

Don't Market Your Law Practice... Alone

So, let me ask you, how much time are you devoting to client development and retention? Do you have a workable “system” in place that runs on automatic pilot so that you are constantly building visibility to draw new clients to you? How often do you check in with your best clients to see how they’re doing, what they think of your services, and how you can obtain more business and referrals?

I’m going to guess that you did not answer all of these questions in the affirmative. You’re probably thinking that I’m crazy for even asking. Yet, you know that you should be doing these things, but there are a few obstacles getting in the way. First, you may not even know where to start. Or, you may have a natural hesitancy towards anything that resembles “selling”. Many of us went to law school to avoid having to “sell”. But most of all, it’s a time famine issue. With all the billable hour requirements, CLE, pro bono, and just staying up on the developments in your area of the law, how do you find the time to devote to business development? And, why should you? Isn’t that what the rainmakers are supposed to do? Isn’t that what the firm’s marketing folks are supposed to handle?

Well, you can rely on the rainmakers to feed you work, or the firm’s marketing department to tell you what to do, but you know deep down inside that there is only one thing that will guarantee financial and personal success in your practice. If you want to have a balanced and comfortable life, one filled with financial and personal freedom, and the time to do the things you want to do, you have to take responsibility for client acquisition and retention. Having an easy and workable system to get and keep profitable clients is the key which will determine your overall success and impact.

Let me tell you about Marty. He is the owner of small firm that handles real estate and personal injury matters. Like many lawyers, Marty left a big firm due to the bureaucracy and loss of control over his career. He hated the “eat what you kill” mentality of client ownership, as well as being told what cases to work on and how much to charge. He felt alienated and frustrated with his professional life.

The first thing Marty did when he went out on his own was to hire a professional marketing consulting to help develop a targeted and disciplined strategic marketing and client retention plan. The second thing he did was hire a part time marketing assistant. For a time, he even used a virtual marketing assistant to save him money. The marketing assistant’s sole role was to think, eat and breathe client acquisition and retention. She wrote articles for Marty,

issued press releases, managed his calendar for networking events, sent out handwritten cards to his clients, researched new client data for direct mail campaigns, and secured speaking engagements for him. While it took about a year to get going, Marty is incredibly successful. Not just in a financial sense, but he is very happy with his career. He is able to pick and choose the clients and cases he wants to work with; he gets to all of his kid's soccer games, and takes a lot of vacations. He has great practice as it serves him. He even brings his dog to work with him once in a while!

Why is Marty so successful? First and foremost, he has a rainmaker mentality. Second, Marty clearly understands that marketing is the most important activity he's engaged in and that a list of loyal clients is his most precious business asset. Third, he clearly gets the fact that marketing takes time and requires a "system". Lastly, Marty went out and got help to drive his business development and client retention initiatives so that one person could be fully devoted to this important objective; while he was able to do what he does best...practice law.

If a loyal following of profitable clients is only thing that will guarantee your financial and professional success, doesn't it make sense to get help developing and executing that plan? Big companies have devoted marketing departments, so why shouldn't you? Whether you're running your own career, or a law firm, you should not market your practice...alone. Ask any successful businessperson what they believe is the key to success and they'll tell you "marketing" and "profitable clients." Develop the mindset of a rainmaker, get a dynamic marketing plan that fits your personality and practice, set up an easy, consistent and visible marketing "system" and then hire someone to help you execute on that plan.

It may be hard to believe that one little aspect of your business can change your life that much but let me assure you that marketing boils down to one word. **CONTROL!**

When you can easily obtain and retain profitable clients, you can make more money, at any point in the economic cycle. And when you KNOW you can make money, you have achieved complete control of the game. And total control equals total peace. Isn't the lack of peace of mind the real underlying cause of stress? Control is peace. And mastery of marketing is control. So get some help and watch your practice take off. It's that simple.

Cole Silver is a lawyer and certified marketing consultant. His *Expert Audio Series* and book, "**How to Create Wealth and Freedom in your Law Practice**", *101 Powerful Client Development & Retention Strategies for Attorneys* can be ordered by going to <http://www.findcareersuccess.com>. Cole is available for speaking engagements and consulting and can be reached by calling 609-306-8098 or by e-mail at cbsilver@yahoo.com.