

What Will Hybrid Marketing Look Like for Law Firms?

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Smart lawyers will combine traditional tactics with the lessons learned during the pandemic to create a new hybrid marketing approach.

I love the Pixar movie “Inside Out.” I suppose it’s partly because Riley and her parents are from Minnesota, but it’s mostly because of the brilliant way thoughts and dreams and memories are represented. At the end of “Inside Out” (mini spoiler alert), Riley’s former islands of family, hockey, honesty, goofball and friendship have morphed into a brand-new island.

I have been thinking a lot about what the brand-new island for law firm marketing will be.

During the pandemic, many marketing activities were off the table (e.g., conferences, sponsorships and client visits). But others were implemented very effectively through other channels.

Aside from the most introverted of introverts, lawyers are looking forward to being in actual rooms with actual people, whether dining, going to a ballgame or attending a conference. Still, there are versions of virtual marketing that should be continued even once things resemble “normal.”

Hybrid Marketing

What will the hybrid version of marketing and business development look like for lawyers and law firms? Here are thoughts on maximizing your options moving forward.

Client Care

Many lawyers did a great job of reaching out to clients during the pandemic, asking how things were going and giving proactive advice. Much of this was because clients were facing unprecedented challenges but some of it was to maintain visibility. Those who stepped up their contact benefitted enormously, sometimes by obtaining additional work but always by building client loyalty. These regular [client services and communications](#) efforts should be maintained into the future.

Client Visits

Among the most valuable marketing and client relations tools, client visits went completely by the wayside. As people return to the workplace, folks get vaccinated and clients get comfortable having visitors, one of the first things lawyers should do is go see their best clients. It would be a great time to discuss the relationship status, [conduct a postmortem on specific matters and talk about the future](#) — how does the client expect things to change coming out of the pandemic?

Content Creation

When COVID-19 hit, the number of alerts and articles produced by lawyers increased exponentially. Of course, there was a lot to talk about, from government programs to employee issues to insurance claims. But it also was a way to stay visible when in-person exposure was not possible. Going forward, lawyers should continue their efforts to develop valuable content, both as an added value for clients and to stay top of mind.

Client Interaction

Over the past year, myriad virtual forums were created so lawyers could see, interact with and even entertain clients. We learned that virtual forums eliminate travel yet still provide “face time.” They proved more effective than phone calls in some instances, for example, to discuss complex issues or pitch business, and were great for providing things like client “lunch and learns” to a team of people. Virtual programs will continue to be a way to effectively interact with certain clients or prospects.

Conferences, Webinars and Seminars

Law firms found that virtual programs could be set up quickly and often resulted in better attendance than in-person meetings, by extending reach and minimizing the burden on attendees. Similarly, lawyers who were interested in certain content could attend CLE programs or conferences without the cost of travel. By scheduling substantive programs to include a virtual option in the future, lawyers can continue to make programming available to a larger potential audience.

Networking Events

Where lawyer marketing really suffered in the last year was providing networking opportunities. While some virtual platforms and forums evolved to allow small-group events or one-on-one networking sessions, by and large, nothing beats face-to-face interaction to build a relationship.

Online Activities

With the availability of content and the lack of human interaction during the pandemic, many lawyers upped their virtual game, posting to LinkedIn, enhancing their profiles and connecting with more people. Having a strong online presence is critical to effective business development. Going forward, lawyers should continue to maintain this focus, by continually updating their online profiles with representative matters and niche expertise, pushing out content and reaching out to new connections.

We Learned a Lot

We learned a lot during the past year or so about what works and what doesn't, what's necessary and what's not.

Smart lawyers will combine traditional marketing and business development approaches with the lessons learned during the pandemic to create a new hybrid marketing approach.