

The following pages include more information on five of the 10 competencies. Strategies will feature the next five in it April/May issue.

Event Management

Marceline O'Connor Johnson, f/k/a Manager of Mischief, Schiff Hardin LLP

Event Management is important to the legal marketer on many fronts. Events may present the face of the firm to clients and potential clients and, therefore, should be flawless in their execution. If you organize a seminar or a client social event that has preventable errors/mistakes, clients and prospects wonder what the firm/practice area do with a bet-the-company case. You need to be constantly aware that existing and prospective clients continually evaluate at each point of contact. Never regard these events as simply “entertainment.”

The best way to develop and strengthen this competency in team members is to walk in their shoes, so you understand what you are asking them to do. Then, you will be able to identify any weaknesses in the process before the event takes place. Over the years, I was responsible for events along with directing and managing the department. I brought this perspective to my current firm where I have the luxury of a graphics person who had also been a wedding planner. We organized events for several years and when our staff increased, we added an individual who manages seminars and client entertainment full-time. She is incredibly detail-oriented and organized. For every client event, she produces a chart that breaks down the process step-by-step, assigns individuals in her group to each step, has a timeline for completion of each step and the names and contacts for each of the outside vendors involved. Her group can then see the details of the entire event, responsibilities, any potential glitches, and, if need be, anyone can step in to assist. It's a living document that we can access and update at any time. This document also becomes a learning tool for the people in her group, as it truly develops and strengthens the members of the team. This process can be used if you are a one-person shop or a huge department.

Overall, the added benefit is that the attorneys can see all the work involved in putting these events together—not just the end result that seems to magically happen when they request something. It has been most successful in its implementation.

Business Development

Sally J. Schmidt, President, Schmidt Marketing, Inc.



Many law firms fail to connect the dots between marketing and business development. When all is said and done, the objective of marketing is to grow the firm's business. In some cases, marketers lose sight of this goal because they are busy dealing with day-to-day administrative issues like tickets or sponsorships, or handling all-consuming projects like Web site redesigns or CRM launches. In other cases, marketers have no personal experience with business development or sales. As a result, they lack the skills or confidence to help lawyers develop winning strategies.

Marketing is a means to an end. The firm's marketing program should create a platform for business development. Events should provide opportunities for lawyers to build relationships. Publications should provide forums for lawyers to communicate specific information to targeted audiences. And research should pinpoint new business possibilities.

Working with law firm marketers to enhance their business development skills, my advice is:

- ▶ **Take initiative.** Learn as much as you possibly can about the firm, its clients and its practices. Don't ask questions for which you could have found the answer if you looked hard enough.
- ▶ **Be curious.** Ask the lawyers who their top clients are. Inquire about the firm's best sources of business. Investigate trade associations, competitors, publications and Web sites.
- ▶ **Don't be afraid to admit what you don't know.** It's okay if you don't understand something, but then try to find the answer. If lawyers use an unfamiliar term, for example, ask them to explain it in plain English.
- ▶ **Be proactive.** Constantly seek information about clients, competitors or market niches that may present the firm with opportunities. Synthesize research and suggest ways to respond. In all cases, the goal is to set the table so the lawyers have improved odds of getting business.

Technology

Mark T. Greene, Ph.D., Chief Marketing Officer, Nixon Peabody LLP



Pressure to control expenses is at an all-time-high in large law firms. As a result, we are focused on process improvement throughout the marketing department. A key component of most improvements is increased reliance on technology to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of all we do. Thus, everyone on the team must master the technologies relevant to their job.

Beyond the usual Microsoft Office applications, our primary technology tools are:

- ▶ InterAction;
- ▶ Our Web site (we have “.net” plumbing);
- ▶ PMAPS (our proposal management system);
- ▶ SharePoint;
- ▶ Assorted databases;
- ▶ Design software;
- ▶ Videoconferencing tools; and
- ▶ Webinar tools.

Our marketing department enjoys very strong relationships with our information technology (IT), information services (IS) and training departments. These relationships are essential as few of our technology tools can function optimally without support from those groups.

Though the marketing department team members are the primary users of these technologies, none function optimally unless they are configured to exchange data with other systems (IT department). While our team can design wonderful ads, presentations, e-vites, mini-sites, etc., others can more efficiently execute those designs (e.g., our media services department). Having state-of-the-art tools doesn't mean we know how to use them well. That's where we rely on our training department. So how do we strengthen our competencies? Largely through the good graces of our colleagues in other departments.

One of the first and smartest things I did when I joined Nixon Peabody was to hire a manager of marketing information systems to serve as our constant liaison with the IT department and generally to remain focused on all of our technology needs. Despite our strong relationships and the best intentions of the other departments, they sometimes get distracted (e.g., when on-boarding dozens of lawyers at a time or when opening a new office). At these times, we are fortunate to have the constant attention of our manager of marketing information systems.

I could (and perhaps should) write a book on how SharePoint has improved our lives. It seems to make everything we do easier and better. Of course, we may overdo it a bit. Do we really need to set up a collaboration site to organize a spontaneous lunch for three people?

Business of Law

Bob Denney, President, Robert Denney Associates, Inc.



Competency in the Business of Law has become essential for legal marketers because they have become not just marketing specialists, but also non-lawyer business professionals in the operations, management and growth of their firms. This means they must understand the full range of factors involved. To be successful, they need to function not just as skilled marketers and managers of their departments, but also as leaders and members of the senior management team—which a growing number of firms now recognize.

Two of the keys to developing this competency are: 1) to study and understand the entire operations of the firm, and 2) to offer recommendations for improvements in almost any area including management, increasing profitability and both measuring and improving ROI wherever possible. ■

Public Relations

*Jonathan R. Fitzgarrald, Director of Marketing, Greenberg Glusker
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Public relations is like emergency roadside assistance—rarely top of mind until you absolutely need it. Not convinced? Just ask Akio Toyoda (president of Toyota), Tiger Woods or David Brandon (former CEO of Domino’s Pizza). In each respective example, a public relations campaign was instituted—successfully or unsuccessfully—in hopes of changing public perception.

As legal professionals practicing in a professional services industry where one’s reputation is based on a perceived image, it is particularly important to leverage all the available tools—like public relations—to ensure you are creating positive impressions and building lasting relationships with clients, prospects, referral sources and the media.

Ensure your future success now by utilizing public relations. Properly doing so will lead to developing business and positioning you as the expert in your industry.

During weekly marketing team meetings, team members are asked to report on their current initiatives—regardless of their role within the department. This report informs the entire team as to the department’s current projects, and it exposes staff to communications functions outside of their area of expertise.

Professional development—vis-à-vis seminars, conferences, workshops, etc.—are also encouraged and supported to ensure the firm’s communications professionals are up-to-date on industry trends and best practices.