

Back to Basics

[How to Market Your Services](#)

By [Sally J. Schmidt](#) | Aug. 26. 14 | [Back to Basics](#), [Daily Dispatch](#), [Law Practice](#), [Legal Marketing](#)

You are a member of an organization that holds quarterly dinner meetings with a speaker. You look at your calendar and realize the next meeting is Wednesday night — drat! But, dutifully, you show up just in time to sit down for the meal, chitchat briefly with the people to your right and left before the speaker starts his address, and then sneak out during the applause.



If you are like most lawyers, you will give yourself credit for going. In my book, however, you get a failing grade. I see it all the time: Lawyers going through the motions in their marketing and business development efforts. The fact is that executing the activity — even if done well — is but one of three key aspects of any initiative; equally important are preparation and follow-up.

The Three Parts to Every Marketing Activity

Let's take the meeting above as an example.

Preparation: Did you ...

- Look at the list of attendees and conduct some quick research on a few individuals you would be likely to see at the event?
- Remind yourself of recent conversations on which you might follow up or come up with some good conversation starters?
- Determine your goals for attending (e.g., meet two new people, follow up with a client)?
- Get comfortable with your “elevator speech”?

Execution: Did you ...

- Arrive early to take advantage of networking time?
- Ask a lot of questions to identify people's interests and issues?
- Work your way around the room so you could visit with multiple people?
- Introduce yourself (and perhaps give a compliment) to the speaker?
- Determine strategically with whom you would sit at dinner?
- Stay late to socialize?

Follow-up: Did you ...

- Make notes on information you learned about individuals?
- Send personal notes to contacts?
- Follow up on things you promised to send or do?
- Send invitations to connect on LinkedIn?
- Add people to your personal contact list or firm mailing lists?
- Think about ways to get back in touch (e.g., setting up lunch meetings for more in-depth discussions)?

Three Keys to Doing It Right

The same three-step process holds true with everything you do in marketing. The keys are:

- 1. Preparation:** What is your objective — i.e., why are you doing what you're doing? What do you hope to accomplish? How can you get ready to take ultimate advantage of the opportunity?
- 2. Execution:** How can you implement the activity so it works to your advantage? How can you present the best possible version of yourself?
- 3. Follow-up:** What can you do once the activity is over? With whom can you follow up? How can you leverage the activity into other things?

Whether it's a blog, a bar committee, a newsletter column, a trade association, a speaking engagement or a nonprofit board, be honest with yourself. If you are not fully engaged, it doesn't interest you or you are not willing to step up your efforts to profit from the opportunity, I give you permission to stop.

In the end, if you aren't going to do it right, you really shouldn't do it at all.

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