

Play to Win

## Marketing and Business Development: Show and Tell

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*Say what you will, but when it comes to effective marketing and business development, how you act matters more than the words you choose.*

If you spend any time reading lawyer bios (as I do), you will run across characteristics lawyers emphasize to differentiate themselves. Qualities like responsiveness, creativity, writing skills, thoroughness and pragmatism are regularly inserted in LinkedIn profiles and website bios.

I'm all for identifying and promoting the things that set you apart from others. However, it's important to remember that people's impressions are based on their experiences with you more than on your words.

### Creating Impressions Through Your Marketing Activities

Over the years, I've heard a lot of clients and representatives of the community complain about board members who consistently miss meetings, speakers who don't submit their materials before the meeting or authors who miss due dates. Your marketing and business development activities have the potential to either demonstrate or damage your professional brand. Here are some examples.

#### Proposals or pitches

When you have opportunities to get new business, do you:

- Make an effort to research the entity, individuals and opportunity?
- Ask the prospect informed questions so you can tailor your response?
- Answer all the questions that have been asked?
- Find out the preferred form or format of the pitch or proposal?
- Meet the deadline?

#### Presentations

If you have a speaking opportunity, do you:

- Pay attention to the organization's desired topics and formats?
- Tailor your program to the audience?
- Respond in a timely way to requests for bios, session descriptions and session titles?
- Submit your paper or slide deck on time?

#### Board or committee memberships

As a leader of a group or association, do you:

- Show up — and show up on time?

- Come prepared to the meetings (e.g., read the agenda and prepare materials/information in advance)?
- Follow through on your assignments?

## **Articles**

When you are submitting articles for publication or posting, do you:

- Research past publications to see what has or hasn't been covered?
- Follow the guidelines for length, format and content?
- Learn about the audience so you can write in a tone and level appropriate for the reader?
- Submit your photo, bio and article on time?

## **How You Act Is Much More Powerful Than What You Say**

If you claim to be creative, show it, whether it's through client gifts or the way you communicate information (e.g., infographics). If you're bilingual, write your bios and materials in both languages. If you tell people you're responsive, acknowledge requests ASAP and meet your deadlines.

You can't turn authentic brand qualities on and off. Your marketing and business development efforts should reinforce the consistent experience people can expect from you as a lawyer.