

The 7 Day Solution

Transform Your Law Practice By Next Week

A Simple Strategy for Legal Success

by Marianne Merritt Talbot, Esq. and ESQ Consulting



The current recession dealt a mighty wallop to the legal industry. *The National Law Journal* reported that close to **ten percent of associates at the 250 largest U.S. law firms were fired in 2009** – which is the biggest amount let go in one year in the 30 years the *NLJ* has kept track of such statistics! Headhunters have reported a dramatic spike in law firm partners seeking new jobs, and firms continue to fold at an alarming rate. Partners who do not bring in business are also being routinely de-equitized to save money. Where does this leave you?

Never forget: if you have a book of business, you will always have a job. You will control your future, rather than having others (such as firm partners) dictate what happens to you. You will also contribute to the reputation and bottom line of your firm which will make you valuable.

This e-Guide will assist you in launching yourself into greater legal success and job security. It will, in just one week, help you expand your professional network, client cultivation skills, business mindset, and confidence.

Does this sound like a tall order? All this in just 7 days? Bear with me – as an attorney, law professor, corporate trainer, coach, and business owner for the past 17 years, I have a whole toolbox full of ways to shift you – and your business – in a positive direction. Taking the steps set forth in this e-Guide may not instantly add money into your wallet (or maybe it will!), but I guarantee it will help you feel better, create more business opportunities, and begin taking charge of your future.

Now isn't the time to remain glued to your desk hoping to avoid the business guillotine – it is the time to get out and begin generating business and polishing your credentials. Contrary to popular belief, developing your practice doesn't have to be an intimidating, tedious, or joyless prospect – in fact, it can be the most motivating and enjoyable part of your day.

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YOUR 7 DAY TOOLKIT

1. **Adopt A Marketing Mindset.** In order to transform your practice, it is imperative to think and act like an entrepreneur, even if you are an attorney comfortably ensconced in a firm. Every attorney in this economy must understand that he or she holds the keys to legal success and cannot rely on anyone else (or their firm) to provide job security. Having a “marketing mindset” means that you make marketing a priority each and every day, and take daily steps to build your business. This will become as natural as eating and breathing and your practice will blossom as a result.

2. **Identify Your Professional Goals.** Take a couple of hours this week to identify what you want to achieve in the next 12 months, 2 years, 5 years, 10 years – and beyond. What inspires you? Ideas: owning a law firm, working part-time while being a stay-at-home mom or dad, making partner, owning a side business, retiring by 50, writing the next legal mystery bestseller, becoming an artist in Paris, being appointed a law professor. Be creative, be extravagant, even identify things you don't think you can achieve. Think big.

Of all the tips set forth in this e-Guide, **identify-ing and writing down your short-term and long-term goals may be the MOST IMPORTANT exercise you could ever do**, because then you can design a plan to achieve them. So take the time to really reflect and develop your goals and dreams and enjoy the exercise.

3. **Identify your Ideal Client.** Who is your Ideal Client(s)? Do you have a clear understanding of who you want to represent? Do you currently work with those clients or is it time to upgrade your Ideal Client profile? Get specific: what is her industry (or industries), what does she do for a living, does she keep you on retainer, does she send you lots of business, is

she an absolute pleasure to deal with? Once you identify your Ideal Client, then you can begin to target them in your business development efforts.

4. **Take At Least 2 Marketing Actions Every Day.** This will springboard your practice THIS WEEK! No matter how busy you are, dedicate yourself to taking at least 2 marketing action steps every day. On page 4 of this e-Guide you will find a menu of marketing tools to give you ideas. Remember, marketing is like working out - one can't become an athlete without dedication to physical training. Flexing your business development muscles every day is imperative to ensure that your practice continues to grow.

5. **Get Out There:** write, speak, volunteer. Clients hire lawyers they like, not simply resumes. Get out of the office and rub shoulders with communities of people who are your Ideal Clients or can become good referral sources for you. Invite a former client to lunch. Check out a Business Network International (“BNI”) meeting in your area (see the Marketing Menu for details). Even connect with other parents at a PTA meeting! You never know where new clients can come from, or who may refer clients to you, once they like and trust you.

This e-Guide is designed to provide general advice about marketing strategy. For specific advice geared to your specific situation, consult an expert. No published material is a substitute for personalized service from a professional.



6. **Upgrade as Necessary.** It all needs to look good: your website, your wardrobe, your office, your written materials. Not up to snuff? Get help! You will not attract higher-end Ideal Clients if you look decidedly low-rent. Hire a new web designer, copywriter, interior designer, personal stylist, and/or assistant who can help you with filing. Or enjoy doing this work yourself. Notice how having everything really polished increases your confidence – from how you feel when clients walk through the door to how you carry yourself.

7. **Claim A Niche:** Identify a niche where you can cultivate legal leadership. What kind of specialty does your firm want to develop but hasn't? Are there any growing or cutting-edge areas of the law where you can step in and make yourself a leader (ideas: environmental, animal protection, e-discovery, elder law)? If you develop a specialty niche in such a legal arena, this will attract clients, publicity, revenue, and job security.

