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LEGAL MARKETING

Where to Start Anew With Your Business Development Efforts

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Special to the Legal

It's mid-2021 and are you feeling too tired to start up your business development activities? Too busy? Don't think you can grow your practice? Forget how to do it? Don't think you can afford it?

You are in luck. The playbook is different than it used to be.

Yes, some lawyers are still investing in traditional marketing activities like internet advertising, social media campaigns, firm newsletters, holding major client events or hiring PR firms to get them in the paper and going on RFP pitches.

Good news for you: I don't think you should or need to start with these tasks to see results.

Knowing people, being in their lives, listening to them and then doing things for them that make their professional or personal life better—that is what is working now. That is your new business development playbook.

And—believe me—thinking of someone else's needs, doing



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something that shows effort on your part—that is personal to them—will be so much more rewarding and actually easier than “selling or hunting for business per” se. I like to call it “give to get.” And I know you can give. It's so easy.

If you stay interested in someone's life, in a way that feels true and personalized to them—work will follow.

James Rohn, the chairman of Conrad O'Brien, perhaps said it best: “Just do life with people and the rest will take care of itself.” Be you and shine. Think about how you would like to be treated and then do that for a client referral source, a colleague and more.

Based on that simple idea, the following is your six-step checklist

to get back in the business development saddle. Remember successful rainmakers do something just about every day that provides personal attention to someone and it can be very little—a phone call, a birthday card with a handwritten note, an article of interest, a nomination, etc.

Your job now is to tackle this to do list and then press “repeat!”

Actively schedule to do each of these things starting the first of the month.

- Visit one client at his official or remote office for a one-on-one check-in: This is an expressly free meeting where you listen and go over everything going on with them—such as how they are, how work is, obstacles they face, how their case is proceeding, etc. Something to shoot for: ideally, try checking in with each of your current clients once a month and past clients every three to six months and provide them with a value-added service that really helps them.

- Meet with one referral source who has sent you work: Check in and find out how they are doing

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and how you can be of help to them. After the check-in, send a follow-up note with something that might be of interest based on your discussion. Calendar to touch them again in a month. If you can't think of what a good touch would be, email me. I have a great list.

- Meet with someone you like who might need your help down the round. Think neighbor, classmate, golf friend running buddy, someone you buy a service from, someone you have risen the professional ladder with you, etc. Meet, ask questions and learn about their business, life or family. Who is their ideal client or customer, what issues or problems are keeping them up at night, what are their hobbies, and what are things they care about outside of work? Discover a way you can be of help to them so they, in turn, will reach out to you when they have a legal need or one of their friends does. Do it.

- Keep growing your own referral network. Meet with one law school classmate or colleague in the Bar who does not compete with you. Talk about cross-referrals and what a perfect client looks like to each of you.

- Credential yourself so you attain some thought leadership space and look like a force in your area of law. You don't have to do it often—maybe one to two times a year. How? Write (client alert, article for publication—maybe even here); speak (via webinar or in person to a small or large); host.

- Join and get involved with one industry, civic, trade, cultural,

etc. group where clients are in which you have a genuine interest. Volunteer and help. Rub elbows with fellow members and get to know *their* world. The ultimate goal is to have a leadership position in the group within three to five years. Try to meet with one person you are volunteering with each month and get to know his world.

Once you get in the rhythm of getting in touch with people, listening hard to them and then providing a value-added service based on what they said, this kind of business development will become an easy and productive part of your practice.

After doing these six things—pick a new person in the first four categories and do it again. These items are your marketing plan through the end of 2021.

Don't forget some important tools:

- Ask your assistant to Google your top-five clients and top-five referral sources *every week* and give you the results so you can contact the client and positively act on any news involving them. Understand news items that might affect your client. Be relevant and helpful to them. Read their press releases and website frequently.

- Because your website and LinkedIn bios are your professional calling cards, make sure they help you and promote the kinds of results/successes you have brought to clients. Clients and prospective ones want to see that you have helped businesses or people with their exact problem and you have done so successfully.

If you don't know where to start or feel you don't know how to do any of these things, email me. It won't be hard to get you going. Once you get in the rhythm of getting in touch with people, listening hard to them and then providing a value-added service based on what they said, this kind of business development will become an easy and productive part of your practice.

Got a legal marketing question you want me to write about in my next column? Please email me at stacy@stacyclarkmarketing.com. I am here to help. •