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L P M
LAW PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

What's old and what's new?

Are Law Firms Making Any Progress in Their Marketing?

The question of whether law firms need to engage in marketing finally seems to have moved beyond the stage of debate. In a recent survey of law firm marketing efforts, nearly 87 percent of the 400 responding firms claimed to be "currently involved in marketing activities."¹ Of course, every firm is engaged in marketing; some just do not realize it yet. At this point in the evolution of law firm marketing, 15 years since the *Bates*² decision first allowed attorney advertising, and after an equal number of years of frustration and expenditure, it is interesting to reflect on how the marketing function is changing in law firms.

Marketing Activities Tried in the Past

What marketing activities have law firms undertaken in the past? According to the survey results, more than half (54%) of the firms that have marketed have produced announcements. Fifty-one percent have organized seminars to promote their services, and exactly one half have developed a brochure that describes the overall capabilities of the firm. Rounding out the top five activities that firms have tried in the past are providing firm-sponsored tickets to special events or functions (49%), and developing resumes or biographies of the attorneys (45%).

More than one quarter of the responding law firms have hired some assistance for their marketing efforts in the past, in the form of an outside entity, such as a public relations agency (29%) or a marketing consultant (26%), or as an internal resource—a firm marketing administrator (28%). The table below sets out the top ten marketing activities the responding law firms have tried in the past. These results are very consistent with those found in the previous year's study of law firm marketing.

Table 1

Top Ten Marketing Activities Law Firms Have Tried in the Past

<i>Past Marketing Activities</i>	<i>Percentage of Sample</i>
Announcements	54%
Seminars	51%
Brochures: Overall Firm	50%
Functions/Events/Open Houses	49%
Attorney Résumés/Biographies	45%
Firm-Sponsored Tickets to Events/Functions	42%
Advertising: Yellow Pages	40%
Formation of Marketing Committee	37%
Development of Firm Image/Identity/Logo	35%
Client Newsletters	35%

Source: "The State of Law Firm Marketing: 1991"

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Sally Schmidt, President of Sally Schmidt Consulting, Inc. in Burnsville, Minnesota, has an MBA in marketing and has consulted to scores of law firms across North America on their marketing efforts. She was the first President of the National Law Firm Marketing Association (NALFMA) and has spoken at more than 30 national conferences for the legal profession. In addition, she recently completed a book on law firm marketing entitled, *Marketing the Law Firm: Business Development Techniques*, published by the Law Journal Seminars-Press (1991). (612) 895-5797.

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THE BOTTOM LINE