

play to win

Marketing When You're Too Busy for Marketing

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Ways to keep working on long-term marketing goals even when your plate is full.

Now that we're coming out of the pandemic, many lawyers are slammed. During my coaching calls, I often hear things like, "I was too busy to do much last month," "It's just a really crazy time for me" or "I couldn't handle the work if it came in."

I get it. I've worked with lawyers my entire career and I know there are times when client or practice demands are overwhelming. Still, it's important to remember three things:

1. Marketing is a long game. For better or worse, today's blog post, lunch or presentation rarely results in an immediate piece of new business.
2. Marketing efforts are cumulative. You are building a brand and relationships, both of which take time.
3. You need to be visible. If you drop out of view for long stretches, you will not be top of mind when someone needs your services.

Working Long-Term Marketing Goals Into Your Schedule

So what is a busy lawyer to do? Here are some thoughts on how to maintain your marketing efforts even when your plate is full.

Take it up a notch

Think about ways to make your scheduled activities more effective from a marketing or business development standpoint. For example, that email becomes a phone call; that phone call becomes a Zoom meeting; that Zoom meeting becomes an in-person meeting; or that in-person meeting is held over lunch or ends with cocktails.

Many of these actions will add little to no time to what you were already doing.

Use resources developed by others

You don't have to create new content if you are leveraging other people's work. Like and share posts on social media. Post firm webinar announcements or alerts on your LinkedIn page. Forward some firm blasts to a few people with a personal note or invitation.

Break up projects

Every activity consists of several steps or tasks. If you're hoping to write an article, start with the outline. If you've thought about attending a conference, check the early-bird registration date. If you are hoping to speak at a seminar, calendar the deadline to submit a proposal. If you want to sit for certification, tickle a month before the sign-up is due. The most important thing is not to let important deadlines pass.

Find a marketing buddy in the firm

You can work with others on an activity so it is more likely to get done. You could, for example, write an alert with a colleague; set up a time to review each other's contact lists for opportunities; or plan a breakfast briefing with another partner. Alternatively, you can use a marketing buddy to hold each other accountable.

Use your assistant

Many of the best rainmakers I know have [integrated their assistants into marketing and business development activities](#). For example, assistants can:

- Check dates or inquire about other people's calendars.
- Add contacts to appropriate firm lists.
- Sign you up for conferences.
- Maintain your contact list and track your interactions.

Schedule time

You need to make marketing part of your regular routine. Plan an hour once a week when you're not normally as busy to tackle some administrative aspects of marketing, such as [connecting with people on LinkedIn](#), setting up meetings, [writing thank-you notes](#) or posting content.

Do things you enjoy

If you like writing, focus on that. If you like entertaining, take your favorite clients or referral sources to lunch. If you like organizational activities, prioritize the meetings of a group or association. By planning things you enjoy with people you enjoy, you will be more likely to make the time.

Look for twofers

When you're busy, you need to maximize every marketing opportunity. Are there ways to get multiple benefits from one activity? For example:

- Co-sponsor a webinar with a referral source.
- Interview some prospects for a podcast you record.
- Co-author an article with a good client.

Leverage

Similarly, try to get multiple benefits from activities once they're complete. Turn an internal presentation into a series of client alerts. Turn research from a case into an article or client advisory. Create a summary of the Q&A session during a webinar to send as a follow-up to the attendees.

Sell others

Unless you are a solo practitioner, there are other lawyers in your firm. Look for opportunities to promote or develop business for them. Some possibilities:

- Bring a colleague to meetings with referral sources.
- Introduce someone from another practice or office to a good client.
- Transition a valuable marketing opportunity you don't have time for to another lawyer in the firm.

Small Steps Will Advance the Ball

Marketing can't be something you do only when you're not busy. It needs to be incorporated into your practice. Even when it feels like you can't keep your head above water, there are myriad small steps you can take that will still advance the ball toward your long-term marketing goals.