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## A Beach-Friendly To-Do List for Getting More Business

BY STACY WEST CLARK

*Special to the Legal*

There are hundreds of articles providing advice on how to market your law practice successfully. Heck, I have written a barrel full of them. The key for any lawyer is to find out what works for them — whether it is an activity, a mindset, or an exercise (and I don't mean cardio). I always tell lawyers: only go outside your comfort zone by 10 percent. You have to do things that are authentic to you and sit right in your stomach.

So here is a handy “beach-friendly” list of what works for some of my top multimillion-dollar rainmakers. See if any resonate with you.

- Become an expert on a specific topic and let everyone know about it and why they may need help on that subject some day. Write on it, blog on it, post on it, speak on it, lead on it. And let your clients know you are an authority on it. Do something at least once a month for a year to show your expertise both offline and online.

- Make a list of your 10 favorite clients and find a way to “touch” them — in a way that is meaningful on some level to them, either professionally or personally — at least twice a month. A call, an invitation, a mailing of something that can help them in their job, a nomination for an award, a slice of a brief — there are countless ways to let someone know you care that will keep you on top-of-mind status.

- Find out what your top five clients like to do and make it happen for them. Golf at a top course they have always wanted to play on, great seats to hear Yo-Yo Ma, a behind-the-scenes tour of a five-star restaurant — these are all examples of things my clients have done that just took a little bit of elbow grease to make happen. My biggest rainmakers shower their clients with thoughtfulness, and such actions are remembered.

- Visit your top five clients off the clock and just listen. Ask them, “If you had a magic wand, what problems would you like to see go away that your business is facing?”



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- Write off time and show them that you have done that on the invoice. Make your invoice a marketing tool by showing just how many value-added services you provide.

- Write for publications read by your target audience. If you need help finding out what they read, ask them or ask me. It's not hard. Ask your clients what they would like to read about — it is bound to be a common theme for others in the industry.

- If you want to “get in the door,” mine your online and offline connections. Don't be afraid to be bold. You are starting with nothing, so you have nothing to lose. Ask everybody you know in your office, in your neighborhood, on your holiday card list, on your law school class list and on LinkedIn if they know anyone at X company. Then, work it. Once you have that connection, don't be afraid to ask for a meeting. Promise you will make it worth their while to break bread together or to meet in the company's offices. And here is the kicker — make good on that promise. Go to that meeting and give away something for free — that will show how you have thought about some of the company's issues and have already started to work on solving them. I have seen this work many times.

- Do a critical self-analysis of your practice. What is the experience like of being your client — emailing you, calling you, calling your receptionist, sitting in the reception area? Have you ever audited this? You may be practicing

great law but if I can't stand to be in your office or if my calls are never returned by you or your staff, I am ripe for another law firm offering “uber” service to pick me up as a client or at least get my attention.

- OK, this one is hard to do but is so worthwhile. Ask your top clients what you can do better. What kind of service are they getting from anyone else in their life that they would like to see from you? These are the questions that will bind you together and show you care. These questions should be asked of your corporate and consumer law clients.

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- And while you sip on a refreshing drink, with or without an umbrella in it, at the pool or seaside, turn to someone successful next to you and ask, “How did you do it? What are the steps you took to become successful? How do you give top customer service, where do you look for new business and how do you go after it?” You will be amazed at what you learn in this paperless and human way.

You can do this. Find what works for you and do it again and again. Make it your go-to marketing activity. Plant the seeds this summer that will reap benefits this year and next. •

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