

## MARKETING FOR LAWYERS: IT'S NOW OR NEVER

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### I. An Introduction to Marketing Basics

#### A. Marketing for Lawyers

People are constantly inundated by marketing efforts these days. Unless you are totally disconnected, you are exposed to it everywhere you look and with almost anything you listen to. Oh sure, marketing is on TV and in the newspapers—for those who still actually read them—but also on your screens while you shop, research, read the news, learn how to fix that leaky faucet, catch up on sports, or browse social media. If you connect with anything, marketers will find a way to connect with you, which is frustrating to many. However, an increasing number of lawyers have discovered the importance of marketing, and those who have not run the risk of being left behind.

Many lawyers have not kept up with the times. The legal industry's history of shunning the practice of advertising has handicapped itself—but marketing is different from advertising. Advertising is a form of marketing, but marketing encompasses much more: it involves identifying the product or service you are selling, who you are selling it to, and your relationship with those individuals both as potential and existing clients. Marketing includes branding, establishing customer loyalty, ensuring customer satisfaction, and engaging in strategic communications. Most successful lawyers are using marketing in various forms, whether they do so intentionally or would readily admit it. And those who are intentional about marketing often see results from their efforts and generate more business than those who are not.

Marketing in the legal industry started with large law firms in hyper-competitive markets. In order to sustain the significant overhead of such behemoths, and in the face of stiff competition from other equally impressive pillars of the Bar, a certain amount of strategic and intentional marketing was necessary. In those early days, marketing was simply done through relationships. The individuals responsible for this aspect of business generation were called “rainmakers,” but they were essentially marketing

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officers. Their job was to develop and maintain client relationships. Eventually, these officers began employing other professionals to help with these duties. They prepared glossy firm pamphlets, designed classy calling cards, hosted elaborate social events, and scheduled strategic dinners, cocktails, and accommodations at sporting events. That practice is marketing. Just as other advancements typically trickle down from large law firms in big cities to those of us in the hinterlands, marketing eventually made its way down here—with our large firms.

Most lawyers have been doing some form of marketing for years, though they were never taught it in law school or identified it as such. Listings in the Yellow Pages, little league sponsorships, ads in the high school football programs, client lunches, onsite visits, and Christmas gifts are all examples of marketing efforts. After a while, the thought behind these efforts often fades and the practice continues more out of habit than strategy, eventually losing its effectiveness.

At the end of the day, marketing is about education and relationships. It is about communicating what you do and how you do it. It is about focusing your attention and efforts on those individuals who are likely to generate more work, either directly or indirectly. It is about increasing your odds of being in the right place at the right time.

## **B. The Purpose of Marketing**

Remember the game show “Let’s Make a Deal” from the 1960s?<sup>1</sup> The contestants were audience members selected by the host, Monty Hall. As the show progressed over the years, audience members stepped-up their efforts to be noticed so they would be selected to compete. They began wearing costumes and holding signs, and their efforts became increasingly outrageous over time. This behavior was not pretty, but it is a lot like marketing—getting noticed in a crowded marketplace so you will be selected.

The legal landscape has changed significantly in the last few years in several different ways. Lawyers must face the fact that doing a good job for a fair fee may no longer be sufficient to garner work. While the competition between lawyers for work has increased, competition also comes from non-lawyers. The proliferation of the internet, the ability to access it easily from a multitude of devices, and society’s penchant for spending hours per day on it have provided endless opportunities for innovative entrepreneurs to edge into the mix. We know many legal needs in the country are going unmet,<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Let’s Make a Deal* (NBC television broadcast 1963).

<sup>2</sup> Hugh Logue, *Civil Needs Unmet: The Latent Demand for Legal Services*, A.B.A. (Mar. 16, 2020), [https://www.americanbar.org/groups/business\\_law/publications/blt/2020/04/civil-needs-unmet/](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/business_law/publications/blt/2020/04/civil-needs-unmet/) [https://perma.cc/PZ6K-6935].

but, simultaneously, many great and capable lawyers are sitting at their desks wishing they had more work. This gap is a product of an inefficient marketplace.

