

Five Legal Marketing Strategies for 2014 Success

By Margaret Grisdela

As the new year approaches, law firms that bring a fresh, disciplined approach to 2014 business development campaigns will be the most likely to succeed. Here are five recommendations to jump-start your law firm marketing efforts in 2014.

MARKET TO CURRENT AND PAST CLIENTS

Your competitors covet your clients. It is well worth your time to stay close to both current and past accounts, particularly since they are your best source for new business. A quarterly “Client Alert” in email and/or direct mail format is productive yet not burdensome. It does not have to be long (two to four pages is ideal) but it should be substantive.

Start right now to compose a January letter to your client base. The beginning of the new year is a perfect time to market. Use your holiday list as the basis for a letter advising clients on legal considerations that will affect their business or family in the coming 12 months. Offer a call-to-action, like a free consultation or an educational seminar, to accelerate the business development process.

UPDATE YOUR REFERRAL NETWORK

Networking is the primary source of new business for many attorneys. No matter how well networking works for you, it can always perform at a higher level with a little time and attention. Write down your referral sources, prioritize them, and set up a schedule in your calendar to stay in touch. Work your list on a monthly basis for best results, and remember to reciprocate with leads for your network members.

TARGET YOUR IDEAL PROSPECTS

Business oriented law firms might target the chief litigation counsel for national hotel chains or big box retailers with South Florida operations. Employment defense law firms could target specific employers, as well as insurance carriers offering EPLI coverage in Florida. Law firms with a consumer-oriented practice—like family law, estate planning or personal injury—could also benefit by targeting prospects based on demographics or affiliations (country club, children’s school, motorcycle clubs, etc.).

Your target “wish list” will bring focus to all marketing and outreach efforts, providing leverage for your marketing investments and a better ability to measure results. The size of a target list will vary by firm, and for most will range between 100 and 1,000 prospects. Get down to the level of a specific target person’s name, with business affiliation and contact information,

recorded in a fielded Excel file to facilitate a weekly or monthly review of next steps in the business development process.

PREPARE FOR THE SALES PROCESS

Now that you have a targeted prospect list, there are certain basic sales support materials needed to convert these prospects to clients. Start the new year with an updated supply of law firm brochures, bio pages and practice area pages. Electronic PDF files of these key marketing materials can be posted to your website, and also printed in short runs for proposals or prospecting meetings. Related business development tools may include a PowerPoint template, tabletop exhibit or proposal outline.

GET SOCIAL

LinkedIn is the social media outlet that supports all types of law firm practice. Plan now to take your LinkedIn profile to the next level of performance and visibility in 2014. Increasing the number of connections (for those under 500 connections) is a natural starting point. Consider also posting a “status update” to your profile once or twice a month, which will then go out to your network members. Other ideas include posting a video, a PowerPoint presentation or participating in groups.

The right Internet campaign can bring almost immediate results. Twitter and Facebook can also be productive, particularly for law firms with a consumer-oriented practice.

CLOSING OBSERVATIONS

One of the most challenging aspects of law firm marketing is the need to balance the daily demands of a busy law practice with the commitment to keep looking for more clients. One way to overcome this obstacle is to establish an in-house marketing committee that meets on a monthly basis, particularly if a non-attorney staff member is given the responsibility for day-to-day campaign management. Outside consultants may also serve to bring industry experience, structure, and discipline to the business development effort.

Remember, never stop marketing! Marketing is a process and not an event. The author welcomes your feedback.



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