

Biz Dev That Works – Getting Back to Basics

How many of the following have you tried as a marketing initiative or the next big client attraction tool?



Jaffe Staff

- Social media
- Directory listings
- Print, radio and TV advertising
- SEO
- Unique website
- Educational programming and events
- Client appreciation events
- Speaking
- Association sponsorship
- Conferences
- Begging
- Groveling
- SuperBestOver-RatedTopLawyer Awards publications

While any of the above (or a combination) may work, chances are that you're spreading yourself thin and looking at a very daunting marketing plan if you are trying to do all of them at once.

Instead, think about these ideals about marketing â€¦

Marketing Myths

"I'm new in my career â€¦ I don't know anyone."

"It's all about a sales mentality and personality, and I'm not wired that way."

"I'll hang around until someone retires and gives me their book of business."

Marketing Certainties

Keep it simple â€¦ a good plan that's well-executed beats a brilliant plan that isn't executed.

Results will not occur overnight, but they will happen and they will be measurable.

The costliest marketing plan out there? Doing nothing.

Marketing Realities

You can create a plan that matches your personality and strengths.

You owe it to yourself, so make appointments and dedicate specific time to complete your marketing initiatives just as you would for a court appearance, deposition, etc.

Slow and steady (and consistency) wins the race. Marketing has to become a habit and key element that drives your work day, your practice growth and your personal goals.

Once you remove the marketing myths from your mindset, creating a marketing plan for your law practice is really as simple as taking a deep breath and following a common sense, basic approach. Here is a sample plan as an example.

12-MONTH ATTORNEY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- Leverage membership in an association that I belong to. Schedule a lunch appointment with fellow members outside association activities to discuss how we can assist each other with business development, [networking](#) and referrals.
- Complete three speaking engagements – can be a firm event or for an industry group, state bar, etc.
- Schedule one client lunch per month specifically to have my "how" meeting (how are you doing, how are we doing, how is business).
- Identify my top three clients and expand new business from them by 15 percent – a good start would be with the previous item.
- Take the same top three clients and ask them to introduce you or refer you to one new prospect each.

â now *STOP*. Work this business development plan for the entire year. Complete a road map of exactly how you're going to tackle each initiative, including target due dates. Ask a colleague or assistant to help keep you accountable and on track.

Here are a few thoughts about client relationships and retention (which are factored into the sample plan):

"Appreciation can make a day, even change a life. Your willingness to put it into words is all that is necessary."

– Margaret Cousin

It's not enough to do good work. You must also be perceived as a highly valuable member of the client's business.

Where do you begin?

What you say to your clients before, during and after you get hired makes all the difference. How you develop your relationship is critical to their perception of your value. The most-important thing you should be doing: Get out of your office and meet with your clients! Why? Because Out of Sight = Out of Mind. **Never** assume a client who consulted

with you in the past will consult you in the future. To prevent that from happening:

- **Meet** with clients to communicate your commitment to your relationship and their success.
- **Meet** with them to demonstrate a service-oriented "we care" attitude.
- **Meet** with them to provide first-class legal services on a cost-effective basis – services that anticipate and meet their business needs.
- **Meet** with them to discover their expectations – and then always exceed those expectations.
- **Meet** with them to determine any areas where you can improve your work product and service delivery. Your clients will appreciate that you asked and that you want to know.

Why does this matter? Because your competitors' hottest prospects are *your* current clients! In this day of mass electronic and instant communication, loyal client relationships are dwindling. You have to have the competitive edge. The way you do that is to create a genuine and loyal relationship with your clients, and the way you do *that* is to actually lay eyes on them – spend quality time with them. It is so much easier to retain a client than to gain a new one!