

Powerful Prospecting Starts with a Plan

Article By:

Margaret Grisdela

Social media is all the rage these days, and it is indeed an effective way to maintain high visibility in the legal marketplace. Social media is only one piece in the business development puzzle, however.

Rainmaking success works best with an integrated marketing plan. There are many communications channels available to build your prospect list, and finding the mix for your law practice will reward you with new business opportunities.

Here are the top seven proven lead generation techniques for legal marketing:

1. Speak.

Addressing an audience of prospective clients is one of the best possible ways to demonstrate your legal knowledge. While most of your preparation will focus on the presentation itself, lead generation is accelerated when you make the time to promote the event in advance and then quickly follow up on all your leads after the event. Make a point to get a list of all audience members, even if you have to give something away in exchange for a business card.

2. Publish.

Getting your name in print as an author essentially provides an independent third party endorsement of your legal expertise. A well written article in a highly regarded legal or trade publication will contribute to your business development efforts for years to come.

3. Prioritize your referral network.

Most attorneys maintain an informal list of referral sources. Take this a step further by writing down your best 5-10 referral sources, and assigning a priority to each contact person. Schedule a meeting with your “A” sources every 30-45 days, your “B” sources every 60-90 days, and stay in touch with your “C” sources with less time-consuming methods like email or a phone call. Constantly work to refine your list to maximize performance, and remember to reciprocate with qualified leads for your referral partners.

4. Market to current and past clients.

Your best source of new revenue in the short run is hidden in your client list. Stay in touch with clients at least 4-6 times per year through newsletters, client alerts, or events to increase retention rates, up-sell, and cross-sell.

5. Maintain a prospect list.

Refine your “ideal client” profile to the point that you can compile a list of at least 25 key prospects, identified by firm name and contact person. Work this list diligently in a continual effort to move to the “next step” of gaining the client. Start by identifying a mutual acquaintance who might provide an introduction, or an organization where your prospect is active. Move from getting acquainted to building trust, assessing needs, suggesting solutions, demonstrating your value equation, and closing the deal. The entire process may take months or even years, so be patient but politely persistent.

6. Leverage organizational memberships.

Whether it's a bar association or an industry organization, turn your memberships into new business through speaking opportunities, newsletter articles, webinars, or by serving on a committee that gives you access to decision makers.

7. Internet marketing.

Your website bio page is a good starting point. Make sure it is current and provides a recent headshot. Next evaluate your website to confirm that it is easy to navigate, frequently refreshed, and structured for search engine visibility. Online legal directories abound. [LinkedIn](#) is an easy first step into the social media scene, followed by blogs. There are so many Internet marketing options that space simply does not permit full coverage.

A strategic attorney marketing plan can serve to tie all of your business development efforts together around a focused practice.

While all these marketing activities can seem like a juggling act, there are a few techniques that will streamline the process.

Create a marketing calendar that includes your desired frequency for each campaign. For example, you should try to speak at least 2-4 times per year. You may want to get published twice a year. By putting these goals on your calendar, they are easier to manage and achieve.

Take a few minutes to identify 3-5 newsworthy topics within your area of expertise. You can then incorporate these topics into all your marketing efforts, such as speaking, publishing, newsletters, blogs, social media, etc.

A database can be your best friend in recording and tracking your prospects, outreach efforts, and follow up dates. This can be a simple Excel file, Microsoft Outlook, or a more complex customer relationship management system.

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