

You've Gotta Prove Your Value These Days. Another big change during my decade of legal sales and marketing.

A little over 10 years ago when I became one of the first Sales Directors at a law firm, measuring the effectiveness of marketing and sales investments was basically unheard of in the law firm world.

Right now, I'm preparing for a presentation at the [19th Annual Marketing Partner Forum](#), a presentation with [Jim Stapleton](#), [Silvia Hodges](#) and [Adam Severson](#) titled "Building Reporting: Marketing and Business Development Metrics." And, I'm realizing that a subject that was once rarely discussed has become one of the hottest topics in law firm sales and marketing circles. In 2001, law firm marketers talked about how many brochures they produced, articles they placed, organizations they sponsored, lawyers they got into directories, and how many Client CLE events they planned and staged. In 2012, law firm marketers are talking a whole new lingo: number of leads in the pipeline as the result of an event, what percentage of those leads become clients, how much revenue does each average new client represent, what is the dollar equivalent of earned media placements, how many click-throughs result from a blog post, and on and on and on.

Doing a little search-engine searching on the topic, I can find virtually nothing on the search term "Law Firm Marketing Return on Investment 2001." Searching on the term "Law Firm Marketing Return on Investment" without specifying a date yields page after page of articles, blog posts and commentary – most of it written within the last year. The [September 2011 issue of "Strategies: the Journal of Legal Marketing"](#) is dedicated solely to managing with key performance indicators, another way of labeling ROI.

Interestingly, but not surprisingly, the discussion of Marketing ROI seems to have really heated up in 2008, about the time of the financial meltdown. Which law firm sales or marketing professional did not start feeling the heat at that time to justify his or her existence, as the owners of law firms started to focus as never before on the impact of law firm operations on their wallets? And, as they started to legitimately question: what's working and what's not? And how many law firm sales or marketing professionals who could not justify his or her existence are still in the field with us today?

Prepping for the Marketing Partner Forum has reminded me of another of the Top 10 changes I've observed over my decade or so in the legal world: Measuring Return on Investment, and being able not simply to list one's actions and activities but being able to quantify and prove the value of one's work and one's recommendations. There's quite a bit less net under the law firm sales and marketing high wire than there was 10 years ago.