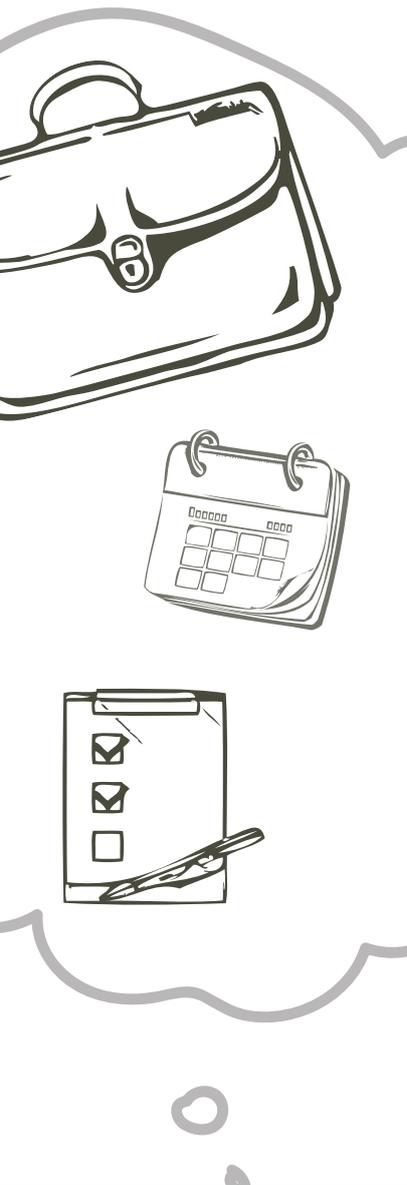


Marketing Your Law Practice: Low Cost High Impact Strategies That Work! Part II

By Terrie S. Wheeler, MBC



In early 2015, I wrote a series about your 2015 marketing plan, just as a new year was upon us and we were all feeling energized and ready to tackle new goals and resolutions. Now, with a couple of months under our belts, it is time to revisit our goals, both personal and professional, and to make sure we are making genuine progress against our stated objectives. Last month, I shared some smart tips for implementing your marketing plan using low cost, high impact strategies that are not far removed from the activities you are already doing. In this article, I offer some additional bright ideas that should take less time, money and effort than you might think and still have a real and lasting impact on the long-term growth of your practice. At the end of each section, look for ideas that you can start now (meaning today!) to continue the momentum you have started this year in better marketing your practice.

Bright Idea! Trade Association Involvement

Trade associations are generally ripe with both prospective clients and/or referral sources that can help you reach your business growth objectives. Before you pick this low-hanging fruit, however, here are a few tips:

- **Research before you join** – Ask your clients and referral sources what organizations they are involved in. Attend a couple of meetings before you join.
- **Get known** – Attend as many meetings as you can. If you can't make the commitment to attend the meetings, don't join right now.
- **Extend your services** – Offer to write for the organization's publication and speak at monthly meetings on topics of interest to members.
- **Follow up with members** – When you find someone you would like to build a relationship with, add them to your sales pipeline (keep reading). Ask them to coffee to learn more about them. Ask great questions. Determine action steps and commit to following up.

A short note related to bar associations: use your bar association(s) to build relationships with your colleagues and to pursue your own professional development through CLE offerings. Over time, you

will likely build solid relationships with other lawyers leading to friendships and referrals.

Start Now: Offer to write a column answering common legal questions members have; interview a few members you hand-pick for content for your column (and great networking with the members you most want to meet!).