8. **Take Excellent Care of Yourself.** You know the drill – if you don't take care of yourself, you can't take care of anyone else (and certainly not your clients). Right now, put some "me time" on your calendar – including time with your family, to be creative, to move your body, and to stay healthy. Do something extravagant to pamper yourself and your family – like going out for a fabulous dinner at a new restaurant. You work hard and deserve to rejuvenate yourself. You are cheating yourself and hurting your practice if you do not build fun into each and every day.

9. **School's Not Out.** Always continue educating yourself: read books about marketing, business skills, networking techniques, personal development, spirituality and happiness. Continue growing in all areas of your life. I share some of my favorite business resources on page 5 of this e-Guide.

10. **Last but not least . . .** what do you know you need to do but haven't done? What are you procrastinating about? Identify at least two things below – they can be anything personal or professional that are weighing on your mind - and then get to them this week! Knocking them off your "to do" list will help you focus on more important projects.

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YOUR MARKETING MENU

Following find a list of over a dozen simple marketing actions you can start implementing RIGHT NOW. Take at least 2 actions per day - remember, this week is about launching your business forward, so put in the sweat equity!

Work – and have fun with – your short-term and long term goals. Spend 10-20 minutes every day percolating these ideas and be sure to write them down so you can keep track of them. Then you can start designing a plan to achieve them! (10-20 minutes)

Visit a dynamic networking organization. Ideas: BNI (find a local chapter at BNI.com), your local Chamber of Commerce, or a trade group whose members may include potential Ideal Clients. Many of these organizations (such as BNI) meet in the early mornings so they will not interfere with your business day. (1.5-2 hours)

Join LinkedIn (LinkedIn.com) and start building your network. If already have a LinkedIn profile, update it to include new contacts, additional details of your practice, testimonials, a better picture, etc. (30-45 minutes)

Research committees of your local bar association. When you find one you are interested in and that may help develop your specialties (or a new niche), send an email to the chairperson enthusiastically introducing yourself and expressing interest in getting involved. (45 minutes)

Look at your website or firm biography. Is it time for an upgrade? Proofread it to make sure there are no typographical errors. Toot your own horn and add case victories, achievements, testimonials, community service activities, and leadership positions. (45 minutes)

If you own a small firm or are a solo practitioner and you don't have a website, it's time to start developing one. Make an appointment with a recommended web developer or even design your own. (30 minutes-1 hour, for starters)

Dedicate some time cleaning, decluttering and beautifying your office. (45 minutes)

Take a former, present, or prospective client to lunch. (1-2 hours)

Join Constant Contact (or another online newsletter service) and take a tour of its services so you can begin designing a client newsletter, which is a great marketing tool. (30-40 minutes)

Do you need or have a mentor? Mentors can be pivotal in guiding a successful career. Identify a potential candidate, or call your current mentor, and take him/her to dinner. (1-2 hours)

Get nervous in front of groups? Want new ideas how to be more dynamic to attract new clients and impress colleagues? Check out some free tips on ToastMasters.com. (20 minutes)

Download and listen to educational and inspiring audiobooks on your commute. (30 minutes-1 hour). Or read a chapter of a business development book. (15-30 minutes)

Connect a client or colleague with a necessary resource - an accountant, web developer, mover, insurance broker, etc. Use this to start building your referral network. (10 minutes)

Outline an article on a legal subject you feel confident writing about. Contact a publication that is read by your Ideal Client population and offer your writing services. (1 hour)

Learn your jurisdictions's attorney advertising regulations, so you can be sure your advertising language and methods are ethical. (1 hour)

Schedule FUN in your day – every day! Take some work to your favorite bistro, walk through a nearby park, plan an extravagant vacation. Stress and worry impacts on relationships with clients, colleagues, and of course – your family. (Minimum 30 minutes per day)

Do Random Acts of Anonymous Good – buy a meal for a homeless person, send cookies to a colleague going through a divorce, donate to your favorite animal or children's charity, drop off some flowers at a nearby nursing home. Generosity is an integral component of any good marketing plan because the more you GIVE the more you GET. (5-30 minutes)

RESOURCES



To get you speeding along to more business success, here is a selection of books and tapes to motivate you.

It's Not How Good You Are, It's How Good You Want To Be – Paul Arden

The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success – Deepak Chopra

Secrets of the Millionaire Mind – T. Harv Eker (the audiobook is very good, too)

Never Eat Alone: And Other Secrets to Success, One Relationship At A Time - Keith Ferrazzi

Mojo: How to Get It, How To Keep It, How To Get It Back If You Lose It - Marshall Goldsmith

Pitch Like A Girl: Get Respect, Get Noticed, Get What You Want – Ronna Lichtenberg

Book Yourself Solid – Michael Port (the audiobook is excellent)

ABOUT ESQ CONSULTING AND MARIANNE MERRITT TALBOT, ESQ.



Marianne Merritt Talbot is the owner of ESQ Consulting. For nearly two decades as an attorney, law professor, corporate trainer, author, executive coach, and business owner, Marianne has been involved in virtually every aspect of legal marketing, including business strategy, skills training, publishing, and public relations. From her extensive experience in both law and business, Marianne delivers plans and programs that give clients greater professional success, business development expertise, job security, and confidence.

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