

HOW SMART MARKETING WILL MAKE YOUR SALES EFFORTS EASIER



By Terrie S. Wheeler, MBC

Nearly every lawyer I have ever worked with agrees that word-of-mouth referrals from others are the driving force behind their success. There truly is a symbiotic relationship between your marketing and sales efforts. Remember that marketing is about the messages you convey to the world, and sales is about you, sitting one-on-one, with a prospective client or referral source and asking great questions.

THE CASE FOR MARKETING

Marketing is a little more behind the scenes and includes everything you do to keep your name recognition high. Marketing includes writing and promoting blog posts, posting and engaging on social media, writing articles, speaking at events, getting covered in the press, sending targeted e-communications, being involved in trade and professional associations, having an awesome website, and having strong SEO in place to drive visitors to your site.

Marketing is about the messages you consistently push out into the marketplace. It softens the marketplace to better receive your sales efforts.

SALES IS A CONTACT SPORT

Your sales efforts, on the other hand, are you – out there in the marketplace – meeting with people. Because you have done an excellent job with your marketing, people know who you are. They are familiar with your firm and your practice because you have stayed top-of-mind using the marketing tactics above. Sales is about asking great questions, showing the person in front of you that you are smart, well-read – a true adviser – and that you ask pointed, well-researched questions about them! Your contact has no choice but to be impressed by you and the thoroughness with which you prepared for the meeting.

Consider the following marketing and sales practices that will help you close deals with new clients and build relationships with new referral sources.

MARKETING THAT WORKS

It matters not if you are in a large firm, small firm, or are a solo practitioner. Consider actively pursuing the following.

Bloggng: Write short and concise posts with a specific audience in mind. Write about something they will be interested in; something that affects them significantly.

Blog Promotion: Once your blog is posted, promote it on your LinkedIn profile, and your social company pages. Feature it in an upcoming e-communication. Use it as a “writing sample” for pitching reporters and editors of print publications.

Social Media Posting and Engagement: Post about topics of interest to your contacts like upcoming presentations you will be delivering, or link to stories in major news publications. Congratulate people on their promotions or work anniversaries.

Your Website Biography: Make it rock with everything fabulous about you – your blog posts, articles published, representative experience, press coverage, a summary of your practice, and testimonials from satisfied clients. Make your bio a mini website just for you. Remember that 80 percent of law firm website visitors access biographies.

Search Engine Optimization: All I will say here is that SEO is not just about pay-per-click advertising, Google retargeting, or boosting Facebook posts. These

are all paid functions. They all fall into the category of advertising. I am talking about increasing your *organic* rankings on the major search engines like Google, Bing and Yahoo.

BEST SALES PRACTICES

Your marketing is now a smooth oiled machine. People know you because you have mastered and consistently pursue the activities above. Now, where the rubber meets the road. This is you, connecting one-on-one with prospects and referral sources. Set a goal of building relationships only with people you genuinely like, trust and respect. Please consider the following sales best practices.

Research: For your most important meetings, spend time researching the person and their firm. Google them. Review their website; particularly the news and updates section. Review the person’s biography, LinkedIn profile and blog posts. What are you looking for? Things you both have in common. Remember, in many cases this is what people who meet with you are also doing!

Ask Great Questions and Take Notes: Based on your research, come up with questions you can ask. Questions that will show you wouldn’t dream of meeting with them without doing your pre-meeting preparations. Taking notes shows that you are genuinely interested in what you are learning from them.

Track your Efforts and Follow Up: Treat your relationships as you would an important client. Always calendar action items and next steps or you will forget them. PSM uses a contact action plan to help our clients manage their contacts. Send me an email, if you would like a template you can use.

Engage Personally: Life isn’t just about business. Some of the most rewarding relationships you will build happen when you also talk about your families, upcoming vacations, and

other personal tid bits. This is when your true personality shines through!

Joint Marketing Opportunities: Make suggestions to your best referral sources that the two of you conduct a joint webinar, co-author an article, present at a CLE or association event, or write for one another’s blogs.

The most important concept here is that a successful practice requires both marketing (messages) and sales (questions) and remember that marketing without sales is way too expensive, and sales without marketing is just too hard because no one will know who you are. Make sure your growth efforts include both a strong marketing approach followed up by your personal and targeted sales efforts.



Terrie S. Wheeler, MBC, is the founder and president of Professional Services Marketing LLC. Terrie works with her legal industry clients to develop strategic marketing and sales plans. Terrie also serves as vice chair of the MN Lawyers Board of Professional Responsibility, and works with lawyers and law firms across the country. You can reach Terrie at (320) 358-1000 or TWheeler@psm-marketing.com.

