

LJN

LAW JOURNAL
NEWSLETTERS

Marketing

The Law Firm®

An **ALM** Publication

Volume 30, Number 12 • April 2015

SALES SPEAK

'Speed-Reading' Your Clients

By Victoria Arnold

One characteristic that successful rainmakers share is their ability to quickly establish relationships and close the sale. How do they do it? Many are keen observers, good listeners and have honed their abilities to match their own interpersonal/communication style with that of their prospective clients. They have naturally learned how to "speed-read" people. This helps them increase the probability of smoother sailing through every step of the business development cycle. But one need not be a "natural" to be effective in this arena.

Anyone can learn how to improve his or her abilities to speed-read people, thanks to an ever-growing body of research and assessment tools (Myers Briggs Type Indicator, DiSC, and HBDI, to name a few) that are designed to identify personal preferences and communication styles. Many books, seminars and certification programs are devoted to this topic. One could spend a lifetime delving ever deeper into the nuances of communication. Fortunately, it is possible to focus on several key concepts that can enhance business development efforts. This article highlights a few of these, and draws heavily on the

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Small-Firm Marketing

Five Ways You Can Outsmart the Goliath

By Anthony Johnson

In a market flooded with newly minted attorneys, spreading the word about your services can feel like an empty pursuit. Attorneys just don't have the time or marketing expertise to experiment with new tactics, so they settle for traditional channels like TV commercials.

But resorting to this bland approach means you're gambling on viewers needing your services at that very moment — or remembering you when they do. When every firm in town has the same idea, your message can't possibly stick.

While the demand for legal services increases nominally year-over-year, the supply of attorneys continues to grow disproportionately. In 2013, more than 57,000 people took and passed the bar exam, according to the National Conference of Bar Examiners. Although many of these people go into politics or consulting, that still leaves hundreds of new players competing for the same amount of business.

An increase in the number of practicing lawyers means prices are pushed down for everyone. The last thing people want to buy discounted is law expertise, but many believe that all lawyers are created equal, and cheaper is better. I'd rather let those people walk out the door because they tend to be bad clients, but many small firms don't have that option. They have to lower their rates or lose business.

THE SMALL-FIRM DILEMMA

Small firms and solo attorneys spend most of their time running their businesses on relatively small budgets. Meanwhile, larger firms and new lawyers have ample time and resources to focus on earning market share. A practicing attorney might spend 80 hours per week on legal work and client development; conversely, a new lawyer trying to break into the market has 80 hours to twiddle her thumbs and develop creative marketing methods.

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REV UP YOUR MARKETING!

Instead of competing with the Go-liath firms on their turf, you need to be strategic with your marketing efforts. Here are five ways to rev up your marketing:

1. Find Your Niche Market

Imagine that every firm in your town had to pick just 20 areas of practice. What would those top 20 areas be? Defense, estate planning, criminal law, family law? Now make a list of your top 20 desired practice areas. If anything on your list overlaps with your competitors' top choices, cross it off. What you have left is your target market.

Targeting the areas where your competitors aren't means your marketing dollars will stretch further. With less competition, you'll likely attract more clients as a smaller firm. Once you've fully saturated your niche, you can expand to another. Wait until you've exhausted your efforts in at least four to five areas before tackling mainstream practice areas.

2. Don't Waver on Price

Price-shopping for your services won't happen if you don't let it happen. It's that simple. As someone who has sold services and goods across multiple industries, I've learned that most people don't make purchasing decisions based on price alone. Give them a reason to hire you aside from your rates, whether it's your unique experience or a guarantee you offer on their investment.

Decide whether you're a discount attorney or one who deserves to be paid a premium for your services. Make your rates "company policy." This phrase makes people accept your rates as non-negotiable, whether you charge \$300 per hour or 40% contingency. You can use the "company policy" phrase to communicate

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that your firm doesn't scale the contingency or to guarantee that your clients will never pay more than a certain percentage of their recovery. If you want to give someone a discount, do it after everything is said and done. If you value your services, others will, too.

3. Uncover Your 'Why'

Determine why a client should choose you over every other lawyer in town. It's the core concept that your firm stands for or the guiding principle you abide by. Make sure your entire firm understands this from a cultural perspective. You'll create brand consistency that potential clients will notice when interacting with your firm.

