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LEGAL MARKETING

Marketing Boot Camp: Get Your Tools in Order Now for Success in 2018

BY STACY WEST CLARK

Special to the Legal

Some of you may have holiday shopping on your mind. That's fine—but I would rather you consider making sure that your list includes important marketing tools that will be needed for effective business development in 2018.

So, in no particular order, Santa, can you gift wrap these for me? I swear I have been nice!

Your new and ever-present marketing mantra is: Give to get, give to get. Constantly be thinking of ways to enrich the professional or personal lives of your clients, referral sources and targets and you will succeed in growing a very healthy book of business.

A terrific (meaning solidly firm) handshake with eye contact.

An extremely neat and professional appearance.

STACY WEST CLARK *has been helping Pennsylvania and New Jersey lawyers and law firms expand their practices for more than 30 years. She is a former attorney with Morgan, Lewis & Bockius and was the firm's first marketing director. She is president of Stacy Clark Marketing, www.stacyclarkmarketing.com, a firm that helps law firms grow their businesses.*

An informative 30-second elevator speech that makes the listener want to know more about the kind of successful work you do.

Notecard stationary. Kept on the upper right hand corner of your desk, use these cards to touch someone personally. Three sentences is all that is needed. Handwritten notes trump emails.

A terrific LinkedIn and firm bio that conveys what is special about you and your approach to your practice. Make sure your bio answers the question: What does someone get by hiring me—that they would not get from my competition!

Make a mental note each day for the next month of anyone who delivers to you extraordinary service and figure out how you can do the same acts for your clients.

Ask your key clients where they get their professional education from and join and attend that group's meetings on a regular basis if possible.

Ask your key clients what they read for their professional education and write for that publication.

Put your business cards everywhere—I mean it—gym bags, coat pockets, glove compartment and more. If you are attending a conference, don't check your briefcase with your business cards in it.

A terrific mailing list that includes not just clients and friends—but everyone YOU are buying a service from. Why shouldn't they be thinking of hiring you?

A clear voicemail message that is you—not your assistant's voice—that helps a caller get to a live person for help.

Speaking of which—a backup plan for how your key clients can reach you in an emergency. (See an excellent Oct. 25, blog post by Michael B. Rynowecer on this subject—The Mad Clientist.)

A fulsome email signature—Someone must be able to find you fast (so provide your phone, email, website, address, fax.)

In addition to your comprehensive mailing list mentioned above, also have a list of reporters who have contacted you regarding a case or deal you have handled or cover your area of practice. Stay in touch with important media members, serve as a background expert to them, send them story ideas and get coverage for your victories.

Reach out to your alma maters and get your alumni lists. Pour over them to find non-competing lawyers that you can add to your referral network. Make a plan for meeting in person with five to 10 of them over the next six months to see what kind of referrals they would like. You can use this meeting as an opportunity—after you listen to them talk about what they are looking for—to speak to what you are looking for.

Calendar marketing—schedule a lunch date every Thursday. Schedule an in-person visit with a different client off the clock once a week. Call your key clients off the clock to check in and let them know how their case is proceeding. Spend at least four hours a week "giving to get" in this way. Email me if you would like a link to my article in The Legal—chock full of ideas on what and how to "give."

Make a mental note each day for the next month of anyone who delivers to you extraordinary service and figure out how you can do the same acts for your clients.

Do a Google search on yourself. Find out what the world sees about you online. Compare your results to what happens when you search for your biggest competitors.

Protocols for opening and ending a matter—so that you and the client are in sync regarding their preferences on communication, case strategy, accessibility and more from the start. Similarly, when a matter ends, you should conduct a client Interview, expressly off the clock, to assess your client's satisfaction with your services and learn their immediate "next step" plans for their business. Consider providing a gratis "post mortem" review of the case to your client telling them how to avoid problems and legal fees down the road.

A marketing plan! Hooray. No more rifle shot marketing. Have a 90-day plan to "give to get" for three clients, three referral sources and three prospects and watch the matters flow in. Include a credentialing activity (write, speak, lead). After 90 days, assess what worked and didn't and do it all again.

As always, I am routing for you and here to help. •