



Notes to support Business Development Webinar: Developing your Marketing Plan by Ann Page

'One can't do today's job with yesterday's methods and be in business tomorrow'
Marc Schroder

A) What is marketing?

A dictionary definition is 'the action or business of promoting and selling products or services, including market research and advertising.'

According to Wikipedia – Marketing is communicating the value of a product, service or brand to customers for the purpose of promotion or selling that product service or brand.

Marketing blends art and applied science (such as behavioral sciences); and makes use of information technology systems.

B) Three reasons how a marketing plan can help you:

1. Help you take control of your legal business by helping you *make things happen instead of waiting for clients to come to you.*

Developing a strategic, thoughtful annual marketing plan can serve as a step-by-step map to a lucrative legal business. Given our current economic conditions, in no other time in recent history has the adage "failing to plan is planning to fail" been more apropos.

No one, these days, can take for granted that client work will continue to flow through the pipeline. Too many recently dissolved practices and firms are a testament of that. In some industry segments, there is a shrinking amount of existing work to go around, and with the competition of legal services being as fierce as ever, one cannot just maintain the status quo and expect to sustain a strong practice.

In business management guru and author David Maister's book "True Professionalism," he asserts that billable hours impact today's income, but your non-billable hours determines your future. Right on.

As you embark upon the process of planning, implementing and measuring your business development efforts, chances are you will become empowered by the sense of accomplishment being derived from taking the driver's seat of your professional destiny. Along the way, relationships will be fostered and nurtured, professional accolades may be bestowed as you establish yourself as an expert in your chosen area of practice, and new client matters will be opened.

A well-crafted marketing plan should be S.M.A.R.T. -- Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely. Easy to say, a little tougher to do!



2. Crystallise your business development thoughts, aspirations, growth goals and put them in writing.

Marketing planning need not be a masterfully written document that ultimately winds up in a file somewhere, never to be seen again. Rather, it is a wise practice to actually write down a few objectives and accompanying action steps that will directly affect the way you grow your practice, develop loyal clients, cultivate stronger referral relationships and ultimately derive a greater degree of satisfaction from your legal business.

Another way to think about a written plan would be to view it as a "to do" list outlining no more than three definitive business development goals with a supporting list of action steps to support advancing the goals. The more specific you are in devising the goals and the tactics, or action steps, the higher the probability you will take the necessary steps to implement them.

3. Use your plan to increase your focus and time management ability.

So what is your overall marketing goal? - *To increase your current client base by 20 percent?*

Using a thoughtful, written plan to guide your business development efforts not only helps you stay focused on your long-range goals, it also saves you time from engaging in a wasteful, "gunshot" approach of random acts of marketing. **Consistency is really the key.**

Whatever the marketing objective or strategy, you will want to develop specific action steps or tactics to move you closer to your goal. These should include specific activities and initiatives, which you will take to advance your reputation and relationships among your growing network. *Use the Calendar in the Take Away Workbook.*

It's harder to ignore these steps if you have:

1. Invested the time to think through the your goals and process and
2. Actually written these down and
3. Committed to implementing these by setting aside a period each day to market e.g. *15 minutes/30 minutes to draft an email or return calls or do research on competition, check out LinkedIn contacts and posts.*
4. Set time aside to evaluating and measuring results of the written plan on a periodic basis. Again set aside the time in the diary to do so.

A second purpose of engaging in daily marketing activities is that over time you will build a sense of confidence from the continual "seed sowing" of building your practice and you will "reap" the "fruit". The reward being new client retentions and an expanding network of contacts and referral sources. For instance, if you make an appointment with yourself to call one of your clients, prospect, referral source, and networker source daily/weekly, it becomes part of your good working habits; not something you never get around to doing.



Here are **eight** quick ways you can **turn daily tasks into marketing activities that help deepen your relationship**. *If that seems daunting start with a weekly goal of three per week or a set amount of time each day/week.*

1. When a matter ends, **give your client a call** and tell he or she how much you enjoyed working for and with them. Or say, "I was thinking about you and wondered how you're doing or if you had seen X". Clients are flattered that you bothered to show interest in them. Even if this is a distress purchase such as a matrimonial issue, there still could be a follow phone call/post card to see how it is working out. *No sales just good client connection activity.*
2. Scan newspapers, the Internet, or social networks for interesting - and appropriate - **articles you can pass along** to a client or prospect. Send it with a brief note highlighting why you think it might be of interest.
3. **Work at building relationships** with clients by asking them questions at the end of every conversation. Inquire about their business or a recent vacation.
4. When you meet at a client or prospect's office, take five minutes to **reconnect with people** who you know professionally. Walk around, say hello and ask 'small talk' questions.
5. **Look for 'inward opportunities'** - **often!** Pinpoint who you'd like to have cross-sell your services and make an effort to sit next to that person at the next networking meeting or luncheon. Have some literature or information you can pass once this has been agreed so you retain some control about what is said about your service
6. **Look for 'outward' opportunities** - **often!** Pinpoint whom you'd like to cross-sell their services, which would make a natural, fit with yours. Then make an effort to sit next to that person at the next conference or networking meeting or luncheon. Build networks – these services don't have to be legal. Don't spend breaks scrolling through your messages or emails. Instead, use the opportunity to meet and **talk to new people**. Experience tells us that we prefer to do business with folks whom we like and with whom we enjoy spending time. What better way to "find" those people than to explore business development opportunities within the groups and organisations to which you already belong?
7. **Schedule client meetings** at a time when it would be natural to have lunch or coffee. Take time off the clock to get to know clients or prospects. Do you know their outside interests? Not only will you learn new things about individuals already in your network (which has its own benefits), but also you will most likely learn that you share things in common. Depending on circumstances taking a client or prospect to a sporting event, theater performance or some other social outing in which you may share an interest can be a good way to build relationships. It can be a way to have fun outside of the office while engaging in high-impact business development activities
8. **Challenge yourself** by discovering at least one new marketing opportunity in your everyday routine a month. Record these in your marketing plan and your tracking system. **Keep the ones that work for you.**

