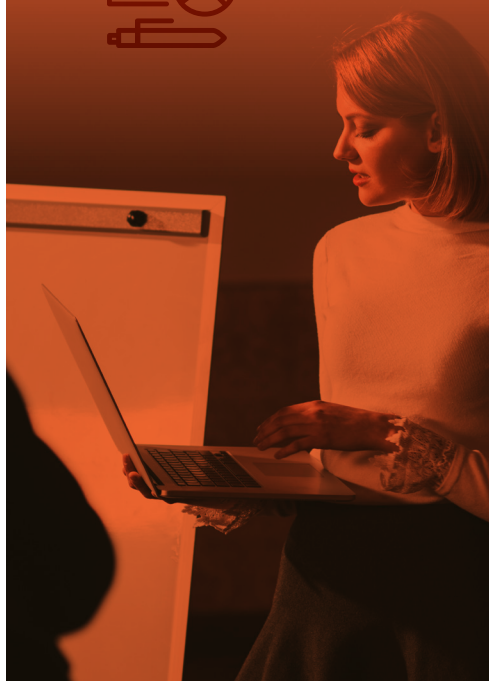


# NEW LAWYERS: YOUR MARKETING TOOLKIT!

BY TERRIE S. WHEELER, MBC



Graduating from law school is an exciting time in your life. You have studied hard, read more than you thought you could, and reached your goal – passing the bar exam! This article is geared toward those of you who choose to go into private practice at a law firm. A future article will discuss tips to start your own practice out of law school.

The following tips and suggestions are designed to help you ease into developing clients of your own. It won't happen overnight. While law schools provide the intellectual and decision-making framework that will serve you through your career, you will need to dedicate law school-level study time to turning the theories you learned in law school into how to be successful in private practice. Most law schools do not teach you to run a business, attract clients, develop referral sources, and apply ethical best practices to your marketing efforts. While you will not be able to land large corporate clients or attract big litigation matters as a newly minted lawyer, there are many things you CAN do to begin the process of becoming a rainmaker.

**Stay in Touch With Your Classmates:** When I talk with successful lawyers they can generally trace some of their best relationships and referral sources back to law school. Make sure you stay connected to the people you really liked and bonded with in law school. Remember that many of them will take other legal positions and can develop into great referral sources. It's just too easy to fall into "the grind" of being a new lawyer, telling yourself you are too busy to socialize. Yes, you're working hard, but find a balance so your life isn't all work and no play.

**Update your LinkedIn Profile:** Make sure you visit your LinkedIn profile often to make sure it reflects all your accomplishments. LinkedIn is the professional version of Facebook, so make sure you select personal friends you also want to add to your professional network and send them connection requests. Also, make sure your headline specifically references your practice areas, so you can be found in searches.

**Practice Client Service on the Partners:** Believe it or not, the senior lawyers at your firm will be judging your every move. They are consistently looking to validate their decision to have hired you. They will notice when you come in, when you leave, the quality of your writing, how well you catch on, take criticism, get along with others, and more. You have one chance to make these career-changing first impressions. Practice your client service skills on partners by asking for

deadlines, seeking feedback, requesting guidance on the time a given task should take, exceeding expectations, and showing you are a valuable team player and an extremely hard worker. Remember the partners in the firm are judging you on what they were judged on as young associates. Acknowledge the first couple years of practice will require you to show the firm you've got what it takes to become a partner.

**Seek a Mentor:** If your firm has a mentorship program – great! Many firms have mentorship programs in name only, because the partners are so busy serving clients, they don't proactively reach out to mentor newer lawyers. This means you must take the initiative. Look at the partners at your firm – those you most respect and would like to emulate. You will choose substantive legal mentors to help you learn the complexities of your practice, as well as mentors who will help guide your growth and development as a lawyer. But you can't wait around for a partner to approach you – you must be the instigator of your own mentorship experience.

**Stay Socially Active:** I know how busy you will be as a new lawyer. But remember, in most cases, you set the boundaries around the time you spend in the office. Don't let your relationships go stale. Make a point at least once a month go get together with your personal and professional friends. These relationships will continue to be important in the future as you grow your practice.

**Market the Firm:** As a new lawyer you need to learn the substance of your practice area(s), which in most cases, requires at least two to three years. While you are in the "new lawyer" category, another way in which to practice your marketing skills is to market the services of your colleagues and partners. Your career will blossom if you are able to use your contacts to generate business for the firm.

**Keep your Biography Current:** Your website biography will become one of your best marketing tools. Over 80%

of website visitors will go to the "Our Team" page to seek you out. You want to make sure your biography reflects your growing list of accomplishments, published articles, speaking engagements, blog posts, and representative experience.

**Start Writing Blogs:** If your firm has a blog, commit to contributing to the blog on a regular basis. Remember that in most cases, law firm blogs are written for non-lawyers. If you conduct research for a partner on an interesting topic, turn that research into a 500-600 word blog post.

**Join the New Lawyers Section of your State Bar:** As mentioned earlier, one of your best referral sources can be other lawyers. Make sure you focus on building relationships within your state, county or local bar associations with other lawyers who have graduated in the past five to seven years. These people are your professional colleagues and need to be nurtured.

It's important to set your expectations at the beginning of your career as a lawyer. Remember how important it is to build your base of experience so that someday you will have credentials to impress a prospective client, but that this knowledge gathering takes time. Do what's in your control as a new lawyer and practice delivering exceptional services to the partners in your firm. Don't lose touch with your friends from law school, but also extend yourself to build new relationships with other new lawyers through your bar association activities. Remember that you're in it for the long haul and that if you consistently implement the ideas above, you will be successful.



**TERRIE S. WHEELER HAS WORKED WITH LAWYERS AT EVERY LEVEL FOR OVER 25 YEARS. SHE EARNED A MASTER'S DEGREE IN BUSINESS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS AND TEACHES MARKETING AND CLIENT DEVELOPMENT SKILLS AT TWO MINNESOTA LAW SCHOOLS. TERRIE IS A MONTHLY COLUMNIST FOR ATTORNEY AT LAW MAGAZINE AND ALSO PRODUCES A COLUMN FOR THE ABA'S SMALL FIRM AND SOLO SECTION. YOU CAN REACH TERRIE THROUGH HER WEBSITE, WWW.PSM-MARKETING.COM.**

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- Return to work programs
- Infections of vestibular system
- Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo
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- History of one or more falls
- Concussions
- Orthopedic problems
- Diabetic neuropathy
- Multiple Sclerosis
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- Peripheral neuropathy

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