



# SEVEN SECRETS OF A SUCCESSFUL MARKETING STRATEGY

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**How do I make sure my marketing strategy works, when I know that only 75% of strategies are ever successfully implemented?**

## **Secret 1: Involve everybody in the implementation of the strategy**

Personal participation by each individual in the firm, in the implementation of a marketing strategy will increase the likelihood of its success. Encourage participation, involvement and sense of ownership by every person in the firm, in its future profile raising and successful marketing.

Ownership of your marketing strategy should permeate every person's job. It is important to communicate to everybody the wide range and nature of marketing. It starts with the way in which an initial phone call is answered by your reception or switchboard; to the welcome given in reception; to billing; to the quality of the law and the way in which your legal services are provided.

Ownership incorporates all levels of seniority. For the successful implementation of the strategy everybody in the firm has a responsibility which they know and understand: from the senior partner, managing partner, through all layers of seniority of lawyers, trainees and paralegals.

## **Secret 2: Make things as easy as possible for yourselves**

Effective marketing is about building relationships with people over the long term. Therefore, to make it as easy as possible for yourselves, work with those with whom you have existing relationships. Build on those, which will include current clients, former clients and dormant

clients as well as current and dormant contacts. This makes it easier for you, because they will have already heard about you and you are refreshing the relationships you already have, rather than trying to generate new ones.

Target your marketing and personalise your marketing according to the strength of those current and past relationships. Take these into account in all communications and development of the relationship.

“As you may know, ...” is a useful phrase if you are uncertain about the depth of the relationship, and whether it is a long-term in-depth relationship or a more recent one. Using this phrase when giving your market information, means that those who do know can nod their heads and say ‘yes’ and those who don’t, may feel pleased that you told them in such a tactful way.

Establishing a new profile and starting to market to people who have not heard of you is difficult, time-consuming and costly. Therefore, grade and categorise all your contacts, clients, referrers and intermediaries according to the length of time you have known them. Imagine that your marketing is like a drip of water into a very still pond, the greatest impact you will have are those at the centre of the ripples and the effectiveness will decrease as the ripples spread out over the pond.

### **Secret 3: Set SMART targets for all activities and results**

**S – Simple; M – Measurable; A – Achievable; R – Results-driven; T – Time-bound.**

In my first article in April, I mentioned the importance of SMART targets. Setting targets enables people to measure objectively how well they are doing. I suggested in my April article that you could set so many 6-minute unit targets per day, week or year.

Measurable targets can be adjusted to a person’s job and also to seniority. Specific targets can be set for every lawyer at whatever year of qualification. For example, a trainee may have the target to prepare research for three presentations per year. A first-year qualified could be set the target of being involved in three marketing events per year. A second-year qualified could be targeted to organise two events per year for his contemporaries from university. And so this system of graded marketing targets can progress right up to the most senior lawyer.

Targets can also be set for events. For example, a target could be to meet 5 new people at each marketing event and to collect business cards from them. It could also be to meet 5 people that you currently know as contacts and to find out 5 new facts about each one of them.

Like getting fit, dieting and keeping slim, these targets have to be SMART and in particular, have to be realistic and achievable. It may be better to have somebody over-achieving their targets than consistently being given targets which are too high and which they constantly fail to meet. Targets need to be specific in the same way that you must “get fit”, does not have the same

impact or value as a target, as you are currently running one mile in 15 minutes and your aim is to run one mile in 10 minutes.

#### **Secret 4: Publicise successes and recognise progress**

Marketing for lawyers may be uncomfortable. Most lawyers did not join the legal profession to be in marketing or in sales, yet it is an increasingly important part of their current role. It is therefore important, to publicise and recognise success and give credit where it is due. This is important for motivating the individuals that are making the effort and also encourages others who find it equally difficult, by demonstrating to them that it is possible.

This recognition does not necessarily need to be monetary. It is important to consider where recognition should come from and how it should be publicised.

#### **Secret 5: Adapt a three part approach to all marketing activities and events**

The first part of each activity or event requires planning. This preparation should include assessing the objectives of the activity; who the target market or audience is; the most appropriate event or method to communicate with them; tips and techniques to implement the ideas during the event itself and objective measures of the success. This may involve briefings beforehand of everybody involved; support and training.

The second part is to make sure it happens. This means putting into practice all the planning and preparation and encouraging each individual to take ownership for the overall success.

The third part is to evaluate the success of the event or activity afterwards. This involves open and honest de-briefing and analysis of the results against the original objectives. It includes analysing the successes and why they were successful; noting anything that went wrong and analysing why it did not meet the anticipated results. It includes keeping a record of the lessons learnt for next time and applying them.

If you feel that you do not have the time to complete fully all three parts, then it is worth considering whether the event or the activity is worthwhile to do.

#### **Secret 6: Follow-up**

Follow-up is one of the most fundamentally important aspects of marketing. One of the most effective tools each individual has is that of making commitments to current clients, dormant clients and contacts and be seen to keep those commitments and never promising anything that they cannot deliver.

Follow-up also includes obtaining feedback on the services which are delivered, the perceptions of the clients of those services and incorporating their observations and into the service next

time and for other clients. Feedback needs to be obtained on a systematic basis and client satisfaction monitored and followed-up consistently.

Follow-up incorporates offering to help and listening and making note of major events in the life of your clients and contacts. For example, as somebody is making a will, they mention that their daughter is having a baby. Offer to get in touch after the baby is born as the client as a new grandparent, may want to take account of this in their will and so change their will. Mark this in your diary and calendar and then get in touch with each person individually, seeing how they are going and offering to help.

Systematic and appropriate follow-up is one of the most difficult elements of marketing and yet one of the most important. It requires streamlined and cost-effective structures which deliver the maximum information for the minimum amount of effort and input.

### **Secret 7: Self discipline**

If you are responsible for marketing in your firm then you need self discipline for every single member of your firm as well as for yourself. For example, if there are 20 people in your firm then you need 21 times the amount of self discipline that a normal lawyer might have. The reason for this is that if you are responsible for the successful implementation of the marketing strategy, you need to:

- Demonstrate that you are totally committed to it. This will mean that you need to give all support to it at all times (however despondent you are feeling) and that you need to encourage everyone else to be committed to it and encourage their involvement.
- Lead by example. This means that you talk about the targets that you are setting, you talk about the targets that you set yourself, you indicate to people and give tips to them on how achieve those targets and by leading through example this will inspire every lawyer and non-lawyer in your firm.
- Take an interest in every aspect of every event and activity. Enquire about the planning; wish people “Good luck” before an event; pop into an event to demonstrate you are taking an interest; and ask for or become involved in the evaluation afterwards.

### **Conclusion**

The seven secrets of implementing a successful marketing strategy are to take small simple steps and make sure that you and everybody else in your firm achieves them.

Setting achievable targets will encourage people. Walk with, lead and motivate everybody in your firm to move in the same direction. This is one of the biggest secrets of implementing a successful marketing strategy.



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