



Week of **December 23, 2008**

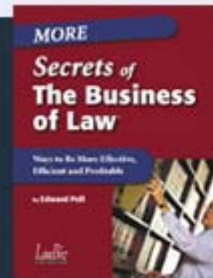
Chill Out Over Cold Calls

"Cold calling" is an aspect of selling that even professional salespeople often dislike. The stereotype is that cold calling too often means negativity and rejection from the person being called upon. But many lawyers fail to see that cold calling can be a natural and positive experience when you approach the right targets positively. And doing so can be a crucial recession survival tactic.

Who are the right targets? They're the people you know. Pick up the phone and call friends, family, business associates, past clients. Tell them that you have some spare time and would be happy to help them with any problems. Chat with the sales folk and other people in your office building. Always have a written summary of your services and a business card handy for them. You'll be surprised how fast they can spread the word about you. All of this is, in essence, cold calling and rarely is a negative experience.

Of course, lawyers must always observe the relevant Codes of Professional Conduct in this activity. A number of states follow ABA Rule 7.3 which prohibits "in-person, live telephone or real-time electronic contact [to] solicit professional employment from a prospective client" when the solicitation involves "coercion, duress or harassment," or when "a significant motive...is the lawyer's pecuniary gain"—in other words, greedy ambulance chasers beware.

So long as you avoid ethical lapses, approaching prospects you know with a business card and brochure are not enough. You also need to create a bond with your prospects and show them you can provide value. When you make the first interaction, present research on pressing industry issues...offer opportunities for training or a business needs assessment...give an open invitation to an entertainment or sporting event. That means an investment in time and expense, but it also means your cold calling effort is more



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"You don't see many stories about legal

likely to bear fruit.

In this way, the cold call becomes a first professional interaction to create a business relationship, an essential ingredient to being retained for future legal work. When a prospect entertains your call and is willing to take the next step of a second call, an appointment, or willingness to receive written material from you, there is an expression of interest that elevates the relationship. If you already have a personal acquaintance with your prospect, this approach moves it to the next level—an establishment of confidence that you can provide a desired legal service to the benefit of all involved.

Best wishes and happy holidays,

Ed Poll

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firms making change work! Help is on the way. Ed Poll's book is a must-read for any leader who wants to win at the great game of business!"

-Terry Paulson, PhD, columnist, business speaker, and author of They Shoot Managers Don't They?