Those seeking legal assistance are not easily finding it. They are making uninformed or ill-informed decisions when hiring a lawyer. They either do not know how to hire one, or they know one but do not know exactly what he or she does. Or maybe they do not want the lawyer they know socially to help them with a particular issue. Surveys show that almost 62% of people hiring a lawyer first ask friends, family, and coworkers for recommendations.<sup>3</sup>

Marketing, not just advertising, involves communicating who you are and what you do—individually and as a firm—to those from whom you might anticipate additional work, either directly or indirectly. However, a lot of marketing is simply about being in the right place at the right time—namely in the mind of someone deciding which lawyer to use or to recommend at the time that they are making that decision. Lawyers cannot easily predict when someone may need legal services, but they can come much closer to identifying who may need such services. Those lawyers who have been actively and strategically marketing in order to stay top-of-mind with existing or potential clients are doing better than those who are not.

### C. Effective Marketing

The first element of marketing is to communicate who you are and what makes you unique. Because there are so many lawyers out there, merely stating that you are a lawyer is insufficient in most markets. Giving people more information about who you are enables them to find ways to connect with you and increases the chances that they will. After all, most of what lawyers do and deal with requires a certain amount of trust. Finding a connection with your client builds a relationship that is healthy and productive. Therefore, one of the best sources of new work is a satisfied client who feels a connection to you as a lawyer.

For those who already know you, it is important to communicate what you do and what you want to do. However, many lawyers struggle with this, perhaps due to modesty or the mandated hallmark of our profession: confidentiality.<sup>4</sup> Regardless, think about all the lawyers you know professionally but with whom you have not worked. Do you know what they actually do or their legal experience? The answer is most likely no. And if we in the profession do not know, do you think our (and their) potential

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<sup>3</sup> CLIO, LEGAL TRENDS REPORT 16 (2017), <https://files.clcio.com/market/ebooks/2017-Legal-Trends-Report.pdf> [<https://perma.cc/5UKZ-PPWZ>].

<sup>4</sup> MODEL RULES OF PRO. CONDUCT r. 1.6 (AM. BAR ASS'N 1980).

clients do? How are we going to refer work to these other lawyers when we do not know what they do? Because most people who want to hire a lawyer first ask friends, family, and coworkers for a recommendation,<sup>5</sup> we need to make sure those people understand what type of work we do. You might get a client through your website, but that client may have viewed your website because you were recommended to them by someone else.

Many lawyers are engaged in facets of a practice that they do not enjoy and thus probably do not do very well, but they keep taking those types of cases. Perhaps they pay the bills. But how will they ever expand their practice in a preferred direction if their time is eaten up by work that they do not want? Again, it is critical to identify what you really want to do, not just what you can do.

#### **D. Target Audience**

Your marketing communications should be targeted at the sources or likely sources of the work that you want. First, marketing should be focused on individuals, such as the individuals who will make the hiring decision and those who may influence the decision-maker. Second, remember that close to 62% of individuals looking for a lawyer first ask friends, family, and business associates for recommendations.<sup>6</sup> The people whom others ask for referrals are akin to influencers, and some of your marketing efforts should target those individuals as well. To do this, start by leveraging your existing relationships: your friends, family, clients, former clients, business associates, spouse, law partners, former classmates, etc. Those individuals must be educated on the work that you would like and must be reminded of your desire for it. Failure to engage in these marketing practices may have unfortunate consequences. For example, many lawyers have heard or experienced that oft-repeated story about a long-time client whose family experiences a catastrophic injury or death and then consults some other lawyer whom no one knows. “Oh, I didn’t know you did that sort of thing,” they say when asked. Avoid this scenario by communicating the work you currently do or would like to do.

Once you begin to assemble a list of these influencers, you will be astounded how extensive that list is. But you probably are not engaging with them in any systemic and regular way. This is low-hanging marketing fruit! Think how many people you can potentially reach through your extensive list. You never know when or where your influencers may have the opportunity to share your name. Yes, it will take some time. But, if you work

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<sup>5</sup> CLIO, *supra* note 3, at 16.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

on it a little every day, before long, you will have created a valuable and target-rich list.

