

# Why Do Lawyers Procrastinate?

## Get back in the game

By Terrie S. Wheeler, MBC

**T**he kids are in school, leaves are turning and it is now time to turn your attention back to your law practice and its continued growth.

Figuring out how to retain clients, attract new ones, effectively communicate, and build name recognition can be an onerous task at best, and one which is thoroughly procrastinated at worst. I believe lawyers procrastinate on marketing for several reasons:

- Most lawyers didn't go to law school to be salespeople;
- Marketing pulls many lawyers out of their comfort zones;
- Many lawyers are more introverted than extroverted (gaining energy from inward pursuits versus from interactions with people);
- Most lawyers did not learn marketing strategies in college or law school;
- On the inside, lawyers hope word of their expertise and knowledge will spread across the galaxy, and that clients will call (the "If I build it, they will come" approach);
- They are just too darn busy cranking out client work to focus on sales and marketing;
- They are the fortunate benefactor of a senior partner providing more work than one human could ever do in a year; and,
- Marketing requires a long-term approach to relationship building; lawyers want to see results *now!*

I often remind our clients that if they wait until they have *time* to market, it will likely be too late. It takes years to build and nurture the relationships that will ultimately become your best clients and referral sources. So, why do so many lawyers put off until tomorrow what they should be doing today? How can we boil down marketing best

practices into easy, bite-sized, manageable tasks so the process isn't so daunting? Here are 10 things you can do today — OK this week — that will help you weave marketing into the very fabric of your practice because marketing is not just something to do if and when you have the time:

1. **Call or visit your best clients** just to talk about how their business is doing in this economy and to brainstorm ideas. Let them know you are not billing for your time.
2. **Set up a coffee meeting** with one of your best referral sources (a banker, CPA, consultant, therapist, consultant) *just* to reconnect and hear more about how they're doing.
3. **Update your professional biography** since it's likely too long since the last update. Make sure you add presentations you have given, articles you have written, new volunteer positions, and update the services you offer clients.
4. **Create some representative experience** to augment your professional biography (client type, client issue, your approach/solution, the result). Clients want to see that you have done what they need.
5. **Project your revenue** by creating a simple list of current clients and what you project they will generate in revenue this year. Figure out how many cases or transactions will carry into next year and estimate how much revenue you already have "on the books." Based on your revenue goal, subtract current client projected revenue from your total revenue goal to determine just how much new business you need to develop.
6. **Use LinkedIn to reconnect with business colleagues** so you can research exactly what they've been up to, career moves, contacts they have, and most importantly, how you

# imate Marketing? me TODAY!

might be able to help them. (see last month's article on How to Use LinkedIn to Develop New Business).

7. **Outline an article** you could have published which would showcase your expertise, and be read by prospective clients and referral sources (note: don't write the whole article. Start with an outline and present this to your targeted list of editors).
8. **Take a referral source to lunch** and discuss what's going on in their business. Consider conducting a seminar for clients, or co-authoring an article together. The benefit? Access to one another's clients.
9. **Join a trade or professional association** that attracts prospective clients and referral sources and make a commitment to attend each monthly meeting (also offer to write and speak).
10. **Create your sales pipeline** to track those in your network with whom you have true sales and marketing potential. Then, hold yourself accountable to following up and making the calls.

Procrastination is very common among perfectionists, and many lawyers are high achieving individuals prone to perfectionism. What is most important in your marketing effort is that you integrate marketing into what you do each day versus waiting until you have time to market. Block out 30 minutes or one hour each day to work on the 10 ideas above or other activities you are already pursuing.

In conclusion, there was an iconic book written by Brian Tracey in 2007, "Eat That Frog." The book covers specific ways to stop procrastinating and get more done in less time. The book has helped many of our clients overcome procrastination and we think it worth reading.



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