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Paula Black has advised law firms around the globe on everything from powerful and innovative design to marketing strategy and business growth. She is an award-winning, Amazon-bestselling author and the force behind **In Black & White** (inblackandwhiteblog.com), a blog dedicated to clear, straightforward advice and open discussion of legal marketing issues. For more information on Paula Black, her books and her company please visit paulablacklegalmarketing.com.

Expanding Your Reach: How to Make Legal Marketing Sense of Professional Organizations

Professional organizations are fertile grounds for finding new prospects. For purposes of this Guide, we've divided these organizations into three categories: Industry/Trade groups, Community organizations, and Bar associations.

As you consider which groups to target, your overall goal is to be where your clients are. That means **your first target should be trade associations** for the client's own industry, be it real estate, hospitality, financial services, or anything else. Narrow your focus. Ask your clients where they go and what they get out of it.

Second are community organizations. Which ones spark your passion and mission in life? It could be civic and charitable as well as personal.

Third are Bar Associations. This is your comfort zone and is not as productive as the others. The key is to be strategic and really concentrate on building your referral sources—not spending the time socializing.

The act of joining a group is not just a matter of putting your name down on the membership roster. It needs to be a well thought out process...one that delivers strategic benefits down the road...and that requires you to focus on your objectives.

The Objectives:

1. Higher visibility in and/or outside the organization.
2. Recognition as an expert in your specialty.
3. Gain experience and knowledge.
4. Build contacts.
5. Open doors that lead to referral sources.
6. Open doors that lead directly to clients.
7. Builds your reputation and stature

What You Can Contribute:

1. Become a leader—you can contribute your knowledge and skills while maximizing your visibility, reputation and network of contacts.
2. Find speaking and writing opportunities. Become the “Go-To Expert.”
3. Contribute your expertise—this will showcase your skills.
4. Introduce others to your contacts—this widens your circle.

Caution: If you commit to an organization—then GET involved. If you don't have time then don't commit. Make sure you align with the vision and mission of this organization and you join for the right reasons. You can't fake it! You have to feel the commitment.