

Play to Win

[Make Your Marketing More Persuasive](#)

By [Sally J. Schmidt](#) | Nov.17.14 | [Daily Dispatch](#), [Law Practice](#), [Legal Marketing](#), [Marketing & Business Development](#), [Play to Win](#)



Lawyers often need to use persuasive skills in their work — convincing a judge or jury with an argument, persuading another party in a contract negotiation, convincing a client to pursue a realistic path. Yet when it comes to marketing, many resort to indistinguishable promises or generalizations. They say they are “accessible,” “responsive,” “experienced” or, my personal favorite, “provide quality services in a cost-effective manner.”

Four Ways to Make Proposals and Pitches More Convincing

You can do many things to make your marketing messages more believable, whether in your bio, a proposal or a pitch for business. Here are four ideas to consider.

1. Show, don't tell. Remember the old saying “A picture is worth a thousand words”? It's true. It's one thing to say something. It's another to show it. How can this be done in marketing?

- If you work particularly well as a team, instead of assembling five individual bios of the people you are proposing on a project, take a group photo.
- If you are pitching a regulatory or litigation matter, develop a [Gantt chart](#) or Excel spreadsheet that lays out the steps and how long each should take. This will demonstrate your experience with the process.
- When proposing how you will staff a matter, don't just list the people on the team. Put together an organizational chart with their pictures, roles and contact information to prove your team's accessibility.
- Remember when your math teachers used to tell you to show your work? Do the same thing if you are proposing an alternative pricing structure. Instead of simply listing the fees, include all your assumptions and how you got there. This will make the client feel your numbers are more likely to be realistic.

2. Give a guarantee. I know you can't guarantee the outcome or results of your work, but you can guarantee your service. For example:

- Promise clients they will get a return call within the same half day. If you are unavailable, you can have your assistant call on your behalf. (Of course, you need to establish the

protocols to make this possible, such as giving staff access to your voice mail, authority to call back, information on your whereabouts, instructions on what to do with phone calls, etc.)

- Rather than just saying you will learn the client's business, offer a visit on your dime to meet with the appropriate people, learn about their operations and discuss the relationship.

3. Support your claims. A lot of lawyers say they have expertise or handle certain types of work. Numbers and real-world experience make compelling arguments for clients. Some examples:

- Saying you have worked with 10 of the top 50 contractors in your state to illustrate your experience with the construction industry.
- Mentioning your six-month secondment as a way to show you sat in the client's seat and understand where law and business intersect.
- Highlighting your prior experience as a claims adjuster as a way to demonstrate your insider's view of the insurance industry.
- Listing specific representative matters on your bio to showcase your experience.
- Providing a list of references who are happy to sing your praises.

4. Remember that actions speak louder than words. Finally, your behavior will trump any written or spoken promises. For example:

- You can say you're accessible, but including your cell phone number on a business card or signature line says it for you.
- You can say you're easy to work with, but sending a welcome letter to new clients [explaining the process](#), providing information about the team and giving information about their matter will prove it.
- You can say you're responsive, but getting your proposal to the prospect *before* the deadline will reinforce it.

If you've ever taken time to look at the bios or websites of your competitors, you will probably see that most are indistinguishable. Everyone claims to be experienced, responsive and accessible. So how is a prospect to separate the real from the pretender? Through actions, not words.

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