The Legal Intelligencer
THE OLDEST LAW JOURNAL IN THE UNITED STATES 1843-2022
PHILADELPHIA, MONDAY, AUGUST 1, 2022 VOL 266 • NO. 21 ALM.

LEGAL MARKETING

Law Firms: Here Is Your Summer Dose of Great Marketing Tips

BY STACY WEST CLARK
Special to the Legal

I want to share with you some information on great marketing initiatives happening in law firms around the country that I recently learned about—as well as some recommendations suggested by my consultant colleagues in their blogs and articles.

I hope some of these give you and your firm some terrific possible new directions.

BE THE FIRST … AND FAST!

Hours after the decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade* was handed down, Reed Smith announced the formation of its "reproductive health working group" to advise health care institutions and other companies on what they need to know, from a business standpoint, in a post-*Roe* world. Lawyers in the firm's life sciences health industry group and several other practice groups had been planning for and anticipating the immediate questions and issues their clients would have—as soon as the draft majority opinion was leaked months ago. According to Reed Smith partner Sarah Cummings, "The firm

STACY WEST CLARK *has been successfully helping Delaware Valley lawyers and law firms substantially grow revenues for over 25 years. She has been recognized as one of the top legal marketing consultants in the region by The Legal Intelligencer for many years. A former attorney with Morgan, Lewis & Bockius, Clark was the firm's first global director of client relations in the 1980s and 1990s. Visit www.stacyclarkmarketing.com.*

is committed to staying in front of the issues that will be challenging to our clients. This was no exception. Seeing the writing on the wall, we assembled a multi-disciplinary team to respond to the varied aspects of this issue. Since *Dobbs* was announced, questions have been coming from clients in a range of industries and because of our working group's deep bench and extensive preparation, we have been able to quickly and nimbly respond to even the most complex questions."

SPOT OPPORTUNITIES BY TRACKING CLIENT REQUESTS

In April, I read an article by Jessie Yount in The American Lawyer that described Nixon Peabody's creation of a diversity, equity and inclusion strategic services group—because of the "significant jump" the firm was seeing in client inquiries. "The group was formed as a result of client requests for help on DEI goals as well as emerging business opportunities in underserved communities," according to the article.

According to Stacie Collier, Nixon Peabody's chief talent officer and a labor and employment partner who co-leads the new group, "Our firm had been doing this type of work for a long time, and forming this group came organically. We have found that even clients with well-established internal DEI teams are looking for advisers who understand best practices, trends and larger-scale issues impacting various industries. For example, the health care industry is addressing its history of disparity in medical services and treatment with various minority communities; banking institutions are focused on seeing through their commitments to fund minority-owned businesses; and publicly-traded companies are seeking guidance on diversifying their boards. Nixon Peabody's DEI strategic services group brings together a team of attorneys from across practices who can provide an outside perspective and deep understanding of these complex issues. The offering is completely adaptable to an organization's individual needs."

I think this is a fantastic example of tracking client needs to spot growth opportunities and then, taking action.

YOU CAN FIND NEW PROSPECTS

A true guru to me in the legal marketing profession, consultant Sally Schmidt recently gave very important and practical advice in the "Attorney at Work" online newsletter. She said:

To find new clients and matters, branch out by doing the following:

• "Start with existing relationships. It's easiest to grow a business from the relationships you already have rather than building new ones.

• Leverage your activities. Once you have invested your time developing something (an article, presentation or checklist for example) you should look for opportunities to re-use it."

I heartily agree with both points and similarly advise my clients to do so. In fact, capitalizing on an expenditure of nonbillable time on some "gem" you have created—that is, repurposing it for other marketing activities—is one of the most productive things you could do. I tell law firms to remember my favorite expression and mandate: "Get five bangs for the buck." This means, recycle any marketing activity you do five times. Take a speech, or CLE presentation and turn it into: a client webinar, a one-on-one onsite presentation for key clients, an article, a helpful checklist for clients that you send them via a personalized letter (and add to your website as a resource), a client alert, and finally, a reason to reach out to a reporter who covers business or the industry affected by your news and give them a story idea.

FOR OLDER ATTORNEYS, BE ACTIVE ON LINKEDIN TO SHOW 'YOU ARE STILL IN THE GAME'

I love this advice from Illinois consultant Ross Fishman. According to his recent Blog post, having a credible LinkedIn profile "in a 21st-century economy shows you are on top of important technology and very relevant"—certainly an impression you want clients and referral sources to have!

My advice: Sit with your client, off the clock, and ask them this question on a regular basis. Use their feedback to specifically implement an action plan that helps them succeed.

