

Women Rainmakers

SHARE THEIR TOP TIPS

Fee-earners from across the continent e-mailed their best tips on an ABA listserv, recommending steps to take and books to read.

BY STACY WEST CLARK

A YEAR OR SO AGO, the American Bar Association Law Practice Management Section set up a Listserv for women entitled Women Rainmakers. The 'serv was full of chatter. Women fee-earners from all parts of the country exchanged their best marketing tips and strategies. Some fee-earners were in big firms—others in solo practice in Montana.

What follows are their unabridged words. Some of these tips are ingenious and others are just plain representative of what works in the trenches. Here is a sampling (note some of the names of their Web sites):

Pauline H. G. Getz, Getz & Associates

Four key questions:

1. Constantly ask yourself “Who gets to my clients before I



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do?” and then build relationships with those people.

2. (This is actually #1) Relationships, relationships, relationships. Seek them out, build them, maintain them and nurture them.

3. Instead of saying “I’m a corporate fee-earner,” describe your work in terms clients will understand and tell anecdotes they can relate to. For example, I say, “I help people form companies, maintain companies, buy them, sell them, merge them, write contracts to help them do business, and help you comply with the securities laws when you’re trying to raise

do?” and then build relationships with those people.

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money for your company.” Then, I look for opportunities to tell stories, such as, “I met with a client whose business partner died and they didn’t have anything in writing between them...” The story ultimately demonstrates that I can help in that kind of situation.

4. Enter every opportunity, such as a service club or professional organization, with the attitude of “What can I bring to this group? What can I do for them?” Then get in there, do something, build trust and build relationships. Lo and behold! What goes around, comes around. The referrals are better because they come from a place of trust.
5. Make sure your clients see your name at least once a month. Mail an announcement, mail an interesting article, invite them to your next seminar, sponsor an event, send out press releases and copy your clients (and post to your own Web site), send them an invoice—remember, this is an important marketing tool. Did you spell everything correctly? Does your invoice “look like” the dollar amount at the bottom?

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Nancy W. Newkirk, Partner, LegalLeaders, Inc.

Marketing a family law practice:

To make “marketing” and “networking” more concrete, think about picking up the phone and calling a few people you may know in related fields or other firms that don’t do your type of law and talk with them. Ask them how you might best get your expertise known to their colleagues and follow up on their ideas. This has two benefits:

1. You are letting them know that you do this type of work and want more business.
2. They may have some very good ideas as to how to make connections in their field.

How about the Rotary? Because local business people attend, it might be a good way to meet people outside of your practice area.

Get together with someone at the trustee department at a bank and present a joint seminar for local citizens about divorce and how to administer funds for children, etc. in these circumstances. A mailing would get your name and expertise out to a lot of real people. Those with an interest or potential interest might attend or save your mailing for future need.

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Deirdre M. O’Callaghan, Preti, Flaherty, Beliveau, Pachios & Haley, LLC

Here are two suggestions for rainmaking:

1. Work with the other women in your firm to cross-market

each other. Our firm has formed a women’s networking group within the firm. We hold events for women clients and prospects—everything from a book group to speakers to a private holiday shopping event. We combine networking time with educational opportunities or charitable causes, to allow women to “multitask” at a single event.

2. Like many others have already said, it’s relationship building. One tip I got early on that has been helpful: do things for others without expecting anything in return. It takes time, but it comes back in spades!

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Laura A. Schroeder

Tell, present and read:

1. Tell your best clients that you would like to have more clients like them doing the same sort of work that you did for them. Ask them to set up an introduction. This works!
2. Make presentations. I am a “water lawyer” and do continuing education presentations for surveyors, engineers, well-drillers, real estate people, etc. This gets your name out to the referral network.
3. Read *Selling the Invisible*.

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Yvenne M. King

From a fee-earner and “strategic coach” in New York City:

To network with other professional women, start a select networking group. I started one with two of my colleagues, called the Professional Business Alliance in the Hampton Roads area, and business began generating within several months. Be selective as to who comes into the group (e.g. are they proactive networkers looking to help each other out?) and set it up so that it’s one person per industry or sub-industry (e.g. only one corporate fee-earner, etc.).

