



MARKETING YOURSELF

YL6

BY STACY WEST CLARK

Hunting for Clients: How to Get Started

Many lawyers in the Delaware Valley have thought long and hard about getting more business. If you are one of the many who would like to have a bigger book of business, you have probably asked yourself, “How do I get started? What should I do first? What tools do I need? Where should I spend my valuable time?” Here come your answers.

IT'S CALLED MARKETING

First, some rules of marketing.

Marketing — put in its simplest form — is putting yourself in situations where you will meet people who need to buy your services. It is a contact sport, and it can not be delegated to someone else. You have to do it if you want people to hire *you*.

Marketing always involves exceptional client service and work product. It also involves exceptional client relations. Example: Don't ever talk to your client on a speaker-phone.

Eighty percent of your work will come from 20 percent of your clients. It is three to five times more expensive to develop work from a new client than it is to get more work from an existing client.

Marketing requires doing more than one task. One marketing activity will very, very rarely bring in business. Experts tell us it takes approximately seven encounters before a sale is closed, so you need to get moving.

Clients hire lawyers today who understand both their business and their industry, and the events affecting both.

The best rainmakers have a marketing plan in place and spend no time or money on any marketing activities that do not further the goal of the plan.

Great rainmakers view every person they meet as a potential client. They have massive mailing lists. They are true hunters — they can almost smell work.

So you want to be a rainmaker?

Great rainmakers have several traits in common. They view every person they meet as a potential client. They look for opportunities to get in front of decision-makers and demonstrate their knowledge of the company's business. They have massive mailing lists which they use to stay in front of potential clients,

referral sources and clients. They exude a “can do” spirit and command of their practice area. They put the client first always. Finally, they are not afraid to put themselves out there and ask for work. They are true hunters — they can almost smell work.

BAD MARKETING

You may be thinking, “Well, I wrote an article. Isn't that enough?” No. Bad marketing is easy to spot. Ask yourself honestly if you are guilty of any of the following:

- Writing an article and getting it published in a periodical your target clients do not read.
- Issuing a press release about a speech you made and thinking you will get work from it. (Making a speech is not news.)
- Not following up with attendees at a speech you made.
- Sitting with your friends at a networking or association gathering.
- Doing one marketing task — like writing an article — and thinking business will come from that one activity. (“Hey, I worked hard on that article. I am done marketing this month!”)
- Not getting out and rubbing elbows with possible referral sources, clients and contacts. (“My phone will ring — I know it will!”)
- Generically describing what you do to third parties: “I am a litigator.” “I am a corporate lawyer.” Argh — what does that mean? Why should I remember this about you? Which description better markets the services

of this lawyer: “Hi, I am an intellectual property lawyer,” or “Hi, I help musicians protect their music from piracy and theft.”

- Not treating referral sources as clients.
- Not actively trying to understand the client’s company, their business challenges, the kinds of customers/clients they are looking for, obstacles they face and more.
- Not following up after each and every marketing activity.
- Not looking and sounding like someone you would want to hire to deal with a “bet-your-company problem.”
- Taking part in a marketing activity you are not good at and do not enjoy. (If you are a bad speaker, don’t speak)

GOOD MARKETING

Now that you know the rules and what *not* to do, let’s get started.

Get your marketing tools in order. What tools do you need to get going? I recommend that my clients do the following:

- Have a target list. Prepare a target list of 20 companies/individuals that you would like to represent or do more work for.
- Make a mailing list. Prepare a list of all your contacts from way back when. Include on it your school, college and extracurricular friends, your neighbors, anyone you buy a service from, anyone you have given work to, your entire family and partner’s family, and everyone in clubs or associations you belong to. Any person you can think of may become a client or may refer one to you. Create targeted mailings to people on your contact list. Review the list constantly to identify people you need to visit or get in front of.
- Prepare your elevator speech. Get your 30-second “selling” elevator speech ready that responds to “What do you do for a living?” Be able to sell your services in 30 seconds or less. Practice on friends and family and in the mirror so you become comfortable with it.
- Write to people in ink. Get personal notecard stationery and post-its to send those on your mailing lists articles of interest, congratulatory notes and more. A handwritten note is much more powerful than an e-mail. *Always!*
- Get your Lexis/Nexis or Westlaw training in order. All marketing plans should be based on research! Use these services and a search engine such as Google to identify which industries, companies and individuals need or want to buy what you sell. Find out how and why companies have been in the news, who the key employees at the company are, what legal troubles the company has or may have and who

their lawyers are.