### **E. Where to Start Marketing**

The first step to marketing yourself or your firm is to formulate a strategy. Marketing professionals can help you create a marketing strategy, but its ingredients can only come from you. Only you know your strengths, goals, contacts, distinguishing factors, marketing budget, etc. A good marketing professional can take those ingredients and help you identify the elements of a strategic marketing plan, though some translation and explanation of the legal field may be necessary. Without a personalized, strategic marketing plan, you may be wasting your time and money on marketing elements such as websites, social media management, and direct email campaigns. For example, having a stellar social media presence will not do much good if your website is lacking. And having a great website is not very effective if no one ever visits it. One email sent to a potential referral source with no follow-up is not going to have much impact six months later. The elements of your marketing plan must work together strategically and intentionally to be most effective.

Another important element of your strategic marketing plan is to create some goals by which you can measure its success. Marketing for the sake of marketing is like shooting skeet in the dark. You must measure the success of your efforts and alter your plan as needed. But remember, many elements of marketing take time and require patience. You cannot launch a new website and expect it to land on the first page of a Google search and generate new clients during its first week. Give the strategy time to work.

## **II. Types of Marketing**

### **A. Websites**

These days, a website is often your first opportunity to make a good impression on a potential client. Even if you were recommended by a potential client's friend, family member, or business associate, he or she will go to your website to evaluate you before you even know they are seeking counsel and have an opportunity to speak with them. Your marketing efforts should also be driving potential clients and referral sources to your website. As a result, the website needs to be ready to educate, influence, and impress. Further, your website should be constantly changing, growing, and improving. Unsurprisingly, recent Google algorithms rank dynamic websites

higher than those that are stale and stagnant.<sup>7</sup> So, yes you need a new website—and it should be in a constant state of improvement.

Your website should include recent pictures of you. Imagine the disappointment when your potential client meets you and you look twenty-five years older than they thought you would. That does not convey a feeling of comfort and trust. It is also a good idea to show you in your element—at your office or at least in some settings other than a photographer’s studio. Remember, this is your chance to convey a little about yourself and to impress someone looking to hire or recommend you.

Your website should naturally include the type of work you do, and it is helpful to describe and explain each category of work rather than simply list them. This will help with your Search Engine Optimization (“SEO”)<sup>8</sup> and with visitor engagement. Consider having Frequently Asked Questions (“FAQs”) or short blogs about various topics on your website. Including FAQs and blogs on topics interesting and relevant to your potential clients can do wonders for your SEO and visitor engagement. Blogs should be substantive but not too long. Five hundred words seems to be a sweet spot. FAQs can be modeled on the searches that people are entering. There are services that can provide you with that information.<sup>9</sup> You should also provide means and mechanisms for potential clients to contact you, either via phone, an online form, text, or an interactive chat bot.

Include a little about yourself in your website—ideally more than where you graduated from law school and what you did there unless you are a very recent graduate. Identify as many things about yourself as you feel comfortable sharing. This will help establish a connection with potential clients and distinguish you from lawyers who simply list their degrees and schools attended in their bio. It will also make for a more pleasant experience as you represent people with whom you may have something in common.

Websites are a lot like clothing—when something is out-of-date, it is obvious. A website can still convey a classic or old-fashioned image if that

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<sup>7</sup> See GOOGLE, SEARCH QUALITY RATING GENERAL GUIDELINES 42–43 (2020) (“Unmaintained websites should be rated Lowest if they fail to achieve their purpose due to the lack of maintenance. Unmaintained websites may also become hacked, defaced, or spammed with a large amount of distracting and unhelpful content. These pages should also be rated Lowest because they fail to accomplish their original purpose.”).

<sup>8</sup> Search Engine Optimization may be defined as “[t]he process of optimizing a website—as well as all the content on that website—so it will appear in prominent positions in the organic results of search engines.” Danny Goodwin, *What Is SEO? Here’s Search Engine Optimization Defined by 60 Experts*, SEARCH ENGINE J. (Jan. 2, 2018), <https://www.searchenginejournal.com/seo-101/what-is-seo/> [https://perma.cc/VW79-SFQB].

