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## Tracking Your Leads

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**W**hy should we track where our marketing leads come from?" This question, posed by the managing partner of a successful boutique law firm, took me by surprise. When we talk with firms about whether or not they track the sources of their leads as well as actual business, they usually steer the conversation toward the challenges of the mechanics, not the valid, essential, and underlying question of why they should consider doing it.

In our experience, most firms do not do an adequate job of tracking their new business development efforts. If they monitor any information, it is the sources of actual new business, but not where the opportunities come from, and very often they are lax about tracking anything. In general, plaintiffs personal injury firms and others heavily marketing to consumers are much more likely to track both marketing and new business results. This may be because there is often a direct line between the marketing and the result, making it easier to capture than other kinds of long-tail, meandering-path marketing.

Here then are the reasons why you would want to track both your marketing leads and the sources of your new business:

When it comes to monitoring results, you are analyzing several elements. Initially, you are examining your marketing efforts, which means the leads you generate. Marketing

equates to the opportunities you have to be in front of prospective clients. Additionally, you want to track new business sales — efforts that actually result in new clients engaging your services. You can also monitor all client growth, including new clients, expanded work from current clients, and/or work from former clients. However, this discussion is limited to marketing leads and new business.

By "tracking," I also mean that someone is stopping to analyze the data once or twice each year. We talk with firms who admirably track new business queries and new business sources, but seldom do they take the time — if ever — to review it. By failing to analyze information in this way, these firms overlook a wealth of information that can guide their marketing investments and tell them where more new business can be found. Firms that take the time to analyze the data gain a competitive advantage because so many firms are resistant to tracking information.



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Consider asking yourself these marketing and business development questions: Is my marketing working? Am I spending too much on this kind of marketing and not enough on another type? Should I advertise here? How many referrals have I given another firm that have not been reciprocated? Why is it we seem to get a lot of new business inquiries but not much new business? How can I get more marketing mileage from the money I invest in lead generation?

The only way you can effectively answer any of the above is by monitoring your results to the fullest extent possible. We know that very often it is difficult to follow a direct cause and effect when it comes to marketing. Even if someone came to your firm through your website, he may have first heard you speak years ago, then read several of your articles over the years, and then contacted you through online means. Still, it behooves you to capture as much information as possible >>

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when it comes to tracking new business opportunities and results.

Tracking your results about where leads and new business come from can help you from several standpoints. Having this data can guide you in how best to invest your marketing dollars and effort. For example, you may have many leads coming from one source, such as from your website, but these leads may not be of the caliber that you desire. Knowing this tells you that you need to revisit your website copy to make sure you are repeatedly describing the kind of client who should call you — not just stating it on your home page. Understanding that you are getting volume, but not the correct type of leads may also prompt you to revisit your screening process, so that none of these prospects reach you before being vetted.

By reviewing your data, you may find that while your attorneys are generating qualified leads, those leads are not converting into business. It is satisfying to know that your marketing is working, but results such as this would also point to a high priority call for business development training (i.e., sales training) so that your firm can close more business.

Your data also give you a baseline. If you've made a decision to invest more in one particular area of marketing, you need to know what kind of difference it has made. You can only ascertain this information if you know where you began. Many lawyers have the misperception that better marketing leads to more revenue, but that is not the whole story. Improved marketing leads to more opportunities to sell — to be in front of someone so that you can convert the prospect into a client. You are the personal conduit to more revenue.

If you survey the number of new business opportunities and actual new business, you can calculate your cost-per-lead and your cost-of-client acquisition, which allows you to compare apples to apples. Knowing that it costs less to acquire a worthwhile lead from one source compared to another is very useful when it comes to deciding where next to invest your marketing budget.

Some results are more straightforward and easier to track than others, such as leads that

come through online sources. What is more challenging is gathering the information from your professionals, who, unless they are reminded, may not remember to let the central compiler know that they received a call as a result of the firm's most recent email blast. You may need to assign someone the task of regularly checking in with your professionals to ask what contact they have had from prospective clients. One person needs to be in charge of capturing and collating the information. When it comes to tracking actual new business, you can request whoever enters the information into your system to not deem it complete until the source of business is also entered. Many firms already have a space allocated for this information, but they simply do not bother to obtain or review it.

When we discuss tracking marketing results with our clients, attorneys often tell us that they do not need to do so because they know "in their heads" where business comes from. Even if this is the case, there is value in being able to confirm your estimates; often, there are indicators of your marketing that may have slipped your mind, such as the high caliber referrals you received last year you may not yet have been in touch with this year.

The old management adage is that you cannot manage what you cannot measure. When it comes to marketing and business development, there is a lot you need to manage even if you cannot measure it as closely as you would like. By measuring what you can, you will give yourself the information to make sound marketing decisions. ■