Young lawyers should emphasize the skills they learned growing up during the digital era. Lawyers, perhaps more than most professionals in other industries, are slow to adopt new technologies. By distinguishing yourself as proficient at online communications and business practices, you can attract clients who use the same technologies in their everyday lives.

The stronger your sense of "why" is, the more success you'll have in marketing your firm and closing difficult sales. Emotions wield powerful influence on our decision-making, so appeal to potential customers on an emotional level with your unique selling points. It's the quickest way to overcome someone's reluctance to hire you.

4. Embrace Bold Tactics

Lawyers are famously old-fashioned when it comes to style. While Google employees are bowling at work, we're still wearing suits. A cookie company can use Twitter as a clever marketing tool, but we're still sticking billboards up on highways. This largely stems from the industry's stringent ethical standards and the stigma lawyers place on digital marketing tactics. TV, billboards, and Yellow Pages remain the preferred advertising methods for lawyers. And we're not the only ones.

While consumers' attention has shifted to using the Internet on every

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from the publisher. Telephone: (877) 256-2472;

Editorial e-mail: wampolsk@alm.com
Circulation e-mail: customercare@alm.com
Reprints: www.almreprints.com

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:
ALM
120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271

Published Monthly by:
Law Journal Newsletters
1617 JFK Boulevard, Suite 1750, Philadelphia, PA 19103
www.ljonline.com



VOICE OF THE CLIENT

Trusted Adviser?

*Maybe Not What
You Think*

By Bruce Heintz

I work with law firms and lawyers to gauge their clients' levels of satisfaction and lack thereof. Over many years, I've been involved in thousands of in-person interviews with in-house legal counsel and business executives on behalf of law firms, Big Four accounting firms and other professional services organizations. During these interviews, clients have shared their observations about the professionals who serve them — and what makes the good ones really good.

So, what is a Trusted Adviser and how do you become one, thereby deepening and strengthening a relationship? Many of the definitions I've found in print and online seem to be a bit vague, such as having "practical judgment" or being able to "influence and advocate." But, I haven't heard these terms used very often in interviews and I'm not sure how helpful they might be. Instead, I will share with you a few of the more instructional vignettes that I have gleaned from listening to clients enthuse about their own Trusted Advisers:

HEROES COME IN MANY SIZES

The conventional image of a Trusted Adviser is that of a superhero. For example, a law firm might house only a few of them. They are the Big Kahunas who by virtue of their capabilities and personal styles have clients falling all over them and are big rainmakers. True, but ... there are other mere-mortal types of lawyers who also function as Trusted Advisers. "Jennifer [an associate] periodically asks what issues, challenges and concerns might be coming up for me, so I can always count

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on her to be prepared when my issues turn into crises down the road."

THE FIGHTING FIDUCIARY

According to Wikipedia, "In a fiduciary relationship, one person, in a position of vulnerability, justifiably vests confidence, good faith, reliance, and trust in another whose aid, advice or protection is sought in some matter." Clients say that their Trusted Advisers are always looking out for ways to maximize the client's well-being, even when at times it puts the provider against his or her own firm's immediate financial interests, such as spending more than budgeted hours on a fixed-fee project just to make sure the product is first rate. Accordingly, Trusted Advisers solve problems, resolve conflicts and help clients plan for the future. The owner of a middle market company was confident that, "Steve always has our best interests at heart."

NOT JUST INSIGHTS, BUT FORESIGHTS

Hindsight reports facts, events or developments, but without substantive opinion or prediction. Insights, on the other hand, take hindsight a step further by including information that is tailored to specific situations, companies or industries, and that provide a degree of unique analysis. Foresights typically result from the analysis of a collection of indicators, trends or developments which, when taken together, reasonably suggest a future development. You guessed it, Trusted Advisers provide all three of the above, but especially the most highly valued — foresights. [These definitions are provided by law firm business development trainer and coach, Eric Dewey, of Group Dewey Consulting.]

DISCUSSIONS THAT GO BEYOND LEGAL ISSUES

The test that shows that you've really made the grade is when you are asked for opinions on subjects that are beyond your immediate professional specialty. For example, one CEO felt that his lawyer was so business knowledgeable and street

smart, that he invited the lawyer to join him and other executives in brainstorming sessions about the company's overall business strategy, not just the legal ramifications.

