

# Marketing

## The Solution to Inertia? Think Small

**SALLY J. SCHMIDT** | When I think of the marketing challenges that lawyers face, I believe the biggest one is inertia. There are many reasons it's often hard to get started in marketing, but perhaps the two toughest relate to (1) a lack of know-how and (2) a seeming inability to find the time.

Some lawyers feel they just don't know how or where to start in marketing. Maybe they don't have many—or the right—contacts yet. Other lawyers may know what they should be doing but just don't do it, while still others have great ideas but never execute them. Obviously, a big part of the problem is that marketing time isn't billable time, so it suffers when compared to the revenue-producing files piled on the lawyer's desk. Plus, it can interfere with other priorities, from family to hobbies, so it simply keeps shifting down the to-do list.

Just thinking about “marketing” can be overwhelming. So my recommendation is to *think small*. In other words, instead of creating a grand marketing plan, take one baby step at a time. One effective activity can lead to a good contact, an interesting response or even a new opportunity.



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### Six Strategies to Get Started

Here is a checklist of six “big-picture” marketing strategies with some examples of the many small steps that you can take—immediately—to kick-start your marketing efforts. If you select and implement just one activity from among the following ideas, you'll be on your way to more effective marketing.

#### 1. Getting Feedback from Clients

- Take a client to lunch and ask for feedback on your individual performance or the performance of your firm.
- Upon the conclusion of the next significant matter you handle, set your calendar to call the client one month after the bill is paid. Use the phone call to conduct a “post-mortem” on the matter.
- Send a written survey to your 10 best clients to find out how you're doing.

#### 2. Building Your Visibility

- Identify one seminar or seminar sponsor that deals with issues related to your practice, and call to see

how you can become a presenter at a relevant program.

- Identify one publication or Web site related to your practice and contact the editor. Volunteer to write an article, to provide background information or to otherwise be a resource.
  - Send an e-mail alert on a hot topic related to your practice to people who would be interested in the subject. Send three alerts over the course of the year.
  - Sit down for one hour and update your resume or biography to more accurately reflect the kind of work you do *and* whom you've done it for recently. Insert your relevant outside activities as well.
- #### 3. Networking
- Find one organization that you'd like to get involved in, and make a commitment to go to every one of its meetings for a year.
  - Write down three past or potential referral sources, and call each of them twice a year to discuss mutual business opportunities over lunch or dinner.
  - Send an e-mail to five former law school classmates, asking them what they're up to and updating them on your practice and other activities.
  - Ask one person—a client, a referral source or a friend—to introduce you to one other person who might be good for you to know. Then do the same for your contact.