

Play to Win

Your Secret Marketing Weapon

By [Sally J. Schmidt](#) | Oct.26.16 | [Business Development](#), [Daily Dispatch](#), [Legal Marketing](#), [Play to Win](#), [Rainmaking](#)



I've noticed that the best rainmakers usually have really good legal administrative assistants (LAAs), and these lawyers are generally very good at engaging their LAAs in activities to nurture existing client relationships and even develop new ones.

Now, I'm well aware that the assistant-to-lawyer ratio has changed dramatically. Many LAAs are supporting three, four and even up to seven lawyers in some firms, so you need to be sensitive to the demands being placed on them. Still, many LAAs like to get involved in marketing activities. I have listed below a range of things that LAAs (and, in some cases, paralegals) can do to support a lawyer's marketing efforts. A few of these might work for you.

Client Relations

There are many ways that LAAs can play a role in developing existing client relationships. Here are a few ideas.

Onboarding: Have kickoff meetings with your staff when you get a new client, or even a new matter, to talk about the client, the issue, the client's contacts and guidelines. Get everyone on the same page from the beginning.

Interacting with the client: Send your client a welcome letter, introduce your assistant and provide his or her contact information. When clients come to the office, have your assistant greet them in the lobby or arrange to have the LAA pop into the conference room to say hello.

Maintaining information: Your LAA can help you track important client-related information, such as a client's birthday, the anniversary of an incorporation, or kids' names, and set up calendar reminders.

Coordinating with the client: Encourage your staff to build their own relationships with people at the client's office. For example, your LAA can introduce herself to the general counsel's secretary. This will help when you are trying to get on the calendar, exchange documents or obtain some information.

Setting up meetings: One rainmaker I know told several clients that he wanted to have a monthly breakfast meeting to check in and listen to the client's priorities. His secretary worked with the partner's calendar and the client to make sure the meetings got scheduled each month.

Marketing and Business Development Activities

There are also many things your staff members can do to assist with your marketing and business development efforts. Below are a few possible areas.

Intake/metrics: Every lawyer should be tracking information on new business and marketing results. For example, your LAA can be employed to make sure your clients are correctly coded in the intake process, from the source of the business to the type of matter to the client's industry. Not only will this allow you to develop information for pitches (e.g., how many of a certain type of matter you've handled, how many clients in a certain industry you've worked with), it will help you see which marketing efforts are paying off.

Organization: Your LAA can maintain repositories of your marketing efforts and materials, such as PowerPoint slides, articles, representative matters and proposals.

Research: Your staff can help you get useful information for marketing purposes, for example, by checking the LinkedIn profile of a potential client with whom you will be having lunch, or setting up Google alerts on your top clients and prospects.

Pipeline and pingings: Some LAAs work with their lawyers to maintain a list of targets and track contact with them. For example, one partner I know will call and leave his assistant a voicemail following his marketing outings to report the details of his conversations, which she subsequently records in Outlook.

Social media: While I think the lawyer must be responsible for most activity on social media, there are things that an assistant can do to help, such as uploading a recent article on the lawyer's LinkedIn profile.

A good marketing program requires administrative activity — tracking, organizing and following up. By making members of your staff part of your marketing and business development team, you can improve the effectiveness of your effort while making the best use of your time.

Sally J. Schmidt is President of [Schmidt Marketing, Inc.](#), which offers marketing services to law firms. Sally was a founder and the first President of the Legal Marketing Association. She is a Fellow of the College of Law Practice Management and was one of the first inductees into the LMA's Hall of Fame. She is the author of "[Marketing the Law Firm: Business Development Techniques](#)" and "[Business Development for Lawyers: Strategies for Getting and Keeping Clients](#)." Sally writes Attorney at Work's "Play to Win" column. Follow her on Twitter [@SallySchmidt](#).