MAKE ME LOOK GOOD, NO, MAKE ME SHINE!

Apparently, Trusted Advisers take actions that forward the advisees' careers — and, possibly even more critical, keep it from sinking if disaster strikes. For example: stopping the client before he/she does something misguided; suggesting damage-control actions after he/she went ahead and did it anyway; providing ideas that might impress the client's boss and help him/her continue to move up the career ladder. "Rachael is a very good advocate and sounding board for me with regard to my career."

TECHNICAL EXPERTISE IS NOT A 'GIVEN'

Many of the charts showing competency levels for professionals portray technical expertise as something that will not distinguish — everyone must have it. But clients are able to discern the differences. For example, a General Counsel told me, "That's why we use Mike — he knows more about [technical specialty] than anyone on the planet!"

YOUR OWN PERSONAL JUNKYARD DOG

Some of us were bullied as kids and dreamed of a tough big brother to come and punch out the bully. Now that we're grownups, we call on our Trusted Advisers to do this dirty work for us. So many clients have bragged to me, " ... aggressive lawyering ... with him, we win ... A-Team ... we'll put our guy against their guy any day ... he's our number one ally outside of the company" It's human nature.

FIRST CALL

This is probably the single most discriminating test for whether a professional has reached the status of Trusted Adviser. Just like in the movie *Ghost Busters*, the big question when faced with a calamity is,

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Voice of the Client

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“Who you gonna call?” In these cases, if you’re in the client’s speed dial list and you get the first call, then you know you have arrived.

HOW LIKELY TO BE

RECOMMENDED

Toward the end of my in-person interviews, I ask the client, “Would you recommend [the firm] to others for similar types of work?” If necessary, I probe the interviewee’s response to compel him or her to go beyond just a simple Yes or No. Based upon their explanations, it’s easy to discern whether the law firm — either as an institution or because it has a particular lawyer on the client-serving team — is considered a Trusted Adviser. In these cases, the client trusts the lawyer and the firm enough such that the client will risk his/her personal and professional reputation by recommending the firm to others. That is priceless!

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device imaginable, advertising dollars remain stubbornly targeted at traditional media spending. Print ad revenue has been dropping off for some time, but advertisers continue to spend money on it. And they continue to spend money on TV ads, despite lower numbers of viewers. You’ll get a much bigger bang for your advertising buck if you focus on digital markets, where customers spend more time and companies can spend considerably less on ads.

Taking your efforts online will not only save your firm money, but it also will drive more targeted leads back your way. Google’s core competency is relevancy, specifically in search results, so by using keywords to target your niche audiences, you can create a conversion-centric marketing campaign that targets potential clients who are ready to hire you.

When people Google something, they want *the* answer, not millions

THINKS ABOUT YOU OFFLINE

When I reflect on whom I might consider to be my own personal Trusted Advisers, what stands out is when one of them has said, “Bruce, I was thinking about you the other day, and I had this idea ...” This tells me that I’m more to them than just billable hours. As a result, I feel that they really care about me and that they are in it for the long-term relationship, not just a short-term transaction.

I LOVE HIM!

Don’t laugh, I hear this fairly often. Of course, it’s not a reference to any romantic leanings, but possibly represents the ultimate testimony to the person being referred to — the Trusted Adviser.

CONCLUSION

Obviously, there are other attributes in addition to what I’ve described that lawyers and other professional services providers do to earn the right to be a Trusted Adviser. But one of my points worth emphasizing is that it takes more

than just getting the boxes checked on a list of stated traits, such as, has “Integrity.” Instead, being a Trusted Adviser often manifests itself in the form of higher-order configurations of sometimes-subtle behaviors — in particular, ones that change and improve the advisee’s fortunes and, therefore, are highly valued.

During all my interviewing, it’s a rare occasion that a client actually uses the term, “Trusted Adviser.” Instead, as client interviewees describe some of the situations like I’ve shared above, both interviewer and interviewee know almost instantly what’s being talked about. I’m not entirely sure how to interpret this, but it suggests to me that the term, “Trusted Adviser,” as vaunted a position as it suggests, is not good enough to describe that wonderful person who has been so valuable to you, the advisee.

