

Not another night with the firm's clients

Does the concept of marketing give rise to that nauseous feeling that you have not experienced since moot court? Do you immediately conjure images of stayed and uncomfortable social functions at which you are expected to converse with people that you have absolutely nothing in common with? Do you believe that marketing is something that should be done by partners, and partners only? The concept of marketing in a law firm has changed significantly in the last five years and young lawyers cannot afford to consider themselves exempt from these changes. There is no doubt that a law firm is a business and the solicitors are merely commodities of that business. A solicitor that has an established client base (no matter how big or small) is inevitably more attractive to prospective employers. Indeed, to be admitted to partnership in any firm a client base is essential. So how does a young lawyer struggling to satisfy the demands of the job and with few professional contacts market? Should you start by calling the senior members of banks or corporations in town or by writing highly academic articles for relevant trade journals? Marketing does not need to be difficult, time consuming or fearful. There are a few very simple things that you can do to gradually build a profile for yourself and consequently a client base.

Take an interest in your existing clients

Rule number one is to look after your existing clients. Too frequently people dedicate time and money to chasing the large and prestigious client whilst neglecting their existing clients. Take a particular interest in your clients. Ensure that you provide them with an *exceptional* service consistently. Ask questions and get to know them or their businesses. All too frequently a potential restructure client will walk out of your office with a discretionary trust because you did not take the time to find out about all of their interests and determine what was best suited to their needs. A client may think that a discretionary trust is all that they need, but is it really? I am not suggesting that you over service your clients (this would be as detrimental to your practise as under servicing them) merely take the time to find out their complete requirements and provide them with the most appropriate service. Never forget that you are the expert and you are there to assist them.

Use the resources available to you

The resources available as a result of your membership of the Law Institute are a great forum for marketing. Join the sections that interest you and get involved in some of the

committees. The referral work that may flow from raising your personal profile within your own industry will astound you.

Get to know the industries that you are interested in

If you are interested in a particular area of law pursue it.

Determine what clients or industries would require that

form of legal services and develop an understanding of those industries. Most industries have some form of group or collective. If possible you should join the group, attend their social functions and receive any journals that they produce. As you learn more about the industry and the relevant area of law you may be in a position to provide the industry with legal information perhaps via their existing journal or by producing your own journal.

Contribute to newsletters and journals

It is easy to raise your personal profile by appearing in print. However, young lawyers are often cautious about being committed to publication. Begin by contributing to any existing newsletters

within your own firm and then extend this to other newsletters. Your articles do not need to be extensive or highly academic (always keep the ultimate reader in mind) and may merely be about an interesting legal problem that you have tackled recently. If you are involved in a difficult matter, keep notes about it. With your first hand experience in the matter these notes may be converted into an article with little effort. Keep a file of all of the articles that you write. Writing articles is time consuming, but if you can maximise the exposure gained from your investment of time by submitting the article to a number of newsletters that are circulated to different clientele.

Conclusions

Most importantly marketing should be enjoyable and complimentary to your style and personality. In determining what forms of marketing you should undertake concentrate on the activities that you enjoy. If you enjoy the time that you spend on marketing you are more likely to reap the rewards.

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