

Play to Win

[**Lawyer Marketing Begins at Home**](http://www.attorneyatwork.com/start-at-home-with-lawyer-marketing/)

By [Sally J. Schmidt](http://www.attorneyatwork.com/author/sally-j-schmidt/) | Jun.17.13 | [Business Development](http://www.attorneyatwork.com/category/business-development/), [Daily Dispatch](http://www.attorneyatwork.com/category/articles/), [Law Practice Management](http://www.attorneyatwork.com/category/practice-management-2/), [Legal Marketing](http://www.attorneyatwork.com/category/legal-marketing-2/), [Play to Win](http://www.attorneyatwork.com/category/play-to-win/)



Younger lawyers often wonder where to begin their marketing efforts. Without a notable track record of experience or expertise, and lacking contacts who are in a position to send business, the odds can seem insurmountable. If you are part of a law firm, however, you have many potential marketing opportunities—they just happen to be a bit closer to home: *Inside* your firm.

Partners with clients are frequently looking for resources to service the work. In addition, most firms offer opportunities to assist with lawyer marketing activities, from drafting client alerts to preparing seminar materials.

Now I can hear the arguments already. How does that help me? If I work on someone else’s client, I don’t get credit. If I draft an article, I don’t get the byline. True. Yet these opportunities can help you immensely with your future marketing efforts. First, obtaining the kind of work you want will give you the substantive experience you need to attract clients someday. Second, assisting with writing and speaking will teach you the value of client-oriented marketing approaches. Third, both substantive and marketing activities will provide you with opportunities to build relationships that might be helpful in the future.

I once worked with a partner of a firm who had a multi-million-dollar book of business. The genesis of the practice started when she was an associate. A client needed some advice in an area in which the firm lacked expertise. She volunteered to find the answer, became the in-house expert in the substantive niche and, ultimately, took her expertise to market.

**Seeking Strategic Opportunities**

So how can you use internal activities to your marketing advantage? Consider the following:

* **Position yourself as a go-to person internally for a certain type of work**. If you are an employment lawyer, for example, you could be the in-house expert to the M&A lawyers on deals involving unionized companies. If you are a litigator in the “home” office of a firm, you could become the associate of choice for overflow needs for a certain office.
* **Identify partners** who have the kind of interesting work or clients you desire and express your interest in helping them. While the partners may not have a need at the moment, trust me—they will remember someone who showed enthusiasm for the practice.
* **Market yourself.** Did you attend a CLE program? Write up a summary of the major takeaways for your colleagues. Did you work on an interesting case? Give a presentation to another practice group whose clients might be affected by the outcome. And don’t be afraid to promote your activities and results (e.g., a pro bono win) in the firm’s in-house intranet or newsletter.
* **Volunteer.** Every firm is looking for folks to step up and get things done. Offer to write an article for the firm’s newsletter, prepare an update for a client webinar, sit at a table at a firm-sponsored event or draft your practice group’s description for the website.
* **Build strong personal relationships.** Just like external clients, internal clients want to work with people they like—and part of getting there is showing genuine interest in them and what they do. Take your colleagues to lunch to learn about their practices and needs or ask if you can sit in on a related group’s meetings occasionally to hear about their projects.

Obviously, once you have the opportunity, you need to do a good job. But the bottom line is, your efforts to develop and service internal clients will translate very well to your future external marketing efforts.

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