



Legal Marketing Strategies

Is your Legal Marketing Stuck in a Rut?

By Margaret Grisdela

Imagine the scene ... members of the firm's Executive Committee sitting around a conference table, unable to reach agreement on which marketing programs to implement. There are so many choices now, from Google AdWords to Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and other forms of social media.

Marketing used to be simple. The Yellow Pages served as a leading advertising channel for personal injury attorneys, while a basic website and nice brochure met the marketing needs of most plaintiff or defense law firms. Add in a strong referral network, and the average law firm of 20 years ago was able to keep the phones ringing without too much work.

How times have changed! Effective legal marketing now involves many specialists, from search engine optimizers to video technicians and website analytics experts. Of course, you still need copywriters, graphic designers, and event coordinators.

Today's competitive marketplace frequently delivers business to the law firms that can master marketing, rather than the best law firms. Does all this sound familiar?

Avoid Inaction in the Face of Uncertainty

Confusion is a common response I see among lawyers struggling to select the best marketing approach. A natural tendency under these circumstances is for the law firm to either do nothing, or to continue with the same tired marketing techniques that deliver unsatisfactory results.

Marketing your law firm is a critical issue, and the economic downturn has left many firms scrambling to fill their pipeline. There is no time to wait. The good news is that there is a silver lining in the rapid changes of technology and promotional techniques.

Let the Market Guide your Promotional Campaigns

Rather than fighting with your law partners over who has the best marketing ideas, turn to the marketplace for answers. Marketing is both art and science, where only actual response rates can truly determine the best promotional campaigns for your law firm.

Develop a plan to systematically test new or modified marketing strategies, keeping those that work and discarding the rest. Internet marketing offers an unprecedented ability to monitor campaign performance on an almost real-time basis, so you will be able to compare response rates and client acquisition costs across multiple promotions.

Smart Choices in Budget Allocations

Your marketing budget should be spread across an integrated set of marketing channels (i.e., Internet, sponsorships, events, and advertising) and scheduled against a written timeline with specific goals. Remember that current clients are your best source of new revenue, so be sure to earmark funds for client retention. Take advantage also of the many free or low cost legal directories offered by firms like Avvo, Justia and HG.org to easily increase your online visibility.

Remember, never stop marketing! The author invites your questions and comments.

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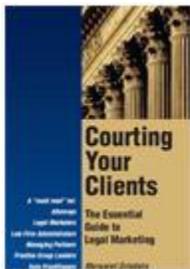
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