<sup>9</sup> See Anna Crowe, *44 Free Tools to Help You Find What People Search For*, SEARCH ENGINE J. (Mar. 7, 2021), <https://www.searchenginejournal.com/seo-101/what-people-search-for/#close> [https://perma.cc/PQ9K-54RM].

is what you want to communicate, but it must do so in an up-to-date way. As such, a website should be constantly evolving and improving. Not only does change ensure that information is up to date, but it also improves the website's SEO performance. Consider what potential clients may be searching on a search engine, the pages that are getting lots of visits, the pages that are not seeing much traffic, the type of work that you are seeking, and the latest professional developments in the lives of the firm's members. It is better to have no news or blogs than the latest posting being dated years or even months ago. If it is old news, take it out of the rotation or move it to some sort of history or archives section.

Packing your website willy-nilly with keywords will not necessarily get your site more views. The latest Google analytics will actually punish you for doing this.<sup>10</sup> The Google "bots" that determine where your site will appear in search engine results are looking for fresh, current, substantive information that they believe their users are looking for. Give searchers what they are looking for, not just what you want them to know.

Here is a quick word to the wise on web designers. Many will contact you with some statistics on your website's performance and promise to increase the number of visitors by some percentage. Keep in mind that, though more visitors could mean more potential clients, your goal is to garner clients, not just website visitors. It is better to have five visits by individuals who are genuine potential clients rather than 5,000 visits by "individuals" (bots) that will never be clients or referral sources.

If you do not engage someone to generate the material necessary to keep your site updated, then it is going to require some work on your part. Even if you do, you should be engaged with whomever is doing your writing and managing your site so that they are aware of any trends that you see in the pipeline of your potential clients and in the marketplace generally, and any changes in your client or work goals.

## **B. Direct Email Campaigns**

Direct email campaigns are one of the easiest but most underutilized marketing tools. When it comes to generating new work, direct email campaigns are like fishing in a stocked pond, while mass marketing is like deep sea fishing without a GPS or fish-finder. These campaigns can generate new business in two principal ways: new work from old or existing clients, and referrals from influencers.

First, you will need to create a list of potential recipients of your email campaigns. You can build this from your email contacts or your practice

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<sup>10</sup> See GOOGLE, *supra* note 7, at 49, 52 (stating that websites that use "keyword stuffing" are considered the "[l]owest quality" pages).

management system. You can also refer to membership lists and directories of organizations of which you are a member. Go through the list and identify those you know or have met. You might want to identify each person on your list in a group or category such as “client,” “lawyer,” “family,” or “other” to make it easier to comply with the Model Rules of Professional Conduct. Remember, under Rule 7.3 of the Model Rules of Professional Conduct, communications with past and present clients, others with whom you have or have had a professional relationship, family, and other lawyers are exceptions to the prohibition on solicitations.<sup>11</sup> So, identifying those individuals you can email without violating the solicitation rules can save you some heartache.

After you have created your list, make efforts to keep the list updated, such as with the name of a person you met at a conference, someone who came to your office for a real estate closing, or an attorney with whom you developed a relationship during a case. Your list can be exported into any number of online services that manage email campaigns, such as Mailchimp, ConstantContact, and SendinBlue. Use a reputable email campaign manager to ensure that you are compliant with the CAN-SPAM Act, which sets forth rules about unsolicited emails.<sup>12</sup>

Your campaigns should have a variety of themes. Some should remind or inform recipients of who you are and what you do. Pick a topic and dedicate an email to that topic. It does not have to say, “Hey, I handle car wrecks!” but could perhaps include a topic related to car wrecks that they might find interesting or helpful. Others could feature developments in your area of the law. Or perhaps you could publish a newsletter that would be of interest to subgroups within your target audience. The idea is to find some excuse to put yourself in the minds of these individuals who can directly or indirectly produce more work for you.