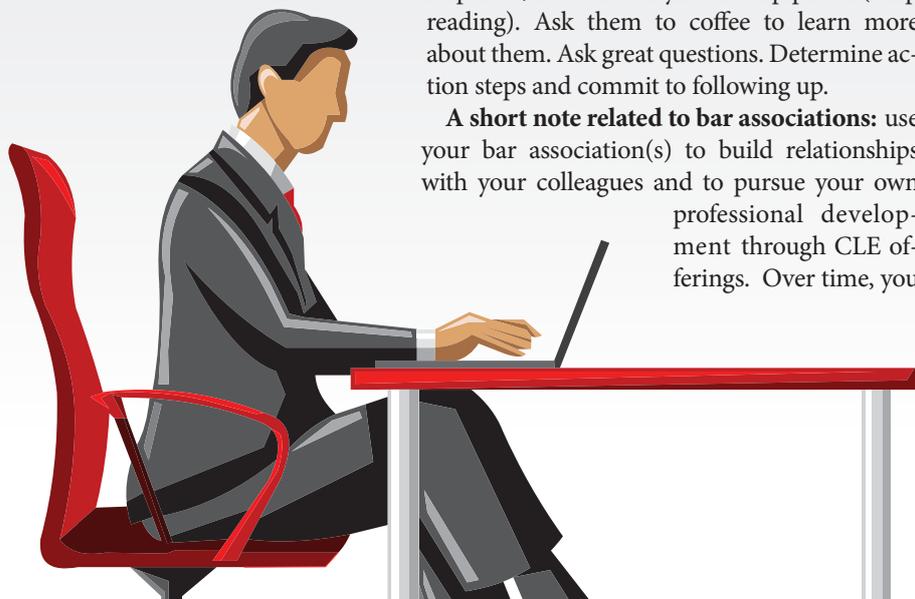
Bright Idea! Community Involvement

In addition to your pro bono commitments, consider becoming a nonprofit board member or volunteering in your community. Your clients and referral sources want to see that you are focused on more than just billable hours. Make sure the organization you become active in has a mission you deeply support and believe in. If it doesn't, you will lose interest. If you are an exceptional board member or volunteer (prepared, attends meetings, asks great questions, follows through on commitments), you will undoubtedly be perceived as an excellent lawyer.

Start Now: Make a list of three organizations you are interested in serving. Schedule time on your calendar to investigate the board appointment process online and follow up with your top choice.

Bright Idea! Run Your Practice Like A Business

Lawyers do not learn how to run a business in law school. Running your law practice like a business involves developing specific processes for everything you do and a commitment to the profitability of your firm. Read this great book by entrepreneurial guru, Michael Gerber, "The E-Myth Attorney: Why Most Legal Practices Don't Work and What to Do About It." This is one of the best books available on how to run your law practice.



Bright Idea! Work On Your Sales Pipeline

Once you accept that in addition to being a lawyer who sells sophisticated legal services, you are also a salesperson, the job of sales becomes less daunting. As such, we encourage you to create a sales pipeline of your best current clients, prospective clients and referral sources and make a point of reaching out to these contacts throughout the year. Add reminders to your calendar to follow up with each person. Track when you last saw the person, opportunities you see, next steps and the date you plan to follow up. You also want to use your sales pipeline to track current and projected revenue.

For every task and function at the firm, (developing leads, answering the phone, greeting clients, filing documents, hiring new staff, conflict checking, opening new files, greeting visitors, client intake, case strategy) record your process and create a process manual.

Start Now: Put on your salesman's hat and do your research. Before you meet with a contact, spend 10 minutes reviewing their website, biography and LinkedIn profile. Do a Google search on the person and see what interesting facts you can find.

Bright Idea: Developing Your Base Referral Sources

As a lawyer, you rely on referrals from current and past clients, as well as from other lawyers. Building your base of referral sources is a one-to-many strategy. A strong relationship with one person could lead to many new clients in the future. So how do you attract more A-level referral sources? Start with an analysis of your current clients over the past two years. For each client, identify who referred them to the firm. What do the referral sources have in common? Maybe they are bankers, CPAs, social workers, therapists. Whatever the mix, commit yourself to meeting more people like your best referral sources. Offer something of value to prospective referral sources.

Remember the key to building great referral relationships is to ensure they are mutually beneficial. Lawyers have a reputation of asking for referrals but not giving very many. Commit to developing a few really great referral sources, then do everything you can to also refer business back to them.

Start Now: Develop a system to track referrals you make, and those you receive. Develop a rating system based on the professional's substantive knowledge and past successes before you make a referral.



Terrie Wheeler is the founder and president of Professional Services Marketing, LLC (PSM). Terrie has spent the last 25 years as an in-house marketing director, marketing consultant and marketing coach to lawyers and law firms. She currently teaches marketing and client service at three Midwestern law schools and is a Minnesota Supreme Court-appointed member of the Lawyers Board of Professional Responsibility, where she serves on the executive committee. You can attend PSM's free marketing motivation webinars at www.PSM-Marketing.com or contact Terrie at twheeler@psm-marketing.com.

Fraud Investigations | Expert Witness Services Seminars and Public Speaking

IDENTITY THEFT



Robert K. Minniti

CPA, CFE, Cr.FA, CVA, CFF, CGMA, MBA

fraud



Minniti.cpa@cox.net | www.minniticpa.com | (602) 354-2900 | 777 E Thomas Road, Suite 130, Phoenix, AZ 85014