Therefore, I leave you with the question: Have any of your clients said “I love you” today?

—♦—

of different answers. If your ad answers a search, Google will deliver it, and your ad spend will be much more efficient at returning leads. After all, the people who are searching Google often are ready to buy; that’s why they’re searching in the first place. People who are watching TV might or might not need a lawyer, so your spend there is less efficient.

While going online is the first step, it’s not just about where you advertise; how you advertise is equally important. Be creative and bold. Why wear a suit and talk solemnly to a camera when you could put your Twitter handle on a parachute and jump out of a plane? That’s an extreme example, but if you’re new to the industry or having trouble finding customers, you’ve got nothing to lose by pushing the limits.

5. Outsource Your Online Marketing

You know you need to advertise online, but you want to practice law — not learn online marketing. Leave this area to the marketing professionals by outsourcing these tasks.

The hardest part is selecting the right company. I’ve found entrepreneurial groups and networks to be especially helpful for finding a new business consultant. Many group members have hired and fired marketers, and I got some fantastic recommendations that led me to a great company. These connections can also offer advice and direction for your online marketing practices.

Choosing the right marketing firm is important, so you shouldn’t select one hastily. Take the time to find the best firm, and don’t be afraid to give up on a company that’s not working and try again.

CONCLUSION

Although law is a more traditional industry, attorneys aren’t tied to the advertising methods we’ve embraced for so long. Stop sitting idly by, expecting that consumers will contact you when the time is right. Take advantage of the uncharted online territory. When the right people need your services, you’ll be there to save the day.

—♦—

Communicating Effectively To Both Genders

By John Hellerman and Cari Brunelle

What you say isn't as important as what is heard.

Let us explain what we mean by way of example. The partners of a real estate boutique, nearly evenly split with 16 women and 14 men, gather for an urgent meeting called by their chairman, a respected mentor to many of them and a pillar of the commercial real estate community. Suffice it to say, after a storied career, he knows how to close a deal. But today he's haggard after a week of plane rides. He stands at the head of the conference table and proceeds to explain the details of a proposed merger with a competing firm. He's done this before over the years and, perhaps feeling somewhat entitled, he keeps his case for the merger short, laying out only the bare facts that support the union, focusing on the large salary increases the partners could expect to receive. When he's done, he gruffly brushes off a few cursory questions and calls for an immediate vote.

He loses. And you might be able to guess why.

GENDERS HEAR THINGS DIFFERENTLY

Most of the male partners heard what they needed to hear: a solid business case for the merger and the potential for more income. Most of the women, although no less interested in those two factors, took away a different message. They heard a lethargic announcement in which the chairman attempted to force-feed them his desired merger without thinking it through, making any at-

tempt to build consensus, or considering the implications for all stakeholders. How would the firm's clients receive this news? What would be the impact on the group's retirement packages? What would happen to the support staff in their downstate office? With no answers, the female partners vote no in force.

While it's an oversimplified scenario, certainly, its premise is grounded in scientific research, and it illustrates points that are vital for lawyers to keep in mind.

The first is that the effectiveness of any communication depends on the audience as much as it does on the communicator. Communicating, in other words, is not only what you say — it's what the audience hears. This is highly relevant to lawyers, because communication is paramount to lawyers' work, and because all lawyers must address different audiences over the course of their careers. Indeed, they address varied audiences over any given week: judges, clients, prospective clients, compensation committees, practice group leaders, support staff, lateral recruits, associates, journalists, and colleagues at peer firms, to name a few.

Successful lawyers have the ability to appeal to all of these different audiences, and their success can be attributed, in significant part, to their awareness of how those different audiences will receive their messages. The stakes are even higher for law firm leaders, who address a multiplicity of audiences on a daily basis.