### C. Social Media

Social media is a great means of accomplishing your primary marketing goal of being in the right place at the right time—in the minds of those deciding which legal services to use or recommend. Seek out the social media platforms that are most likely to be used by your potential clients and referral sources. Depending on your type of practice and locale, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, and/or Facebook may be right for you, but pay attention to new platforms. With most forms of social media, you can seek out individuals with whom you can connect. You will need to actively manage

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<sup>11</sup> MODEL RULES OF PRO. CONDUCT r. 7.3 (AM. BAR ASS’N 1980); *see also* ALA. RULES OF PRO. CONDUCT r. 7.3.

<sup>12</sup> Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing Act of 2003, 15 U.S.C. §§ 7701–7713.

your connections (or pay someone to manage them for you). Once you connect with others, you can build your following and connections by commenting on the posts of others. Even if you never have any original posts, you are still making connections that can work to remind people who you are.

To maximize the value and benefit of a presence on social media, you should create and post with some regularity. As with all marketing, you get out of it what you put into it, and what you put into it should be strategic. Say something that would be of interest to your potential clients or referral sources. Consider including high quality graphics or videos. Avoid controversial topics unless that is the type of practice you have or want. Think of social media posting like a woodworking project where you measure twice and cut once—prepare your post and review it more than once before you let it loose.

The Rules of Professional Conduct apply to social media.<sup>13</sup> You do not have to include a disclaimer on every post so long as you have it on your home page for that platform, but other rules regarding advertising and solicitations still apply.<sup>14</sup> Even if your posts are technically compliant, they can still get you into trouble, especially if your account or posts identify you as a lawyer. When in doubt, create a separate personal account from the one for you as a professional lawyer.

If necessary, you can contract with someone to manage your social media at a reasonable cost. For example, some companies will prepare social media posts for clients, send them to the client for approval, and then schedule their publication. Scheduling posts allows you to have a consistent social media presence without having to actually be on social media regularly. Whether or not you outsource or schedule posts, you can continue to engage personally on any given platform through comments and likes.

#### **D. Digital Advertising**

Digital advertising is another great tool, depending on the type of practice and cases that the lawyer hopes to generate. This type of marketing encompasses a number of different tools, such as search engine marketing, banner ads, and social media-specific ads.

Search engine marketing is basically buying a position for your firm on search engines and is geared to certain key words or search terms.<sup>15</sup> Your

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<sup>13</sup> See MODEL RULES OF PRO. CONDUCT r. 7.2–7.4 (AM. BAR ASS'N 1980); see also ABA Comm. on Ethics & Pro. Resp., Formal Op. 480 (2018).

<sup>14</sup> MODEL RULES OF PRO. CONDUCT r. 7.2–7.3 (AM. BAR ASS'N 1980).

<sup>15</sup> See, e.g., *Learn About Search Engine Marketing*, MICROSOFT (last visited Mar. 20, 2021), <https://about.ads.microsoft.com/en-us/get-started/search-engine-marketing-basics> [<https://perma.cc/654A-V6QA>].

purchase and placement occur in a virtual auction-like marketplace where the cost of “buying” those words may vary greatly depending on their popularity among those seeking them and what they are willing to pay.<sup>16</sup> In addition to the key words, your advertiser may also want you to define the demographics of those to whom you want your placement focused—by geography, age, education, work, career, etc.<sup>17</sup>

Social media has its own digital advertising forms, such as banner ads, paid posts within user feeds, and even boosted posts to directly target specific users.<sup>18</sup> Banner ads are the advertisements that appear at the top, bottom, side or even in the content of pages that you view or visit.<sup>19</sup> A click on the ad takes you to a landing page where viewers can learn more, submit contact information, etc. You can buy ads on particular sites or you can leave that to the advertiser, who uses algorithms based on your target audience demographics to identify the sites that they typically visit.<sup>20</sup>

