

# Embrace Permission Marketing

By [Sally J. Schmidt](#)

*Permission marketing is a classic way to draw new clients out of your network through various initiatives that give you permission to call.*

I work with a lot of lawyers who don't particularly [like networking](#). In fact, a few have shared privately that one positive of the pandemic for them was not having to attend networking events. Still, growing your base of contacts is critical to developing business; it takes a number of people in your network to generate a new client. It also takes a decent number of "touches" with each of those people before you'll see business or referrals.

The good news is that building your contact list doesn't have to be done through traditional networking. Entrepreneur [Seth Godin](#) coined the term "permission marketing" two decades ago. In short, it means finding ways to let a contact give you permission to reach out and build the relationship. There are two kinds of permission marketing:

- **Implied-permission marketing.** This means you have an existing relationship. In most cases, lawyers feel comfortable reaching out to schedule lunch with existing contacts or sending an alert on a topic of interest to them.
- **Express-permission marketing.** This involves someone you may not know but who agrees to have contact with you, such as a prospect who signs up to attend a seminar.

## Using Permission Marketing

A lot of marketing initiatives will allow people to consent to have contact with you. Here are some examples of how permission marketing can work to your advantage.

### Webinars

If people you don't know register for a webinar, they are signaling their interest in the subject matter. Beyond the webinar itself, think about ways to engage them. Here are examples:

- Invite questions ahead of time to incorporate into your presentation.
- After the program, send attendees a compilation of the Q&A session or responses to unanswered questions from the chatroom.
- Follow up with those who registered but didn't attend to offer a recording or materials.
- Forward a copy of a case you referenced in your presentation.
- Send a related template, form or checklist.

## **Articles**

When writing, identify people who could be good resources for you. You can profile a company, interview people about trends or even quote selected contacts. These actions not only engage your targets but also give them visibility.

## **Survey results**

Every client wants to know what people like them are doing or thinking. What's "market" on deals? What issues are similar companies facing? How are others handling specific situations? You can conduct a quick survey and offer to provide the results to those who participate, like the top five predictions real estate professionals have for the next year, how companies are planning to bring employees back to work or plans to grow in-house legal departments. Respondents will be those interested in the answers and thus open to follow-up on the topic.

## **Alerts**

As with a webinar, by opting in to receive your alerts, recipients are telling you they are interested in the subject matter. Contacting them with seminar invitations, surveys, or additional substantive information in the area typically will be welcomed and perceived as valuable.

## **Direct contacts**

In the category of implied-permission marketing, reach out to potential referral sources for whom there could be mutual advantage in getting to know each other. Examples include an accountant for a business lawyer, a wealth advisor for an estate planning lawyer, or another bankruptcy lawyer for a bankruptcy lawyer. Be transparent about your purpose and how you feel the relationship could be mutually beneficial.

## **No Need for Apprehension**

By agreeing to participate in your marketing initiatives, people are indicating their interest in the subject and agreeing to receive information or contact. So, don't be afraid to reach out in a way that adds value to and grows the relationship.