



PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

TEN TOP TIPS TO MAKE A MARKETING STRATEGY SUCCEED

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Top Tip 1: Regard everything as an opportunity in marketing

Many marketing initiatives have a very low response rate for law firms so it is important to try and capitalise on all the effort that you have put into your marketing events. If you invite people to a particular event, by email, and they do not reply then take this as another opportunity to get in contact with them and follow it up.

If it is a personal and targeted invitation, this does show that you really meant it in the first place and that you are genuinely interested in their attendance at your event.

Attendance at parties, conferences, seminars and workshops can often be disappointing. Up to 30% of your invitees that said they would be coming, may not attend. Use this as a further opportunity to build the relationship. Contact them and say how disappointed you were that they did not attend and you hope that there was nothing serious from preventing them coming. You could add how good the event was. Do not send any materials to them, as they would be getting “know-how” for nothing. The aim is to build a relationship so if you receive a response, you may be able to create a meeting which will give you a chance to develop the relationship further, on a personal, one-to-one basis.

Top Tip 2: Listening is marketing

It is a common misconception that hard-talking, foot-in-the-door talking at people will persuade them that you are a good lawyer and a good law firm. It is this misconception which makes lawyers reluctant to market or sell. It is important to realise that the most effective marketing is

conducted by asking questions and listening to the answers and providing solutions within those answers. The more questions you can ask, the more you are able to understand the perceptions, difficulties, expectations and requirements of your clients and the more you will be able to phrase the solutions in ways in which the client understands, appreciates and wants.

Top Tip 3: Demonstrate what you do

If you explain in your brochures and your website that you understand client needs and are empathetic to the pressures that they are under, it is important to demonstrate that. This starts with the initial phone call into your office, continues with a welcome from you at the reception desk and throughout the service that they receive from your firm.

It is therefore more important that you demonstrate that you communicate well by example rather than telling people you do so.

Top Tip 4: Take a long-term approach to marketing and winning new business

It is very frustrating sometimes when your parties, seminars or other marketing events do not immediately produce work. Marketing for lawyers is about building long-term relationships. Therefore it may take several years and many contacts in order for these relationships to bear fruit in terms of new business. Developing these relationships systematically and consistently over a number of years, using every opportunity to demonstrate how you will provide legal services and the extent and depth of your skills and experience, will result in new work in the long-term.

Top Tip 5: Everybody you ever meet is important

I recommend that you talk to anybody and everybody wherever you are and whatever time it is! This can be in queues, on trains, on planes or wherever there are other people. You never know when this may turn into business. At the very least, you get in many cases an interesting conversation and you never know who people know and what insights you might get into your industry and into other people's businesses. One lawyer I know won a new client after chatting to him in the swimming pool.

Top Tip 6: Be pro-active

If your marketing message is that you are pro-active, it is important to demonstrate your pro-activity.

A tip is to do this is at the end of letters, instead of writing "if you have any questions about this, please do not hesitate to get in touch"; change that to "I will phone you in a few days to see if you have any questions."

It is important to take every opportunity to keep in touch and build relationships with your clients, potential clients and contacts. Do not wait for them to get in touch with you but you get in touch with them.

Top Tip 7: Relish difficult questions in a new business meeting

Lawyers often feel that when they are asked difficult questions at interviews, pitches or client meetings that this signifies that a potential client does not want to work with them. It is very often the opposite. The more difficult questions that a client asks and the more reassurance that they are given by your answers, which address and allay their concerns, the more likely it is that the client will instruct you.

In order to overcome the challenges of difficult questions, if you anticipate a difficult client meeting, it is important to think about the questions you might be asked, structure the answers to them and practise these answers. It is important not to say “well I would cover this” and say that. It is important to say out loud, in front of another person, the answer that you would actually give. If you can video this and watch yourself on the TV then this is a useful way of seeing what others see and it’s even better if you can obtain feedback on what you are doing and how well you are doing it.

Top Tip 8: Use “triggers” to develop opportunities to develop new relationships

In each of your practice areas there will be activities that your clients and potential clients are carrying out which will be an opportunity for you to develop relationships with them. For example, if one of your clients mentions that their daughter is having a baby, this is a trigger for you to suggest re-drafting her Will. Ask permission to get in touch with the mother or daughter after the baby is born (safely), perhaps 6 months later. If you have permission to do this, it cannot be seen as intrusive and unacceptable but rather proactive and interesting.

Another trigger might be in residential property. Somebody has just moved house and mentions they are thinking about an extension or a conservatory. This is a trigger to get in touch with them to see how it is going, for example, to make suggestions on obtaining planning permission and placing a copy with their deeds for future reference.

Top Tip 9: Avoid negatives

Avoid words such as “not”, “no”, “can’t”, “won’t”, “difficult” and “problems”.

Clients are looking for you to be a trusted advisor and therefore although they do not want you to be too encouraging about things which are difficult, they would like you to have a realistic, objective and constructive approach to solving their problems. Therefore, for example, rather than using the word “problem”, use words such as “issues to consider” or “factors which need to be taken into account”. There may be time implications and cost implications but these should not be “problems” for you. The clients often feel that if you see these as problems then

they would see them as insurmountable and expensive difficulties preventing what they want to do.

Top Tip 10: Overcome “I do not want to...” or “I don’t feel like...”

In marketing, if you don’t feel like doing something, or you know you should but you don’t want to, you need to overcome this reluctance and just do it.

Much marketing and selling for lawyers is uncomfortable and is not the reason why many lawyers joined the profession. However, overcoming this reluctance and learning to relish looking for opportunities to help your client can enable you to overcome this reluctance and to provide them with the service that they need.

Follow the 10 Tips and your marketing strategy will succeed.



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