Most professionals understand this intuitively. Rare is the lawyer who would address a group of summer associates the same way he or she would a judge at oral argument. The second important point made clear by the scenario above, however, is that despite this intuitive understanding, both men and women can be blind to the fact that the genders can also be two distinct audiences — indeed, perhaps the most distinct audiences of all. The chairman pushing the merger might have believed he was addressing a single group (partners), when in fact, the men

and women in the conference room received and processed his message quite differently.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

A wealth of research conducted over the last 15 years is giving us a much better understanding of the differences in communication styles of men and women. And it turns out that some, if not all, of those differences are rooted in biology. A 2001 study from Harvard University, for instance, revealed that men have 6.5% more grey matter — the brain's information processing center — than women. Meanwhile, the same study found that the female brain has a larger corpus callosum, the part of the brain that connects its two hemispheres. This means that men tend to do better with tasks requiring more localized processing, while women are better at integrating and assimilating information. The latter finding is consistent with research from the University of Pennsylvania, suggesting that women have more connectivity between the left side of the brain (focused on logic and reasoning) and the right (the creative center); for their part, men have more connectivity within each hemisphere. The Penn study also found that women have as much as 20% more blood flow in their brains, meaning that they are more constantly "on" than men, who are prone to more "zone out" moments.

IMPACT

The impact of these differences is significant. To single out just a few ways men and women approach communication differently:

- Men tend to view communication as a means to deliver information, while women are more likely to see communication as a means of building rapport and establishing consensus;
- When listening, men focus to a greater degree on the factual information being communicated, while women focus more on its meaning; and
- Men are more likely to find emotion to be a distraction in

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Media & Comm

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communication, while women are more attuned to reading gestures and emotions.

So what are we to take from this information? There is only one certainty: Regardless of the communicator, it is always best to assume that their motives are good. If you have a negative reaction to a communication, you should assume that the party delivering it did not intend to hurt feelings or otherwise cause

your negative reaction. Chances are they really didn't mean it the way you heard it, and assuming their innocent intention is the best way to move the conversation to a more positive place for all.

Beyond that, we are merely going to recommend that law firms become mindful of this topic and make it a subject of internal focus. We have spoken with several law firms and general counsel about it, and we have found almost uniformly that lawyers recognize the importance of the issue and have a strong desire to discuss it.

CONCLUSION

As we're learning, "he heard, she heard" is often more important than "he said, she said." So male and female lawyers may inevitably perceive those discussions differently. That's okay. In fact, a diversity of thinking styles is much more a benefit than hindrance to law firms. And understanding the way both genders process messages can make all lawyers better communicators.



Sales Speak

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concepts outlined in the Myers Briggs. (Disclosure: the author is certified in the Myers Briggs Type Indicator,® the oldest and most widely used assessment instrument.)

BE CLEAR ABOUT THE STAGES OF THE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CYCLE

To quote my colleague, Peter Johnson, "Developing business is all about relationships. People tend to hire those they like and trust." (Unless they are buying a commodity service.) The process starts with establishing rapport and building trust; then moves on to uncovering client needs and finally offering solutions. The goal, of course, is to get to the "ask" and the "close."

The speed with which the business developer moves through this process with the client depends on the urgency of the client's need. As we know, however, when selling legal services, the process generally takes considerable time. (Rushing to a close before working through the other steps will surely derail the process.) Each step of the way, we engage certain behaviors and exhibit preferences for:

- How we deal with the outside world — do we focus our attention and get our energy externally (extravert) or internally (introvert)?

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- The way we take in and process information — do we want to know about the specifics or are we more interested in the big picture?
- What is important to us when considering possible solutions — are we interested in the logical, fact-based implications or the impact on relationships?
- How quickly we make decisions — do we move quickly to closure, or take our time?

KNOW THYSELF

Everyone runs into difficult business development situations. Those uncomfortable moments are usually the result of misreading the client's style or not understanding how to deal with a style that is different from one's own. When you meet someone with whom you feel instant rapport, it is usually a pretty good indication that your communication styles (and how you process information) are similar. Most of us are also acutely aware of when we're engaged in conversations that feel slightly off balance. Often, this is a sign that the opposite is true — we've met someone whose preferences do not match our own.

Good business developers are clear about their own communication styles. They understand what works for them and what kinds of style differences tend to trigger their hot buttons. They educate themselves about what to observe and listen for in their clients' communication and in each of the various business development stages. They also act on their observations by adjusting their communication to fit the client's preferences.

EXTRAVERT OR INTROVERT?

