

# Bringing a systems approach to your law firm marketing and legal practice

By: Stephen Fairley

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Allow me to introduce Rich Strauch to you. Rich is the Chief Operating Officer here at The Rainmaker Institute, and he brings a great deal of experience with small and medium-sized companies helping them recognize the systems that they need to implement or improve to help them achieve their business objectives.

Rich has identified several systems that every law firm should have in place to be the type of firm they want to be. Those same systems can take their legal marketing strategy from a hit-or-miss proposition to a referral and lead-generation machine. But before the systems are put in place, there are steps that need to be taken to ensure that there is a strong potential for success.

Here are four steps that need to be taken from the outset:

1. **They must be written down.** Systems must be written down in a step-by-step manner. – You can't just say "track incoming prospect telephone calls." You need a specific set of instructions that answers the 5 w's – Who, What, When, Where, and Why – to design a set of instructions that can be followed regardless of who is in the position.
2. **They must be measurable.** To the extent possible, systems must be quantifiable. If you have a target number of referral source meetings, use the number to help hold yourself accountable. If your goal is a percentage increase, use the numbers in your plan.
3. **They must be managed.** Systems are ongoing and dynamic, not static and must be managed. Someone has to be responsible to see that they happen. The best plans are useless if they are not implemented and monitored.
4. **They must be automated.** Using software helps to automate the process. Technology can lower the number of man-hours you need to accomplish your goals. Set a goal of automating everything that is possible in your business so you can use your time for high-value work.

Each of these items applies to many facets of your legal practice, including your legal marketing strategy. Many firms have plans that are incomplete, not written down, poorly managed and still reliant on 1980s and 1990s technology – Rolodex anyone? To take your law firm marketing to the next level, start with the steps above. We will have more on this in future blog posts.

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newsletter something you will want to share with your staff to begin 2010 on the right note in your legal marketing plan.

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Stephen Fairley is a nationally recognized law firm marketing expert and has helped more than 6,000 attorneys from hundreds of law firms across the country to discover the secrets of generating more referrals and filling their practice.

He is the international best-selling author of 10 books and 5 audio programs.

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