

# Making Time for Marketing

**B**y now, most lawyers understand that marketing and business development play an important role in their careers. People who develop business are, by and large, happier with the practice (and better compensated). They also work with people they like on the types of matters they enjoy and control their own destiny.

Yet, where to find the time? It's not unusual for partners to spend 250 to 500 hours a year on marketing or business development activities; senior associates can spend up to 200 hours. Between the pressures of the practice and a desire for a personal life, many lawyers are not making a sufficient investment in marketing to produce a return.

The good news is that successful marketing isn't just about the amount of time spent; it's also about the effectiveness of the activities. So, in an issue about finding balance and managing time, here are some tips for efficient and effective personal marketing.

## 12 WAYS TO FIND BALANCE AND MANAGE YOUR TIME:

**1 Do things you enjoy.** One firm's technology initiative failed because the lawyers involved would argue over who had to attend the local technology association meetings. If you don't like something, you are much less likely to follow through. If it's a board or committee, you need to have a passion for the organization. If you prefer one-on-one interaction to large group functions, then do the former.

**2 Look for "two-fers."** I believe you should try to get at least two benefits from every activity. If you play golf with a referral source, invite one of your clients for him to meet and ask him to invite one of his clients for you to meet.

### Other examples:

- Attend a meeting with a referral source.
- Give a presentation in conjunction with a prospective client.
- Interview some clients for an article you are writing.
- Go to an industry conference with a client.
- Serve on a board with an important contact.

**3 Look for a nexus with your practice.** Sounds simple, but if you only have so much time, your outside activities

should support your practice and put you in touch with people who would be good for you to know. For example, a construction lawyer might get active in Habitat for Humanity or a family lawyer might serve on the board of a women's shelter.

**4 Incorporate your family into your marketing efforts.** If you entertain a client, include your spouse. Invite a good referral source and his son to a baseball game with you and your son. Invite a client's family to go to *Disney on Ice* with yours. Entertain at home.

**5 Incorporate marketing into your existing activities.** If you are in a book club or bowling league, is there a good contact you can invite to join? This will provide a great opportunity for "off the clock" time to build the relationship.

**6 Find one thing to do well and sustain.** Too many lawyers have scattershot efforts. They will attend a conference one year and never return. They will take a prospect to lunch once. They will write one article. Often, this is because they haven't seen results, but results take time. Follow-up and reinforcement are among the most important determinants of success. So, no matter what the activity, look for ways to own it, such as getting a regular column in a publication, presenting each year at an annual conference, writing a blog, offering a webinar series or establishing quarterly lunches with a referral source. Sustaining an activity will also help you brand and differentiate yourself.

**7 Set some objectives for yourself.** Give yourself measurable goals that are reasonable but also aspirational. This could include things like these:

- Scheduling lunches with two external and two internal contacts per month
- Writing two client alerts in 2012
- Spending 20 hours a month on marketing/business development
- Adding 50 contacts to your LinkedIn connections or contact list
- Visiting three clients this year

**8 Be selective and take control of your activities.** Many lawyers' marketing efforts are unplanned, unfocused and

reactive. A lawyer will go to lunch with people who call, write an article for the publication that requests a submission or give a speech to the organization that asks on the topic it suggests. Maybe these are worthwhile activities—but maybe not. Often, people will say yes because they think they should be doing something. But you should establish the ground rules: With whom do you want to come into contact? What is the best way to reach them? What should be the focus of your message? If you only have so much time, use it for things that will pay off.

**9 Create an appointment for yourself.** Some lawyers find that calendaring activities or blocking time makes them more disciplined. You could block two hours on your calendar every Friday afternoon for marketing, and use this time to set up lunches, send thank-you notes, follow up with people or update your contact list. Similarly, you could set up recurring reminders for those with whom you want to stay in regular touch, such as a quarterly lunch with a good referral source.

**10 Break marketing projects into doable tasks.** When you think about it, could you find time to write one article in the next year? You would probably say yes. But at the end of the year, it's more likely than not that you wouldn't have done it. Frequently it can be helpful to make incremental progress. Month one, write a synopsis—what the article will cover and whom it's written for. Month two, identify publications that would be appropriate. Month three, develop the outline. Eventually, it will be done!



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**11 Leverage your activities.** If you give a presentation, turn it into an article. If you write an article, post it on LinkedIn and your firm's website, and send it to your contacts. In addition to reusing work product, this will reinforce your personal brand.

**12 Sign up for activities that give you the best marketing opportunities.** For example, if you join an organization's program committee, you will have the opportunity to contact speakers or perhaps speak yourself. A membership committee will allow you to reach out to prospective members, who could be good contacts for you.

In reality, the best rainmakers don't count the hours they spend on marketing and often can't even tell you exactly what they are



doing. But there is one thing they do that everyone can learn from: They see marketing and business development as part of their practice, not an extracurricular event. By finding ways to incorporate marketing activities into your practice and life, your efforts will be more enjoyable, efficient and effective. **LP**