With digital advertising comes a lot of data. You can get reports about who clicked on your ad, how many clicked on your ad, how many times they clicked on your ad, how long they spent on your landing page, etc. You can also pay for follow-up advertising, by which those who click one of your ads will see repeated ads from you for a period of time after they leave. You have probably experienced this type of following as you have roamed the internet or social media. Digital advertising generally requires the lawyer ad disclaimer to be placed somewhere in the process. And, as with other advertising, digital advertising must be filed with the Alabama State Bar.<sup>21</sup> One must be careful defining recipients of digital ads or boosted advertising posts, as defining the recipients too narrowly could amount to solicitation, which is not allowed by our Rules of Professional Conduct.<sup>22</sup>

### E. Lists and Directories

Many lists, directories, and accolades are available to lawyers today. Some are “by invitation only,” though the qualifications are sometimes a little vague, while others collect a fee on the back end if you accept a case through them. Some do not charge you for a listing but permit you to buy ads or

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<sup>16</sup> *Id.*

<sup>17</sup> *Id.*

<sup>18</sup> Christina Newberry & Stacey McLachlan, *Social Media Advertising 101: How to Get the Most Out of Your Ad Budget*, HOOTSUITE BLOG (Sept. 9, 2020), <https://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-advertising/> [<https://perma.cc/WD6P-XT4G>].

<sup>19</sup> *See, e.g., Display Campaigns*, GOOGLE ADS (last visited Mar. 20, 2021), <https://ads.google.com/home/campaigns/display-ads/> [<https://perma.cc/9YYV-TDRS>].

<sup>20</sup> *Id.*

<sup>21</sup> ALA. RULES OF PRO. CONDUCT r. 7.2(b).

<sup>22</sup> *Id.* at r. 7.3.

premium placements, and others allow you to purchase “badging” to include on your website to tout your selection to the exclusive list. If you pay for your listing in any way, regardless of how established this list or publication may be, you should consider it advertising and evaluate it accordingly. Are you getting your money’s worth?

As the practice of law has changed, the internet and its search engines have made these listings and directories mostly obsolete. Though these publications rank lawyers according to surveys of fellow lawyers, Google publishes rankings from actual clients, ideally in a format that people are used to seeing and using.<sup>23</sup> Rather than relying on a directory appearing in a potential client’s search engine results, lawyers can insert themselves into these results without being listed on a directory.<sup>24</sup> Perhaps the reason some directories persist is because clients are motivated by the badges showing inclusion in a group or listing, though I would argue most potential clients are not influenced by such badges. There may be some exceptions for certain lists or memberships and certain practice types. Do a quick survey of your clients and get their opinion. Check with your referral sources. You will likely find that the lists and directories are the ones doing the great marketing—to lawyers. Before renewing your subscription to any directory, listing service, or publication, evaluate it. How many cases or clients did you get as a result of it? How much did it cost? Could that money be better spent on other marketing efforts?

### **III. Firm and Personal Marketing: The Process and Considerations**

#### **A. Firm Marketing Versus Personal Marketing**

For lawyers who are part of a firm, that firm likely markets the firm as a whole. For example, firms often buy ads in various local yearbooks, programs, and flyers. Another common type of firm marketing is the distribution of promotional, daily-use products, such as magnetic calendars, letter openers, pens, koozies, and even bottles of hand sanitizer with the firm’s logo. Websites also serve as marketing tools for the entire firm, as does a firm’s social media presence. These forms of marketing all have their place in a firm’s marketing budget.

However, a firm’s marketing goals are not complete unless they also include marketing of practice areas, types of cases, and individuals. Marketing a firm’s practice areas serves two functions: education and reminder. This type of marketing informs potential clients and referral

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<sup>23</sup> See *Local SEO for Lawyers*, RANKINGS.IO, <https://rankings.io/seo-for-lawyers/ranking-factors/> [https://perma.cc/G8VV-367J] (last visited Mar. 25, 2021).

<sup>24</sup> *Id.*

sources of the types of work or services that the firm provides. Once potential clients have been educated on the firm's offerings, they need to be reminded. Someone may know you for one type of practice but not realize that others in the firm are equally skilled at providing other services. Even if those clients or former clients did not have a need for those services in the past, they may need them now or might know someone who does. Leverage those relationships by informing and reminding them of the variety of services and practice areas the firm offers.

