

# An Eight-Step Process

to Develop Your Marketing Plan in

# 2017

By Terrie S. Wheeler, MBC



**B**elieve it or not, you learned the process of how to develop a marketing plan in law school. Let me explain. Developing a marketing plan is just like conducting the discovery upon which you create the case strategy, or pursuing due diligence before you create deal points for an acquisition.

So, let's get back to basics. In order to motivate lawyers to develop, then implement a marketing plan, I needed to streamline a cumbersome process and take the pain out of marketing planning. By boiling the process down to eight steps, my hope is that you will dedicate some of that post-holiday downtime to plotting your future.

**Step 1: Your Contacts** – Identify the top 10 contacts you have in *each* of the following categories. These individuals will represent 20 percent of your contacts, with whom you will spend 80 percent of your marketing time:

- Past Clients.
- Current Clients.
- Prospective Clients.
- Referral Sources (both to you and from you).

**Step 2: A-Level Criteria** – Make a list of the traits and attributes your best clients have in common. Sometimes it helps to think of challenging relationships that frustrate you and record the opposite behaviors. Then repeat the process for your referral sources:

- Traits of my Best Clients.
- Traits of my Best Referral Sources.

**Step 3: Know What Makes You Unique** – Step back and record your answers to the following questions:

- Why do my clients hire me?
- What type of feedback do I receive from satisfied clients?
- What do I want my clients to say about me when they refer me?
- What expertise do I have that most lawyers don't?

**Step 4: To Whom Are You Marketing?**

– Take a moment to define your target audiences. Identify specific types of clients, referral sources or industry groups most likely to value your knowledge. Once you know your target audiences, proactively plan to consistently get in front of these groups:

- Describe an industry many of your clients belong to.
- Based on past clients, what types of companies would you like to attract?
- From what group of professionals or others do you receive a steady stream of referrals?
- What type of lawyers refer business to you (by practice area)?
- What news reporters and blogs cover your area(s) of law?

**Step 5: What Should They Know About You?**

– Clients need specifics. They need to know that you have done what they need. This step involves creating key messages that reflect the results of Step 3. Take time to create representative experience for the work you would most like to replicate. Set a goal to have three or four pieces of representative experience on your biography for *each* of your key practice areas:

- Type of client.
- Client's issue.
- Your approach.
- Result.

**Step 6: Setting Your Intentions for 2017**

– Creating objectives – specific and measurable goals you would like to achieve – can flummox even the brightest lawyer. Take the following format and use it for *each* objective you set under the broad categories

of retaining and growing existing relationships, developing new business, increasing your name recognition, and communicating with your target audiences:

- Specifically, what do you want to achieve?
- By when do you want to accomplish this?
- How will you measure the results?
- How much of your time will it take?
- How much money will it cost?

### Step 7: Create Your Real Business Development Goal

– Lawyers need to join other business owners and forecast future revenue. It's a simple process that will provide a solid number to shoot for. Create a spreadsheet that includes a statement of your total revenue goal, for example, \$500,000. Then create columns for:

- Client Name – Create a list of all your current clients.
- 2016 Revenue – Record the revenue you will generate with each client in 2016 (for example, \$425,000).
- 2017 Projected Revenue – Take an educated guess on what you will earn from each of your current clients next year (for example, \$300,000).
- New Business Goal – Calculate your “real” 2017 revenue goal (total goal minus projected revenue = \$200,000 in new business you will need to generate next year).

**Step 8: Commit to Taking Action** – This is where the proverbial rubber meets the road. Follow this format for *every* objective you set in Step 6:

- How committed are you to achieving this objective (extremely, very, somewhat, not)?
- What action will you take to meet this objective?
- What else can you do to take action on your objective?
- Who can support you in meeting your objective?

Lawyers who have a written plan are 50 percent more likely to achieve their goals. Your plan is your roadmap for the year. So, plot your course and commit to making it happen. As my favorite philosopher said, “Do or do not, there is no try,” Yoda, Grand Master of the Jedi Order.



Terrie S. Wheeler, MBC, is the founder and president of Professional Services Marketing LLC. She works with her legal industry clients to help them create low cost, high impact marketing plans, and to provide the motivation and support necessary to achieve results. Terrie also serves as vice chair of the MN Lawyers Professional Responsibility Board. You can reach Terrie at (320) 358-1000 or [Terrie@psm-marketing.com](mailto:Terrie@psm-marketing.com).



## What would you do with more time?

 **ClientPay**  
[clientpay.com/time](http://clientpay.com/time)

**SEARCHING FOR OUR NEXT**  
**ATTORNEY OF THE MONTH**  
**DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE**  
**TO NOMINATE?**



Submit Nominations at  
[www.AttorneyAtLawMagazine.com/Nominate/](http://www.AttorneyAtLawMagazine.com/Nominate/)