to attract the right kind of clients. Think for a moment about your very best clients. Now think of clients you wish you weren’t working with. Create a list of attributes of your best clients. What characteristics do they have in common? How were they attracted to you? Why do you like working with them over other clients? Make it a goal to grow your business by selectively adding clients you know are a good fit.

Tip #3 - Know How You Got Here in the First Place.

What made you successful when you started your business or went into practice? If you woke up tomorrow and had no clients, what would you do first? Now is the time to refocus your efforts on what has worked for you in the past. Your future success is dependent upon being able to replicate what made you successful when you started your practice or business.

Tip # 4 - Target Your Audience and Your Message.

It is highly likely your marketing strategy will be focused toward a number of target audiences – prospective client groups, referral sources, industry sectors, individual consumers. Make sure your messages are uniquely targeted to the audiences you seek to reach and that you are responsive to the needs of each group.

Tip #5 - Show Them, Don’t Tell Them!

Clients want to see you have done what they need. Focus on providing representative examples of your expertise. Don’t just create a list of services – show prospective clients that you have the breadth and depth required to work with them based largely on your past experience. Create case studies of your best work that summarize each client’s situation, your approach to the problem, and the solution. Results sell!

Tip #6 - Focus on Relationship Building.

If you are in a service business, the vast majority of your clients have likely come from referrals. Past clients, other professionals, industry associations, friends, family, and business associates have all contributed to your current success. Make a list of everyone you want to reconnect with and promise yourself that you will call a few people each week – just say “hello,” check in, and see how they are doing. Meet for breakfast, coffee, or lunch. Staying connected to the great people you have met throughout your career will lead to opportunities you may never have imagined.

Tip #7 - Reinvigorate Your Sales Strategy.

Put a process in place to track your sales progress based on where you are with each contact. Track the logical flow of developing new business. Identify your A-level prospective clients and referral sources, track initial communications, summarize your contact's need, summarize your solution, propose and present your solution, follow up, and discuss premiums. Track both the opportunities you win as well as those you don't. Remember to stay in touch with your A-level contacts.

Tip #8 - Be a Stickler for Responsiveness.

If a client or contact calls you, call them back. If they send you an email, respond – the same day. Even if you have no news to report, call them back. It continues to amaze me how many service providers do not return their phone calls and emails.

Tip #9 - Exceed Client Expectations.

When you exceed client expectations, not just meet them, their view of you as a service provider is remembered...especially when they are evaluating their continued relationship with you and your firm, as well as keeping you top of mind for making referrals to.

Tip #10 - Focus on the Media.

When the economy is tight, there is no better way to expand name recognition and awareness of your firm than to focus on strategic public relations. Develop a public relations plan that will enable your firm to communicate with the media on a regular basis, position members of your firm as subject-matter experts, help you pitch articles to targeted publications and to communicate newsworthy events at your firm. For increasing name recognition, there is no better tool than a targeted strategic public relations effort.

Tip #11 - Communicate with Your Clients.

Keep your clients in the loop on the work you are doing for them. Let clients know what changes and service enhancements have been made at your firm to better serve their needs. Send a newsletter, an email communication, direct them to your website, or call your clients personally. However you choose to do it, stay in touch with your clients on a consistent basis.

Tip #12 - When in Doubt, Ask Your Clients.

Before moving forward on a new marketing campaign, expanding into another market, or launching a new service, consult with your clients. Many services firms have benefited from a conducting client interviews, satisfaction surveys, or focus groups..

YOUR PERSONAL MARKETING COACH

Terrie S. Wheeler, MBC, President

Depth of Experience, Excellence in Service

Terrie founded Professional Services Marketing, Inc. (PSM) in 1996 - a consulting firm dedicated exclusively to working with professional services firms and the individuals within those firms. Terrie has over 20 years of business planning and marketing experience at all levels including firm-wide, regional office, business group, industry, and individual marketing initiatives. Since founding the company, Terrie has helped **scores of services firms** develop and implement strategic business and marketing plans.



Terrie and her 20-member implementation team, walk clients through the strategic business and marketing planning process into implementation, which includes:

- Retaining and growing relationships with existing clients
- New business development
- Targeted and effective communications
- Increasing name recognition and awareness in the marketplace

Helping Individual Professionals Market

Terrie has also done extensive work developing and implementing marketing strategies for individuals in services firms. PSM offers two unique programs to assist individuals in the assessment, planning and implementation of results-oriented marketing strategies:

- **Your Personal Marketing Coach** program offers one-on-one personal coaching to individual professionals. The program is designed to help clients build profitable and rewarding books of business using a proven and effective methodology founded on best practices in professional services marketing
- www.MarketYourLawPractice.com - PSM has launched a unique web-based service for its legal industry clients called www.MarketYourLawPractice.com. Through this website, individual coaching clients and subscribers to the service can access hundreds of tools, tips, checklists, templates and other practical information to design, develop and implement a marketing plan

Other Professional Experience

Prior to founding Professional Services Marketing in 1996, Terrie directed the marketing and client services function at three major Twin Cities law firms - Maslon Edelman Borman & Brand, Larkin Hoffman Daly & Lindgren, Ltd., and Popham Haik Schnobrich & Kaufman. In addition, Terrie served as director of marketing for a national litigation support services firm and as director of client services for a public affairs consulting firm.

Speaking Engagements - Terrie is a **frequent presenter** on topics related to professional services marketing and has trained for business groups, educational institutions, and professional services firms in Minnesota and throughout the country. Terrie has also served as a guest speaker for undergraduate and graduate students at the University of St. Thomas, the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management, Bethel College, Concordia University, and North Hennepin Community College. Many of Terrie's training sessions have received college or continuing legal education credits. In addition, Terrie **has published a number of articles** and been featured in the business press.

Education - Terrie holds a Master of Arts degree, magna cum laude, from the Graduate School of Business (MBC), University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota, where she also earned graduate-level certification in public and media relations. Terrie completed her bachelor of arts, magna cum laude, in Organizational Management and Communications, from Concordia University in Saint Paul, Minnesota.

Giving Back to the Community - Terrie prides herself on the active role she has taken as a business and community volunteer. Find out more about the organizations to which Terrie has dedicated herself.