

# The Legal Intelligencer

THE OLDEST LAW JOURNAL IN THE UNITED STATES 1843-2023

PHILADELPHIA, FRIDAY, JANUARY 13, 2023

VOL 267 • NO. 9

ALM.

## LEGAL MARKETING

# If I Wanted a New Client, What Would I Do? Here's a Roadmap to Follow

BY STACY WEST CLARK

*Special to the Legal*

Hello friends. Let's start 2023 with a roadmap to finding a new client this year. Not bad for a resolution! This roadmap works—and if you use it, you should be able to do it again and again and build your practice.

(Note: there are many ways to grow your practice, and this is just one. For others, contact me or please see my articles on law.com or my website.)

### SO, WHAT WOULD I DO? THREE THINGS

First, I'd figure out what specific kind of law and client I wanted to focus on (because I like it and I'm good at it).

Second, I'd ascertain: What legal services these potential clients MUST buy this year? I would position myself as an expert on those matters online and in print. (I'll tell you how below).

Third, I would then "Fish where the fish are!"—in other words, I would figure out where these clients "live" and become active and helpful in that community. I would learn to emerge myself in the potential client's world and problems.



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### Your Business

#### Development Roadmap:

- Pick an industry or community organization chock-full of the kinds of clients you want to represent who have a legal need you can solve.

- Identify how you can join that group. Usually, most groups have a designated membership category for those affiliated in helping members of the group—often known as associate members.

- Make a date with the executive director or a board member, to explore ways you can help the organization and get involved.

- Go to the group's activities, such as annual, mid-year and monthly meetings, socials and networking events. Try to get to know one person. (Follow up with them after the event—there are tons of proper ways to do this!)

- Join a committee and raise your hand to help on something.

- Seek a leadership position in the group after a year or so if possible.

- Identify the industry/group newsletter—online or in print—for the group and get on the schedule to write something short and extremely helpful. Not only will the article go to the membership, but it will credential you further as an expert in an industry when you add the by-line to your bio and social media.

- Ask one member—if you can take them for coffee and ask them what issues are keeping them up at night. You can say that you want to better understand what kind of challenges they (and members of the group) are facing and what they might be specifically wanting to learn about. Start with a member in a leadership position with the group. The amount of critical information you will receive from this conversation on what you should be doing will be so valuable.

*Tip: Ask questions and let them talk 85% of the conversation. You are there to learn—not brag or take over the conversation in any way.*

- With the knowledge you have gained from your conversation in No. 8, put a

checklist or two-paragraph alert on both your bio and social media that speaks to exactly what you heard. Your goal is to demonstrate to anyone checking you out that you have successfully handled the kinds of problems they have and have a deep understanding of the industry and eagerness to help—i.e., you are the “go-to” lawyer for this kind of legal problem.

- Ask a member what they read, where else they go for their professional education and what they do for fun (hobbies, passions, etc.). This will give you more ideas on how to further connect, demonstrate your expertise and provide value that keeps you top-of-mind.

- Come up with something for the membership that is a “value-added” piece—like a report on proposed legislation, new compliance rules, ways to save money and be more efficient, etc. Why not prepare a checklist (on your letterhead) on reducing risk or preventing litigation—Who wouldn’t want a copy of that?

- Remember, it is a marathon not a sprint. Success/results take time.

## **A SUCCESS STORY: ‘HELEN THE PESTICIDE LAWYER’**

My client, Helen (name changed for anonymity), was a defense litigation attorney at a small boutique firm who wanted more clients who were in the small critter prevention and termination space. I identified the prevalent trade association for pesticide companies on the local, state and national level. Helen joined as an affiliate member. She then looked to attend all local meetings and get the lay of the land and get to know one new person.

After three months, she raised her hand to help with one of the association’s committees. Thereafter, she volunteered

on panels, spoke at the annual meeting, and wrote for the group’s publication. In fact, she asked to be the regular “legal columnist” for the publication—further cementing her brand as the go-to lawyer for industry problems.

After two years, Helen was a speaker at the national group’s meeting. Preparation was easy. She took the talk she had given to the regional group and recycled it.

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In the months ahead, she asked to chair a committee and after a year of active participation, she went on the board. As a board member, she made it a point to take one other board member out quarterly, one-one, to get to know him personally and professionally—thereby starting a relationship and identifying ways to be helpful in the future.

Every time, she did anything in the pesticide-industry space, she added it quickly and religiously to her bio(s). In fact, Helen made sure her bios included all the business language a pesticide executive would want to see their counsel command.

New regulations were being introduced in the state legislature that could affect members. Helen volunteered to track them and keep the membership apprised of how it might affect their businesses and bottom line.

After 18 months, Helen got a call from a member she had sat next to at a couple of meetings. The member knew she got the industry and knew the law—cold. A client relationship was born. It worked. Her efforts not only brought in a client but gave her knowledge on the law, the clients, and the industry beyond anything she could have gotten just sitting at her desk.

Currently, Helen is adding a pesticide industry window to her firm’s website complete with resources like helpful checklists and alerts. She keeps tabs on industry news by reading The Wall Street Journal, the Philadelphia Business Journal and pesticide industry management and scientific periodicals to stay in the know. She has placed Google alerts on words used in the industry, members of the board and others she has met, as well as key lawsuits and legislation to help track everything that is happening. And she follows up with each member she has gotten to know to regularly—to stay on their radar and do something helpful for them—so she remains “top-of-mind status.”

Want to lay out a similar plan and devote enthusiastic time to making it work? Just let me know. This formula works. •