

New Column: Play to Win

[**Personalize Your Message**](http://www.attorneyatwork.com/personalize-your-message/)

By [Sally J. Schmidt](http://www.attorneyatwork.com/author/sally-j-schmidt/) | Feb.19.13 | [Communicating](http://www.attorneyatwork.com/category/communicating/), [Daily Dispatch](http://www.attorneyatwork.com/category/articles/), [Marketing & Business Development](http://www.attorneyatwork.com/category/marketing-and-business-development/), [Play to Win](http://www.attorneyatwork.com/category/play-to-win/)



*In her new column, marketing veteran Sally Schmidt will share some of the simple, easy-to-execute strategies that have given her clients the winning edge for decades. You probably know Sally. She has advised some of the world’s most successful firms on marketing and business development strategies—and, well, she literally wrote the book on the topic (two of them, in fact). In “Play to Win,” Sally’s focus is on helping* ***you****achieve your personal goals.*

If there is one thing I know to be true about lawyer marketing, it is that you will get out of something what you put into it, and nothing more.

* If you belong to an organization, you must make an appropriate investment of time and energy; this, in turn, will lead people to see you as an organized, committed contributor with whom they may like to do business.
* If you send holiday cards, you should write a personal note *and* sign it yourself; your card will then be read and potentially even displayed versus being tossed in the trash.
* If you send a LinkedIn invitation, you need to personalize the invitation instead of using the site’s template; nine times out of ten, this will result in responses to thank you, say hello or catch up.

**A Simple Example: The Email Message**

Take a simple marketing technique—emailing clients or other contacts an article or news item that might be of interest. Your message has the potential to be incredibly effective … or to generate an instantaneous “delete.” So how can you make the most of this opportunity?

* Demonstrate that you know what people are interested in. Most of your contacts are too busy to look at extraneous information just because you want to get in touch with them.
* Be timely. If you are the first to bring something important to a contact’s attention, it will reflect positively on you and potentially even produce a call or email.
* Craft an informative Subject line. Capture attention. *Rewrite* the Subject line if you are forwarding something from another source.
* Personalize the email. If it is a firm alert or newsletter, add a personal note. In all cases, explain why you think the person will be interested in the material.
* Don’t assume the contact has read something. Even if you think people are tracking industry or legal developments, sometimes their inboxes or reading piles are full.
* Identify ways you can help with the subject at hand. For example, can you offer to review a policy or document, present a training program or set up a time to discuss the issue as it applies to the contact?
* Consider picking up the phone. If the information is truly important for the person or entity, perhaps it would be best to call and offer to discuss the ramifications.

*Sally Schmidt is President of* [*Schmidt Marketing, Inc.*](http://www.schmidt-marketing.com/)*, 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 LMA’s Hall of Fame. She is the author of*[Marketing the Law Firm: Business Development Techniques](http://www.lawcatalog.com/product_detail.cfm?productID=15013&masterid=15012) *and* [Business Development for Lawyers: Strategies for Getting and Keeping Clients](http://www.lawcatalog.com/product_detail.cfm?affil=707082&productID=6570)*.*