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LEGAL MARKETING

What Would You Do if Your Business Dried Up Tomorrow? Rainmakers Respond

BY STACY WEST CLARK

Special to the Legal

“What would you do if your business dried up tomorrow?” I posed this question to some of my favorite rainmakers—all successful lawyers from a variety of different practice areas. I thought it would be a unique way to identify some great marketing strategies ... and I was right.

The following are the responses these leaders in the law gave me. I think they are instructive as to what all lawyers should be doing now—rather than waiting for disaster to strike.

Benjamin Levin, managing partner of Hyland Levin: “I would: continue to be engaged in activities outside of the office, and avoid office busy work. For me that includes charitable organizations (religious and community service), stimulate my brain with a new area of legal expertise that has a present day ‘value add’ to clients; and, try to be useful to others, both inside and outside of the firm.”



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has been helping Pennsylvania lawyers and law firms expand their practices and grow revenues for over 25 years. She is a former attorney with Morgan, Lewis & Bockius and was its first marketing director. She is president of Stacy Clark Marketing (www.stacyclarkmarketing.com).

Matt Haverstick, partner at Kleinbard LLC: “I’d do what I did when I started out, with no book. I’d try to help as many people as I could. I’d meet as many people in all walks of life, as possible. I’d take everyone I could to breakfast, or a hockey game, or you name it. Business can come from anywhere—you just need to wear through shoe leather to find it. I learned from a mentor 20 years ago what it means to hustle (his word) for work, and I’ve never given up that mindset. In many ways, I’d just keep doing what I’ve been doing since that early boss taught me to hustle.”

Lori Shemtob, founder and managing partner of Shemtob Law: “I would

rain dance all over again. I would get out there and start speaking to groups writing articles, meeting with new referral sources. I would reach out to old clients and old referral sources and remind them of me again. I would take people out to lunch and send interesting articles on new cases to clients and referral sources. I would learn about social media and invest in it full steam ahead. I would contact a marketing person to help promote and rebrand me.”

James Rohn, chairman of Conrad O’Brien: “If I lost all my business tomorrow, the only thing that would change is the ratio between time spent developing business and doing legal work, because I have never stopped marketing, even at my busiest. No one should ever expect clients to stay. We have to earn that. I would continue to do what I am doing now—finding great people to do life with, being of service to them, and putting their needs at the forefront of my professional life. With no clients to serve, I would add one thing—more public

speaking in front of organizations whose members have the types of legal problems I solve or help avoid all together ... and I would retain a business coach!”

Alan Shuckrow, president and managing shareholder of Pittsburgh’s Strassburger McKenna Gutnick & Gefsky: “I would systematically touch base with my contacts, starting with those with whom I have served with on boards.”

Deborah Hong, partner at Stradley Ronon Stevens & Young: “If all my business went away tomorrow, I would find out why, make the correction and get back to work.”

Michael Lowenbaum, senior partner, Jackson Lewis: “Utilize the tremendous network I built with great national and regional companies. co-counsel and local business and governmental leaders I have worked with both in my legal and philanthropic work to reestablish myself as a trusted partner and ‘go to’ legal problem solver. I would systematically meet face to face with my key contacts and bring each of them several new ideas that would serve to remind them of the value that I have always brought to the relationship. I was thinking this morning that if I could not get those face to face meetings, I would just camp out at my urologist’s office because almost everyone I know would be there visiting one of the doctors soon! I use Outlook to remind me of every client’s birthday and their new age so that I don’t miss any big ones.”

Francine Griesing, chair of Griesing Law: “Every lawyer, regardless of

size of firm, area of practice, or success as a rainmaker, is well served to have a professional development plan and to review and update the plan regularly. The marketplace is moving faster, so having a plan helps you be nimble when changes occur that alter your practice and opportunities. If you have been doing that, you are less likely to be caught off guard if your market changes and likely have a contingency plan in place. So, the

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first thing for me and my team is to maintain a plan that is a living document. In the absence of that, I would make a plan and execute on it. To do so, I would focus on what work would I like to do that is needed by paying clients, who are the decision makers to select lawyers to do that work, and where do you find them? Where do they congregate, what do they read and who do they listen to? And then, try to attend the events they attend, write for the publications they read and speak at the conferences they attend. Building a reputation as an

expert in the field in which you want to practice is key to distinguishing yourself from the pack.”

Steven Barrett, chair of the personal injury practice, Hamburg, Rubin, Mullin, Maxwell & Lupin: “If the business in an instance dries up, you should not have to start over. Why? Simply because established strategic planning should always be in place and can be relied upon, even if it has to now be modified in light of the unexpected change. Gatekeepers—whether individuals or organizations—should always be targeted and marketed for future referrals. True, there needs to be allegiance to established referral sources, but an attorney cannot rely exclusively on long-standing referral sources. As has happened to me, referral sources have retired and even died unexpectedly. As busy as we are in our practices, we must continuously and meaningfully connect so as to develop trust and solid relations. With there being no end to that process, there should be no reason to have to start all over again.”

Great advice with some common themes and palpable energy on the parts of these lawyers. Don’t wait for the sky to fall. Utilize this advice now and grow your practice. I am rooting for you, as always! •