Studies show that lawyers who exercise the sound judgment of developing a marketing plan and who are committed to implementing it hold the keys to their financial future. Contrary to common practice of focusing on the work that already exists within a firm, lawyers who carefully implement the action steps of a strategic marketing plan will greatly increase their ability to broaden their contacts and



increase the number of their referral sources, which eventually leads to more work and income. The path to greater financial reward is clear.

C) The Seven 'P's of Marketing

1. People

The personal, cultural, social, and psychological attitudes of your customers are important. It may also help to identify your 'ideal' client and think about what they need.

2. Planning

Your market research needs to be analysed and evaluated as to how best you can leverage your services.

Broadly speaking there are four different positions available:

1. *Do more of the existing work with more of the existing client base.*
2. *Do new work for the existing client base*
3. *Do existing work for new clients.*
4. *Do new work for new clients (this is the most risky)*

This will inform how you promote and market your services.

3. Product (or service)

What makes your product or service different from that of your competitor? Can you develop any brand values for your product? Decide what your unique selling point is and work out how the customer will **benefit** from your product or service. Any marketing should not focus on the features of your services – this is not what 'sells' your service.

4. Positioning

Differentiate your product from that of your competitors. Look for the gap in the market for your product; work out why this gap exists. How big is this market? Does it have short and/or long term growth potential? Decide who your competitors are and how they will react to your plans. What makes your product special? How will you develop and exploit competitive advantage; work out the best time to launch your product.

5. Pricing

What people feel about a service is reflected in what they are prepared to pay for it. Identify what value your customers place on your product. Then decide which market segment you will attack e.g. premium or budget. What discount structure (if any) will you offer for volume work? Any discount should be tied to a specific reason not just because the client has complained about the costs. Do you have a special price for the 'summer' period?



6. Place

How do your clients access your services? Where are your offices? Will you use the Internet or telephone call centres?

7. Promotion

This is the most visible aspect of marketing. It pulls together various communication elements, some of which you may not use:

- Firm identity – if a sole practitioner – then it is your identify!
- Branding of you, your firm and your different services.
- Advertising strategy if any
- Public relations, internal and external – local newspapers are always looking for local stories
- Direct marketing campaigns – do you have one
- Sales promotion and merchandising
- Sales management systems
- Exhibitions.

Your marketing budget is likely to be quite limited. So carefully monitor the effectiveness of each element of your strategy. Focus on those elements that are generating increased business, or helping to retain existing business. **Consistency is key.**

Below is a list of marketing approaches commonly adopted:

- Networking with existing clients
- Small Seminars
- Speeches at client industry meetings
- Articles in trade press
- Proprietary research
- Local community activity
- Networking with referrers
- Newsletters
- Publicity
- Brochures
- Large seminars
- Direct Mail
- Sponsorship
- Advertising
- Social Media

Don't attempt to do them all! Choose ones that will appeal to your client base.



Take Away Work Book

So what do you need to know in order to *prepare* your marketing plan?:

1. Where your firm or legal practice wants to be in 12 months (short term)
2. Where your firm or legal practice wants to be in 0-3years (long term – given the rapid changing legal landscape this would have to be review on a yearly basis.)
3. Where your competition is?
4. What are the changes coming down the track that will affect your business?
5. Do I know what my reputation/brand is in the market place – with my clients?
6. Do I do client satisfaction surveys?
7. How does I.T. or other client relationship management systems help me to track what is working and what is not?
8. What marketing or promotional tools am I going to employ to promote these specific products/services?
9. *See also the questions in the Exercises*



My High Level Marketing Plan

1. Which clients is my plan aimed at?

e.g new – existing - age group – specific communities

2. Who is my ideal client, and what are their challenges?

3. Who do I help?

To do or understand

To achieve

4. What is my goals for these clients? E.g. more work from existing clients – using these clients to refer work to me – cross selling other services?



5. What is the most profitable service I do that I want to promote to these clients?

6. What is the financial budget that I have for these activities including time?

7. What is the time resource and timetable for implementing these? See Calendar page 11



Who is competition for my firm and me? Exercise

	Me Practitioners)	(Sole Firm
Geographical location		
Clients		
Sector		
Specialism		



Take Away Competition Questions

How is your firm standing out?

How am I standing out?

What makes you different to all the other lawyers practising in your field?



Yearly Marketing Calendar – one item per week

January	February	March
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.
April	May	June
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.
July	August	September
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.
October	November	December
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.