212.558.6559, yking@concentric.net

Brett R. Harris, Wilentz, Goldman & Spitzer, P.A.

From a New Jersey fee-earner:

1. Thank people who refer work to you. It could be a fruit basket or even a quick note, but people like to be appreciated.
2. Don’t join an organization just for business referrals—it will show that you aren’t committed. Life is too short to waste time on things that you don’t believe in. If, on the

other hand, you are dedicated to the cause, your efforts will shine.

3. Explore the use of technology to organize and maximize use of contacts.

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Bea Wolper

From an Ohio participant:

In 1984, I set up a group for women business owners who had been in business for over three years. I permitted up to three fee-earners, three accountants and three bankers... no more. I stopped holding my monthly meetings in 2002 when I had over 900 members on my mailing list (with about 70% representation).

Karen L. Brady, Karen Brady & Associates, P.C.

From a Colorado fee-earner:

Recommended reading: *She Wins, You Win*. Among other things, it reminds us that if we want prospects to use us as professional women, we should be sending our business to professional women, i.e. our CPAs, insurance brokers, etc. 303.420.2863, kbrady@coloradoestateplanning.com

Miriam N. Jacobson

Give and ye shall receive:

The whole notion of networking is making contacts, giving something to others, and reminding them of your presence and desire for clients.

To reach family therapists, ask the ones you know if they have a local organization that meets and if you could address them about family law issues. If/when you do go to the meeting, take along materials—a brochure (bring lots of copies) about what you do, your business cards, an outline of what you'll talk about, all with your name and contact info on them. Pass them out. Take cards from the people there, or ask the organization's representative if you could have a list of attendees (taking their cards is better, because they're handing the card to you, rather than your having to make a "cold" contact).

Then call them, have breakfast, coffee, lunch with them one-on-one, get to know them and their lives and their needs. Tell them outright that you would like to be able to help their patients if they have professional issues. The more personal information and contact you can establish, the more trust and

comfort level they feel, and will result in referrals eventually. Not immediately, not necessarily after one or two meetings, but eventually.

Within your local bar association, get to know lawyers, and give them all of the same treatment as above. You market to them by assuring them that you're not out to steal their clients (put it more softly, but that's the message you want them to understand), and that you would appreciate their referrals, and would keep them in mind when your clients need services.

Even being active with your local section of your professional association will get you noticed, and when they have conflicts of interest, or can't handle a matter, they'll think of you.

Get to know other solos who aren't jack-of-all trades, and therefore don't handle your area of practice.

Join a local business club, chamber of commerce, or a "tip" or "networking" club. The latter often limit how many of any category may join, to minimize competition and to make for better networking, i.e. every member refers business to other members. Remember to refer people who ask you about things that are not in your area to these contacts. Then they'll owe you a referral.

Write a snappy article about some current professional issue, geared to consumers, not fee-earners, and offer it to your local newspaper.

Don't forget to put announcements in your local professional and general circulation newspaper if you move your office, if you add an associate, if you've spoken at an event.

Always have a supply of your business cards in your pocket, and hand them to people you're meeting. Ask them for their cards. Keep a file on your computer with the information you gather.

Send your clients and referral sources holiday cards, birthday cards, clippings of articles you think may be of interest to them, etc.

Yes, it's a lot of work, but you will make good friends in the process, and you will get more clients.

I suggest Theda ("Teddy") Snyder's book, *Running a Law Practice on a Shoestring*. It had many more suggestions. 215.569.2415, miriam@mnjlaw.com, www.mnjlaw.com

Any member of the ABA Law Practice Management Section can join this free Listserv by contacting: Shelby Meyer at 312.988.5615 or sameyer@staff.abanet.org.

Copies of the book *Women Rainmakers' Best Marketing Tips*, 2nd Ed., by Theda C. Snyder can be purchased online for \$27.95 in the Professional Marketing Store, on the Web at www.lawmarketing.biz/store.

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