

# Marketing to the Bar: 5 Steps

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I have spent a good deal of my career trying to get lawyers to spend less time with other lawyers and more time with clients and prospects. In many cases, a lawyer's marketing and business development efforts are more effective when spent in industry or business-related organizations than bar association groups. However, there are certainly times when relationships with other lawyers can lead to client development opportunities, especially when those lawyers don't do what you do. Marketing to other lawyers all depends on your practice.

Targeting other lawyers can be very effective, particularly if you have a niche practice. Consider the following examples:

- A white-collar crime lawyer might target healthcare attorneys for referrals in fraud cases.
- An estate-planning firm could develop relationships with family lawyers to help when clients need to revise their documents after a divorce.
- A traditional labor attorney can assist M&A lawyers when their clients are buying or merging with unionized operations.

## A Five-Step Plan for Marketing to Other Lawyers

How do you go about marketing to other lawyers? Here are five steps.

### 1. Identify your target audience.

Which attorneys have clients that might need the kind of services you provide and do not practice in your area? They could be at boutique firms, general practice firms or even within other departments of your own firm. For example, a personal injury lawyer could target general practice firms without consumer-related services. A lawyer who handles policy-side insurance coverage matters could target the business lawyers in her firm.

### 2. Educate the targets.

And when you do, remember to speak at their level of understanding. You are not teaching them your practice area; you are letting them know how your practice affects their clients. They may need help spotting issues, identifying opportunities or even understanding the process. For example, an immigration lawyer could educate technology lawyers about the immigration process for their clients who are looking to bring in engineering talent from overseas — types of visas, how long the process takes, what it costs, what the client/employer can do to help, etc. There are many potential ways to reach the target lawyers. Depending on the audience, ideas include:

- Identify the bar section or committee for the appropriate lawyers and do some thought leadership. Write for their newsletter, speak at their meeting or sponsor their event. For example, a real estate lawyer could reach out to the healthcare bar to discuss trends in hospital and healthcare facility expansion.
- Establish your own vehicles — alerts, newsletters, seminars, webinars or on-site visits — aimed at the target audience. For instance, tax lawyers could schedule in-house “lunch and learns” for law firms without tax practices, giving CLE credit, if possible.

### 3. Network.

In addition to having confidence in your substantive capabilities, the target attorneys must believe you will take good care of their clients before they send you referrals. Building personal relationships will help you build that trust. Your activities could be one-on-one, such as having lunches with target lawyers, or it could be in groups, such as lawyers from a patent prosecution firm getting together with representatives of a general practice firm to discuss respective practices and clientele. You could also network at their bar meetings.

### 4. Add Value

What can you do help these lawyers help their clients? Depending on the target or the firm, you could:

- Write a guest post for the firm's blog.
- Speak at a client seminar.
- Write a guest column for the firm's newsletter.
- Prepare a brochure or one-page explanation sheet they can give to clients.
- Offer to participate in free consultations.

### 5. Reframe Your Bio.

Consider including something in your website bio and LinkedIn profile indicating that you work well with other lawyers — for example, “Pam frequently speaks to lawyer audiences on the things their clients should know about healthcare reform.”

## **The Hub Mentality**

Clients don't expect their lawyers to be able to do everything, but they do expect their lawyers to know capable people who can fill in the holes. As a result, there are opportunities to position yourself with other practitioners.

In “Are You a Spoke or a Hub?” I explain that networking is like a bicycle wheel. If you're the spoke, the connection is between two points — you and your contact. If you are the hub, all spokes connect to you, and you can link your contacts to others. Keep the hub mentality in mind when marketing to other lawyers. Find the hubs. Eventually, in addition to referral work, you will have a network of lawyers in other specialties to recommend to your own clients. You will become a hub too.

Just remember, there is a lot of risk involved when an attorney sends a valued client to another lawyer. Take good care of the client, keep the referring attorney in the loop and, above all else, return the client at the end of the engagement.

*Sally Schmidt, President of Schmidt Marketing, Inc., helps lawyers and law firms grow their practices. She was a founder and the first President of the Legal Marketing Association, is a Fellow of the College of Law Practice Management and was one of the first inductees to LMA's Hall of Fame. Known for her practical advice, she is the author of two books, “[Marketing the Law Firm: Business Development Techniques](#)” and “[Business Development for Lawyers: Strategies for Getting and Keeping Clients](#).” Follow her @SallySchmidt.*