Much has been studied and written about the importance of non-verbal communication, especially in the meet-and-greet stage of any relationship. (One oft-cited statistic: It takes the average person about seven seconds to form an impression about someone he/she is meeting for the first time.) Nonverbal communication is a vast field of study and includes aspects of the visual, auditory, and tactile. We are not going to cover this aspect of communication here, but instead focus on the clues a client gives us about whether he/she is an extravert or introvert. These include: How quickly and loudly does the individual speak? Does he/she speak briefly and to the point, or run on? As the conversation progresses, do you notice that the client tends to "think aloud," or pauses before answering questions or sharing information?

A gregarious, fast-talking rainmaker can make a rather quiet, slower-speaking client feel more at ease by slowing down and giving the client more time to reflect and respond. On the other hand, the rainmaker with a quieter way of communicating can benefit from picking up the client's energy level and the speed of speech. This doesn't mean that the extravert must act like an introvert or vice versa. It means that each adjusts the range of behavior a bit closer to the client. Most introverts would say that it's much harder for them to develop business than for an extravert.

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Content Marketing

Seven Best Practices

Part One of a Two-Part Article

By Edie Reinhardt

Content marketing is hot. According to the 2014 State of Digital and Content Marketing Survey (<http://bit.ly/1xb4B6o>), 80% of law firm CMOs believe content marketing is an important marketing and business development strategy and 84% expect to increase the amount of content they are producing over the prior year. With so much emphasis on content marketing, what can firms do to help make their initiatives as successful as possible?

1. DOCUMENT YOUR CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY (STRATEGIES)

A documented strategy provides the necessary framework for your content marketing. It spells out to all the stakeholders your message, target audiences, and business goals. You also need a strategy before you can develop a plan. Your strategy guides you in determining how and what content you should produce and promote. It keeps you focused on what you want to achieve and helps you design a plan for how to get there. But those aren't the only benefits.

In the 2015 Content Marketing Institute study on B2B Content Marketing (<http://bit.ly/1HXcI7h>), marketers with written strategies said they were more effective and better at tracking ROI than those without written strategies. And tracking ROI is the key to getting and maintaining support for your marketing investments. While you're writing down your strategy, remember you should really have multiple strategies for

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each practice area, industry group or other audience segment you are going after.

2. CREATE BUYER PERSONAS

One of the keys to successful content marketing is understanding your target audience or buyer. The best way to do that is to develop a profile of that ideal buyer or client, including their key demographics and behaviors, such as:

- Job title and responsibilities.
- Role in the decision-making process.
- Company size and revenue.
- Industry.
- Location.
- Budget and priorities.
- Interests, concerns and pain points.
- Information sources.
- Level of knowledge about your services.

Also consider what stage in the buying process is your marketing going to target. Are you trying to attract prospects doing initial research online? Or are you nurturing a lead and trying to move them closer to hiring the firm? Your audience may have different needs and interests as they move through the sales funnel and the content should be targeted accordingly.

Don't gloss over creating these profiles. Research and survey your market, monitor industry developments, incorporate social listening and look at what your competitors are doing as well as what the competitors of your clients are doing. Also analyze your own data. Segment your clients and prospects. Look at e-mail and social media statistics and website analytics.

The point is that the more you know about your buyer's needs, the better you can tailor the substance of your message as well as how you promote it to them.

3. CHOOSE A WELL-DEFINED NICHE

A lot of content marketing suffers from focusing on too broad a market. Although a more general topic theoretically gives you a larger potential audience, it can also be harder to get attention. We're all suffering from information overload and there is so much content available that it's overwhelming to look at it all. One of the ways to stand out is to promote a narrow expertise.

As you develop your buyer personas, determine your best targets and what you can offer them that is different and compelling. By focusing your content marketing on that group, you can position yourself as uniquely qualified in that niche. You may find yourself with fewer leads, but better quality ones because you better match what the prospect is looking for and there are fewer obvious competitors.

4. DEVELOP AN EDITORIAL CALENDAR

Another crucial component of content marketing is consistency. Too often this is where firms fail, because they can't maintain what they started.

An editorial calendar helps you create and manage the workflow. It's where your editorial and marketing strategies are actually laid out and implemented. Use the calendar to plan out content topics or themes in advance, establish deadlines and assign responsibilities for each step in the process. Think about the format for your content, your message and audience, where and how will it be marketed and distributed and what resources are needed.