FOCUS ON HELPING OTHERS REACH THEIR GOALS

The famous author and motivational speaker Zig Ziglar said, "You can get everything in life you want if you will just help enough people get what *they want."* This philosophy will help you get referrals from colleagues in and outside of your firm.

According to managing partner Nick Monaghan of Dykema Gossett, interviewed by Tasha Norman for Law.com, "If you want to achieve your goals, lawyers should focus on helping (their) partners and colleagues develop and grow their practices. From a service and quality standpoint, treat *their* clients as if they were your own. I believe this results in a client-first team-oriented value system that will ultimately pay dividends. "

ASK A CLIENT HER 'PRIORITIES—NOT WHAT SHE NEEDS'

Wicker Park conducts client interviews for law firms and in doing one with a general counsel of a large organization uncovered this great suggestion and reported it on their Blog. Said the GC, "I believe one of the biggest mistakes lawyers make is asking us what we need. What they should be asking, are about my top priorities. The answer to each question would be drastically different. One is significantly more valuable and yet the lawyers find such discomfort in asking about my priorities."

Makes total sense, right?

My advice: Sit with your client, off the clock, and ask them this question on a regular basis. Use their feedback to specifically implement an action plan that helps them succeed.

STAY ON TOP OF WHAT PRACTICE AREAS ARE GROWING

There are opportunities out there for your practice to grow. How will you know what they are?

• Ask your clients what's going on in terms of problems they are handling or foreseeing. (Harken back to my advice above on being on top of new legislation or rules coming down). Change = opportunity.

• Stay on top of what the news and experts say will be hot practice areas. In their blog, CLIO, a management consultant firm, they said that the following practice areas were growing in 2022: “cybersecurity, labor, elder law, energy, IP and health.” They also highlighted drone industry issues and “liability issues from smart technology”—like digital assistants, speakers, and smart appliances.”

Looking for a niche or new practice area? This is marketing gold. Start here.

BUILD AN ONLINE BRAND FOR YOUR PRACTICE

The first thing every client, referral source and prospective client will do is check you out online. So be prepared. Google yourself. See what they see. Does your digital persona indicate you are at the top of your field or the best lawyer for “x” industry? If it does not, fix that with the right, accurate language and with postings of regular, relevant, helpful content.

ARE APPS NEEDED BY YOUR CLIENTS OR FIRM?

Several firms have caught my eye for having launched apps in the client-service space.

“Littler onDemand” app (LoD).

This is a terrific example again, of a firm really considering what would be of great value to clients and creating it. The firm asked and listened to its clients—and then acted.

Littler Mendelson shareholder Scott Forman, who founded the platform and now serves as chief data officer, has said that Littler onDemand was developed in response to clients who identified the expense of dedicating resources to handle day-to-day human resources questions as one of their biggest “pain points.”

Littler onDemand uses both technology and a team of dedicated Littler onDemand counsel to give quick, consistent and thorough answers to their workplace legal questions. It also provides clients with data-driven insights to identify trends, manage risk and drive stronger business decisions.

According to the firm, LoD has yielded impressive results including:

• The platform houses all of a client’s inquiries, creating a knowledge bank that can be drawn upon to reduce time spent answering duplicative questions. This allows in-house counsel and HR managers to direct mote time to high-value, strategic projects.

• With the help of data produced through LoD, clients can also spot issues recurring over time and identify potential risks. For example, if several questions are being asked about a specific policy, that signals a need for targeted employee training or changes to the policy itself.

Saul Ewing Arnstein Lehr’s internal app called “SEAL2Go.”

The “SEAL2Go” app is meant to: help create a cohesive working environment where some lawyers are remote and boost tech innovation. According to legal tech reporter Isha Marathe of law.com, “the app includes features that mimic the “liking” option on Facebook and the marketing and learning resources of LinkedIn.” Such capabilities are meant to recreate connections that used to be commonplace in the office, while also fulfilling a longtime goal to leave behind a process fast becoming obsolete—email.”

Jason St. John, CEO of the firm, said he viewed “the app as a one-stop shop for not only networking and communicating with colleagues but also to keep track of events taking place in other firm offices.”

Results seen to date, according to Kelly Enache, the firm’s chief marketing officer, include:

• Use of the app to manage the firm’s hybrid work approach by allowing attorneys and staff members to share their in-office schedules with each other week-to-week, which has fostered greater collaboration and more purposeful office time.

• Successful reliance on the app to run a firmwide innovation challenge that yielded 88 team submissions comprised of more than 200 attorneys and staff members and produced several winning ideas.

• Movement of historically email driven initiatives to the app, like the firm’s annual mentoring awards, which was managed entirely via email last year but is being launched via the app this year.

• Increased readership of the firm’s monthly newsletters on client/matter successes and press results once these were made available via the app.

Let’s put some of these ideas to work for your practice—and create some of your own. •