

100 tweets

Thinking About Law Practice in 140 Characters or Less.

by Matthew Homann

1. “My lawyer can beat up your lawyer” is not a marketing strategy. “My lawyer will call me back before yours will” is.
2. The value of a free consultation is what you charge for it.
3. Connect your clients with each other, or they will connect themselves. Be a part of the conversation, or be the subject of it.
4. Nothing is free that costs you your time.
5. If your clients stop paying you, don't ignore them. Fire them.
6. Your clients will always know their business better than you do. Make sure you seek their advice before giving yours.
7. Being good at understanding makes you a good lawyer. Being good at arguing makes you an ass.
8. The most significant advantage you possess over lawyers who've come before you is that you don't believe what they do.
9. When clients want to grow their businesses, do they think you'll help them, or talk them out of it?
10. Call your favorite client today and ask them, “How can I find more clients like you?”

11. There are 1440 minutes in each day. How many did you make matter? How many did you bill for? Were they the same minutes?
12. If you plan to practice for the next ten years, what are you doing to understand your future clients today?
13. Market to a “want” and not a “need.” By the time your clients realize they need you, it is often too late -- for them and for you.
14. Ask clients, “If I could solve just one problem for you, what would it be?”
15. Are you selling your clients tools that help them need you less? If you don’t, someone else will.
16. The confused mind always says no.
17. Your “keep great clients happy” budget should exceed your “try to find new clients” budget by at least three to one.
18. Unless the person who founded your firm 100 years ago is still alive and practicing law, he’s irrelevant to everyone thinking of hiring you.
19. The only “ROI” that matters is your clients’ return on their investment in you.
20. You can’t sell bad service to the same client twice.

21. Imagine a world where your clients knew each month how much their bill from you would be so they could plan for it. They do.
22. If you don't agree on fees at the beginning of a case, you'll be arguing about them at the end of it.
23. With everything else being equal, the business with the best story wins every time. What's your story and is it worth telling?
24. How would your 10 best clients design your firm? Why haven't you asked them?
25. If you keep 99 out of 100 clients happy, your batting average is .990. To the client you let down, however, you're batting zero.
26. If there are three or more things that don't seem quite right when interviewing a prospective client, take a pass!
27. A great question to ask a grieving family about the decedent is, "Did he have a good sense of humor?"
28. You should never have a bigger monitor or more comfortable chair than your secretaries do.
29. Innovation begins with conversation. Engage with your clients so they'll engage you.
30. The single piece of "technology" all lawyers should learn to use better is their keyboard.

31. At the end of every matter, update your “Lessons I don’t need to learn again” list, then make certain to review it before every new one begins.
32. Firing bad clients doesn’t put them out of their misery, but it puts them out of yours.
33. What’s the last thing you’ve done to improve your customers’ experience with you?
34. The more you resemble your competition, the less likely their customers will become yours.
35. If you have to tell your clients you’re being innovative, you probably aren’t.
36. If you refuse to improve your business, why should your clients believe you can improve theirs?
37. There are three ways to improve your business: you can start something, fix something, or stop something.
38. If you’re the first lawyer doing something other businesses have been doing for years, it isn’t innovative, it is about time.
39. Social Media isn’t technology. It is your Rotary Meeting on steroids -- though there are fewer lawyers in the room and the clients are better.
40. When you focus on being just like your competitors, the worst thing that can happen is you’ll succeed.

41. Getting clients and keeping clients are two different things. The first makes you popular, the second makes you rich.
42. Never forget that the least important file on your desk is, to at least one client, the most important file on your desk.
43. What keeps your clients up at night? Is it you?
44. Just because you're not paying your clients for their time, don't believe it isn't as valuable as yours.
45. If you clients hire you because your rates are low, they will fire you the moment they're no longer low enough.
46. Resist the urge to say yes to everything. Say no to something each day, just to stay in practice.
47. It is unimportant how great you are at what you do if you don't send your bills on time.
48. If you're a "general" practitioner, remember that your clients don't have "general" legal problems, they have specific ones.
49. You can't expect someone to appreciate your expertise if you fail to acknowledge theirs.
50. The technology you choose is far less important than the technology you'll use.