You want to plan ahead at least quarterly, but ideally more than that. You can have a 12-month calendar laying out general ideas, and then flesh it out each quarter. It may help to have a master calendar for the firm, but then separate calendars for different practice/industry groups or by content type (for example, a separate calendar for a blog). Your calendar should remain flexible to incorporate newsworthy or topical issues.

Although you may have different people responsible for various parts of the workflow, there should be one overall project manager to make sure everything stays on track.

5. REUSE CONTENT

Developing new content on a regular basis is challenging, so look for ways to repurpose your existing content and curate other people's content. We discuss these ways next month in Part Two of this article.



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True, but to allow that to stand in the way of developing business is a career-limiting move. There are ways introverts can learn to adapt.

A recent example of this situation: I was working with a partner who describes himself as an “introvert’s introvert.” His idea of a nightmare: having to attend any kind of meeting or event that involves more than one person. He recently finished helping a (much younger) client buy a bar and restaurant. The client invited him to attend the opening. The partner did not want to go, but also did not want to disappoint his client.

We worked together to identify where he was moderately comfortable adjusting his behavior, and developed the strategies he would use to “make it through.” What that meant was that he would arrive at the beginning of the party, so he wouldn’t have to deal with a large crowd, and would have time to talk with his client. He would make a point to have a conversation with two or three other guests. We came up with a series of questions he might ask to get the conversation going. In addition, he agreed to an amount of time he thought he could tolerate. Because he had a plan, he found that he was more comfortable than he anticipated he would be.

UNCOVER NEEDS AND OFFER SOLUTIONS

We know that a key component to uncovering needs is referred to as active listening — rephrasing what you think you heard the prospect say and confirming with her/him before moving on to offer possible solutions. This is also the time to identify what kind of information is important to the client; what kind of information he/she likes and trusts. Also during this phase of business development, the client will provide insights about what is important to him/her when considering possible solutions.

Taking in and processing what the business developer has to offer: specifics or big picture? Some clues: Does the client ask for specific information — focus on the present? Does he or she describes things or seek to understand things step by step, and asks for precise descriptions?

Factors important to the client in making a decision: tasks or relationships? What hints is the prospect giving you about which factors are important in making a decision? Does he or she ask questions that are logical and task focused? If so, chances are that he or she will be making decisions based on more impersonal, objective logic. Or, is the client demonstrating more concern about how the decision will affect personal priorities and relationships? In this case, he or she will demonstrate concern for the people impacted by the buying decision.

FOUR MAJOR TYPE PREFERENCES

Susan Brock, in her publication, *Introduction to Type and Selling*, applied the Myers Briggs approach to the sales process. She defines the following four major styles and provides some concise prescriptions for what business developers can do, once they have figured out type, to match the client’s preference:

1. **Details and logical.** Sales approach: Be straightforward, lay out the facts, and demonstrate how responsible you are. (The client values acting responsibly.)
2. **Details and impact on people.** Sales approach: Lay out the facts, articulate how this will affect the people involved, personalize the relationship and service you are providing. (These clients value personal loyalty.)
3. **Big picture and impact on people.** Sales approach: Address the big picture, how it impacts the people involved or supports their values, and support the vision. (These clients value making a difference.)

4. **Big picture and logical.** Sales approach: Focus on the big-picture possibilities (not specifics) and how these possibilities create logical options. (These clients value options that fit needs now and in the future.)

CLOSING THE SALE: FAST OR SLOW?

Throughout the business development cycle, the client will drop hints about how quickly (or not) a decision will be made, but it will become even more obvious when the close is in sight. Typically, clients fall into two categories (also courtesy of Susan Brock):

1. **Clients who like getting to closure.** These individuals will display signs of impatience with an overly long description or procedure. They may move to decision quickly (sometimes prematurely). They often use the past tense: looked, compared, evaluated. So, whatever you do with this client, don’t drag out the process.
2. **Clients who enjoy the process.** These clients like to explore options. They will resist cutting off options and making decisions too soon. They use present participles, looking, comparing, exploring. With these clients it is important to allow time and space for decision-making.

TAKE THE FIRST STEP

Any lawyer can, if willing, learn to apply what they know about themselves and what they observe in others to enhance their development successes. Having a framework, be it Myers Briggs or any of the others tools, is helpful to understanding ourselves and our clients. After that it’s practice, practice, practice.



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