- Your best assistant — your secretary! Formulate a great team approach with your secretary to deliver outstanding client service. Discuss how phone calls should be answered and how they should be handled when you are unavailable or unreachable. Your secretary can also review daily news and trade publications for articles that might be of interest to clients, prepare birthday cards and more. General counsel have told me that they know who has a great secretary and who does not. (Translation: who gets my messages right and finds the lawyer when I need him or her.)

- Never leave home without them (your business cards). Make sure you keep business cards on your person, in your briefcase, at home, in suit jackets and in your car. Pass them out. Collect them from others and add them to your personal database.

- Are you up-to-date? Make sure your bio, Web site and marketing materials about your practice are up-to-date and ready for client review.

NOW MAKE A PLAN

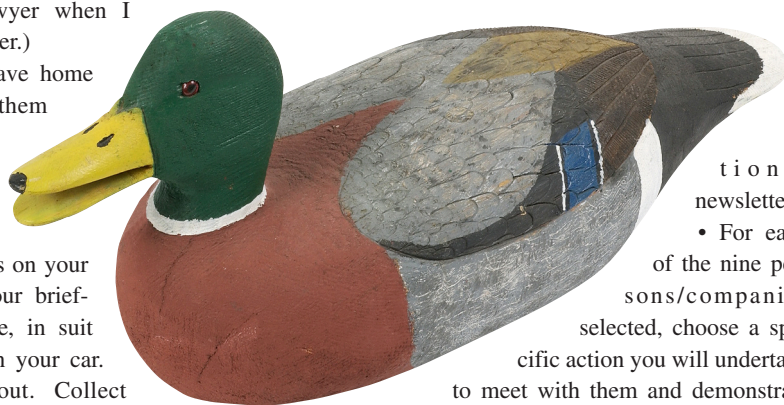
With your tools in order, your contact list ready to mine, your list of target companies prepared and your research done on them, you are now ready to memorialize your game plan into a simple 12-point marketing plan. This plan will be your marketing “to-do” list for the next six months. This is where you will focus your marketing energies and dollars.

Between now and my next column, which will appear in July, look at the target list you created above and do the following:

- Identify three clients and three potential clients you will focus on to get work from in the next six months. Just six names.
- Identify three referral sources you will meet with to discuss sending each other business. Who is a referral source? Anyone who is

in a position to send you work or introduce you to potential clients is a referral source. Think: classmates from law school or college and anyone who might sell your clients a service (accountants, insurance, physicians, financiers etc.)

- Pick a trade, business or bar association and get busy in it. Becoming a member is not good enough. You have to play an active role in the group so fellow members get to work with you and see you in professional action. Work on a committee. Undertake a job. Speak at a conference. Write a regular column in the organiza-



tion’s newsletter.

- For each of the nine persons/companies selected, choose a specific action you will undertake to meet with them and demonstrate ways in which you can help them save money, prevent costly litigation, solve a problem they are having, better understand their business or industry, and more. Such activities could include meeting for lunch or breakfast (or playing a sport, attending an entertainment or sporting event); visiting their place of business, getting a tour of the facilities and meeting their key people; doing an on-site seminar for their employees; or introducing them to a potential customer or client.

EASY, RIGHT? GET BUSY!

The most important thing I can advise you to do right now is get out of your office and talk to people. Find out what is keeping them up at night, or what they like best about their jobs. Find out who their current counsel is and why. Identify how you can help them solve their problems and be more successful. Form personal relationships. Make new friends. Listen. Follow up.

In the coming months, look for more tried and true marketing tips to help you build your practice. I’ll be checking in on you! •

STACY WEST CLARK has been helping Philadelphia lawyers and law firms expand their practices for 20 years. She is president of Stacy Clark Marketing (www.stacyclarkmarketing.com.) She is a former attorney with Morgan Lewis & Bockius and was the firm’s first marketing director — a position created for her in 1986 based on a proposal she made to the firm’s management. Look for Stacy’s upcoming articles on: how to get more work from current clients, how to get press for your activities and expertise, how to network effectively and much more. Stay tuned!