An additional type of firm marketing is marketing of its individual members. Everyone in a firm should devote time, energy, and resources to marketing themselves and their practice. However, different firms and individuals may choose different marketing tools to maximize their effect in accordance with their budgetary constraints. Firms and individuals should play to their strengths. A partner who is a social creature and can generate business from social connections should be supported in enhancing and developing those connections. Others who are active professionally and garner business through referrals from other lawyers should be supported in those endeavors. And those who have the ability to connect with individuals within a particular trade or business should be supported in those activities. If the firm's compensation plan is effective, everyone will benefit from a lawyer's increased production. A rising tide should raise all ships.

A firm's strategic marketing plan and budget should go beyond mere advertisements and must include a wide variety of tools that address every individual and target all practice areas.

### **B. Cross-Selling**

A law firm should be more than a collection of solo practitioners. A true partnership is the epitome of the whole being more than the sum of its collective parts. A firm compensation plan that rewards an attorney's production should include more than just the work they do. It should also include the work that the attorney produces for the firm that is done by others within it. And for that type of arrangement to be successful, effort is required beyond simply having a robust compensation plan.

In order to reach a firm's marketing potential, members of a firm must engage in not only marketing strategies previously discussed but also in cross-selling. It is not enough to market simply to those areas within each member's individual purview. Instead, a firm's members should also be marketing the firm's other practice areas and individuals. Everyone who does so is leveraging their relationships, reputation, and resources to create even greater value for the firm as a whole—and thus for themselves.

The foundation of good cross-selling is a good understanding of what work everyone in the firm does. For larger firms, it may help to just know what the firm is capable of doing even if you do not know the individuals involved in specific areas. One of the reasons firm members hesitate to cross-sell is because they have had a bad experience in the past. It is damaging for an individual and a firm to recommend someone within the firm to a client, former client, friend, or associate and for them to have a bad experience. The firm should be built on trust and an understanding that all attorneys will provide quality services for a reasonable fee and in a reasonable amount of time. Failures in these areas must be dealt with if the firm's members are to engage in cross-selling. A firm with healthy marketing efforts can take them to the next level by actively encouraging and supporting cross-selling.

### **C. Converting Leads to Clients**

Though marketing is unquestionably important to a firm or individual's success, those efforts must be paired with other skills as well. Attorneys must be able to convert a lead, or potential client, into an actual client, or else marketing was for naught. Marketing is about getting the lead to the door, but conversion is bringing them in. Many website purveyors tout increased website visitors, which can be a good step. But, if those visitors are not truly potential clients, their visits do not really matter. Likewise, if the visitors do not engage with you, then they are not likely to become clients.

The first step in converting leads into clients is to keep the process simple. Do not create unnecessary roadblocks or hurdles that may repel your leads. Consider talking to leads on the phone rather than trying to meet them in person, as not everyone is comfortable with a face-to-face meeting with someone they do not know. Firms and individuals intending to take advantage of phone communications with clients must streamline their phone systems. Long hold times and meaningless and frustrating transfers will not work. Nor will a lengthy auto-attendant. Additionally, consider other methods of communication for leads who may dislike speaking on the phone; there are many alternatives available—just ensure the interchange is still quick, efficient, informative, and responsive. Customer service is key.

But the story does not end with marketing and lead conversion. We must be able to deliver what the client needs and meet their expectations. Providing quality service yields immediate benefits to your client and to your business but can also provide future benefits if clients are willing to recommend you when asked. If you cannot deliver, you will not find long term success. Unsatisfied clients can impact business by leaving negative reviews on the internet, which means the survival rate for ineffective counsel is much shorter than it used to be. Thus, firms must adopt a holistic approach

to marketing strategies that include both bringing in and providing excellent services to clients.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

The practice of law is constantly changing. Those who adapt are most likely to survive. Marketing is going to become an ever-increasing part of what lawyers must do. We can accept that fact, engage in strategic marketing efforts, and ready ourselves for future change. Or we can sit alone in our offices next to the silent fax machine wondering where all our work went.