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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](http://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](http://paulablacklegalmarketing.com).

## Every Attorney Needs A Marketing Plan: 7 Easy Steps

Every lawyer in private practice should have an individual marketing plan, period.

The plan should be short, specific, realistic and achievable. Think of legal marketing as your firm's attorneys' investments in themselves. Billable hours are important for today's income, but what attorneys do with non-billable time determines their future... and your firm's.

Individual marketing plans should set forth what each attorney will do over the next 12 months to build, enhance and maintain relationships with key clients. It should also include activities to enhance each attorney's credentials as an expert in their chosen area of law.

To be effective, an individual-attorney marketing plan should...

- **Define a niche...**specialists command premium fees and practice law in the areas they find most challenging and fulfilling.
- **Establish expertise...**each attorney's goal should be to become a recognized expert in their chosen area of the law.
- **Focus on industries and related trade associations...**innovative law firms are setting up industry practice groups and marketing their services to specific industries. Becoming active in one or two carefully targeted industry trade associations is key. Get clients' input on which group to join, and conduct due diligence to make sure it's the right one.

- **Include a personal contact list...** starting with existing clients and referral sources. Update and expand the list continually to include people the attorney knows or wants to know.
- **Invest in key relationships...** focus on 20 to 30 people on whom the attorney can spend the bulk of their “networking” time.
- **Include regular visits to top clients...** asking smart questions, listening, learning, and responding appropriately.
- **Give first-year associates a head start...** by encouraging them to hone their networking skills, finding their niche and learning the law that serves that niche. Pair first-years with senior rainmakers who can act as marketing mentors.

Remember, clients hire lawyers...not law firms...and they hire lawyers they know, like and trust. You want your firm’s attorneys to focus their time and energy as much as possible on activities that create, enhance and maintain relationships with individuals in a position to hire or refer you.

*This article has been excerpted from “The Little Black Book on Law Firm Marketing & Business Development... Everything A Managing Partner Needs To Know.”*