51. If there's an industry whose members you serve, when's their next major conference and why aren't you going?
52. The gut feeling that tries to tell you not to take a case all too often gets to say, "I told you so."
53. Never confuse your desire to explain something with your ability to do so.
54. The one "technology" your clients really wish you'd get better at using is the telephone. Call them back!
55. Stories that start with "This one time, I almost" are boring as hell. Learn to embrace experiences instead of avoiding them.
56. Your clients don't pay you to feel sorry for them, they pay you so they'll no longer have to feel sorry for themselves.
57. What do you think your clients learn from you? Make a list. Is it the same one they'd make?
58. Never assume your current clients understand all you can do for them, or believe your former clients remember all you did for them.
59. Lawyers who fail to think deeply about the future of law practice won't have a future in law practice.
60. Make certain you've divorced time from price in your own mind before selling your "value" to clients.

61. Understand the cost of serving bad clients before you go out and find more of them.
62. Ask your clients, “What do you read to stay up-to-date in your industry?” Now, start reading (or even better, writing for) it.
63. Making a healthy profit from satisfied customers is the purpose of your business, not something to apologize for.
64. Your failure to take time to understand something does not give you license to belittle those who do.
65. Never forget you are less important to your clients than they are to you.
66. Clients will never be as surprised by great legal work as they will by great customer service.
67. While there are hundreds of strategies for getting new clients, there’s only one strategy for keeping them: serve them well.
68. McDonald’s has made billions asking customers, “Would you like fries with that?” What’s your “french fry” question?
69. Focus less on “developing” new business and more on deserving it.
70. A client’s definition of a “great lawyer” is probably far different from yours. Understand their expectations first, and then exceed them.

71. Your clients don't think you aren't calling because everything is fine, they think you're not calling because everything isn't.
72. When meeting a potential client, don't sell your competence, sell your compassion. You must care about them before they'll care about you.
73. A law degree on your wall makes you one of millions. A testimonial on your wall makes you one of a kind.
74. Clip a picture of your kids to the top of your stack of bills so you remember why you do what you do (and charge for it).
75. If you told your clients you'd give them \$20,000 "worth of time" would they have any idea what it would buy?
76. It is hard for customers to weigh cost vs. benefit of hiring you when you leave them to guess at both.
77. To lawyers, indifference and incompetence are two different things. To clients, they are one and the same.
78. When was the last conversation you had with a client about service when you weren't trying to get them to pay your bill?
79. If your clients can go months without hearing from you, they can go longer without recommending you.
80. The cost of serving all your clients better is exponentially less than the cost of replacing the unhappy ones.

81. The best thing you can promise a client is more sleep. Ask what problems keep them up at night, and focus your practice on solving them.
82. Just because clients don't expect great service from their lawyer doesn't excuse you from providing it.
83. You can compete on price. You can compete on service. You can't compete on time.
84. Trying to learn client service in ethics class is like trying to learn to ride a bicycle by watching lots of bike accidents.
85. The most underrated skill to possess at networking events is ability to end conversations, not start them.
86. Many of your clients remain clients, not because they love you, but because they fear their new lawyer will treat them just like you do.
87. People tell others about the great service they receive, not the competence they expect.
88. Asking someone "What do you do?" w/in a minute of meeting suggests your interest in them depends on their answer.
89. It costs less to delight a client than it does to frustrate them. You pay to delight them once, but you pay for frustrating them forever.
90. The "time" clients care about isn't yours, it's theirs.

91. The least profitable lawyer is one who tries to sell advice to everyone.
92. A conference is 100's of first impressions rolled into a 3-day period. Be kind, dress well, and pick up the tab every once in a while.
93. Thinking like a lawyer doesn't pay the bills. Thinking like a business person does.
94. Just because you're not paying your clients for their time, don't believe it isn't as valuable as yours.
95. Baking is chemistry, cooking is philosophy and eating is religion.
96. Nobody wants to hear your life story until they've told you theirs.
97. Twitter How To: Follow, Care, Follow, Share, Connect, ReTweet, Repeat.
98. Never network to meet people, network to help people.
99. When you meet a client for the first time, make certain they don't hear you complain. About anything.
100. People don't tell lawyer jokes because they think they're funny, they tell them because they think they're true. Prove them wrong.

[Matthew Homann](#) is the founder of LexThink and the author of the [non]billable hour blog. He writes, speaks and hosts retreats and conferences to help lawyers serve clients better and make more money.

You can find him online in lots of places. Here are a few of them:

Twitter: twitter.com/matthomann

Blog: nonbillablehour.com

Web: lexthink.com

Email: matt@lexthink.com