

Play to Win

What You Don't Know CAN Hurt You

By [Sally J. Schmidt](#) | Jan.19.17 | [Business Development](#), [Daily Dispatch](#), [Legal Marketing](#), [Play to Win](#)



I'm often reminded of a situation that happened several years ago. I was sitting in a building lobby killing time before an appointment. In the lobby was a small coffee shop. The line was long — out the door. The dutiful employee was making lattes and mochas as fast as he could but many people would walk up to the shop, assess the line and leave. I always imagined that the owner would look at his books at the end of the month and think things were going well and he certainly didn't need another employee.

But did he ever consider the business he *wasn't* getting?

Why do I bring this up? Because I see the same kind of thinking on the part of many lawyers. They'll say things like,

- “LinkedIn has never resulted in business.”
- “Writing articles is a waste of time.”
- “I've never gotten a call from my bio.”

When I hear these statements, my reaction is to say, “Bingo.” *You* may not be getting inquiries or business from these activities but, trust me; other people are.

Ramping Up Your Marketing Game

My philosophy on marketing isn't novel: If you're going to do it, do it right. Let's use these three activities as examples.

LinkedIn. If you're like many lawyers, you have a profile page set up. You may have anywhere from 60 to 400 connections, almost all because you have accepted other people's invitations. And that's it. Your profile is incomplete. You don't use LinkedIn to reach out to people. You don't use it to post articles. In fact, you may not even remember your password.

There are myriad studies about executives' use of LinkedIn — including in-house counsel. People like to do their own research when looking for professionals. So, if you want to see results from LinkedIn, make a commitment to:

- Complete your profile.
- Add representative matters to your experience.
- Write a compelling summary.
- Add a professional (and recent) picture.

- Change your title to something more meaningful than “partner.”
- Reach out to people with a personal note asking them to connect with you.
- Respond with a personal note when others invite you to connect.

These are just the basics but they will help you get viewed more positively.

Articles. In the old days, an article was a stationary thing. Once it was published, game over. Today, with the proliferation of social media and websites, articles can live forever and can provide a way to get on the radar screen of someone looking for a lawyer. To improve your odds of that:

- Write about something that may actually affect someone (e.g., “Six ways to avoid labor problems when going through a merger”) as opposed to something generic.
- Publish it in a targeted medium; an article addressing legal issues facing family businesses shouldn’t appear in a bar publication.
- Make it user friendly by adding checklists or practical recommendations.
- Write in plain English.
- Leverage it over and over again: Post it to your LinkedIn profile page, send it to your connections or groups to which you belong, post it on the firm’s website, add it to your firm bio with a link, tweet it out (or have your firm do so), turn it into an alert, use it to pitch for a speaking opportunity at a trade or industry conference, send hard copies to people who may not have seen it ... the list goes on and on.

Bio. I can’t tell you how many times I’ve said this: Website bios are important. Clients and prospects will look at your bio before calling and they expect to find evidence of your expertise. Some tips for improvement:

- Start with a good branding statement. Who do you work for (clientele) and how do you help them?
- Bring the most important or distinctive characteristics to the front of your profile — previous business experience, certification, industry expertise. Don’t bury it.
- Quantify anything you can—the number of manufacturers you’ve represented, the number of trials you’ve first-chaired, the percentage of the top 50 tech companies you’ve helped.
- Include representative matters. Clients want to see if you’ve helped someone with a similar matter.
- Turn “features” into “benefits.” For everything you say about yourself (e.g., prior military experience), explain how that will benefit a client (e.g., ability to think strategically).

(More bio tips are included in “[Online Profiles: Presenting the Best Version of Yourself.](#)”)

You Don’t Know What You Don’t Know

Just because an activity hasn’t worked for you doesn’t mean it’s ineffective; it might mean user error. So make a commitment to doing something better and you just might be surprised!

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