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How One PI Lawyer Built a Huge Practice Without Advertising

I wanted to share his story with you—because he has built a huge personal injury (PI) practice without advertising—on the internet, yellow pages, billboards or otherwise.



By Stacy West Clark | March 12, 2024 at 09:54 AM

Tim Rayne is a partner at the highly respected regional firm of MacElree Harvey headquartered in West Chester, Pennsylvania with offices in Kennett Square and Delaware and over 45 lawyers who practice sophisticated corporate and real estate matters, commercial litigation, and top-tier family law and estates work. He is a “lifer”—having started with the firm as a law clerk in 1994 and is now a long-term member of its executive committee.

I wanted to share his story with you—because he has built a huge personal injury (PI) practice without advertising—on the internet, yellow pages, billboards or otherwise.

Tim is entrepreneurial with a very high work ethic. He has been this way all of his life. He waxed cars in middle school, in high school he shoveled snow and had a business selling firewood, and in college, ran a house painting business. He carried that work ethic into building his practice. Until recently, when he hired an associate, Tim was the only personal injury lawyer in his full-service law firm—practicing with a paralegal and assistant to efficiently assist his workload. While Tim had the name of a prestigious firm behind him, he still needed to carve out a niche and find clients in the heavily competitive PI world.

So, when Tim decided to convert from a general litigator to a concentration in PI, he vowed to dedicate regular time during the work day and a significant part of his downtime to marketing. His marketing strategy was firmly developed when he attended a legal marketing seminar in 2001. Tim was inspired and motivated by what he learned, specifically: employing the concept of education-based marketing efforts—to reach potential clients and referral sources. He decided to use this strategy to create content and “top of mind” status with his target audience.

Said Tim, “the key to marketing is being top of mind with as many people as possible so that when they hear of a legal need in my area, they think of me and refer me. Over 30 years, I’ve gotten to know a lot of people, but I truly believe that vast majority of my current cases are coming from my Internet presence and regular posting as opposed to referrals that I would have gotten just through traditional handshake marketing.”

Tim created: a mailing list of family, friends, and contacts (now numbering close to 1,000 with whom he regularly communicates and, a website TimRaynelaw.com, which is apart from the firm’s site but within the firm’s visual identity/brand confines. He self-published a book on car insurance choices and personal injury cases (which he continues to give out to this day). Importantly, Tim is a content king—regularly posting tons of informative information to his website and social media platforms. Tim publishes a client newsletter, has written for the local bar association journal and even had a monthly column in his community newspaper.



In 2014, he created a “brand persona” for his practice—he is known (affectionately) locally as “the bowtie lawyer” due to his penchant for wearing them—and in doing so, he projects a professional, classy look. He even did a video on YouTube, in which he, as “the bowtie lawyer,” teaches viewers how to tie a bowtie! In addition to the bowtie, Tim professionally dresses for work every day. I have never seen him in casual clothes, and I have known him for over 10 years. If you see Tim on the street, he looks like he is ready to take your case to court right then and there.

Eventually, social media came on the scene and Tim moved almost all of his marketing efforts online. Video has become a primary focus of his marketing efforts, although he continues to religiously write articles and blog posts. Tim has a YouTube channel with 385 videos. He publishes his videos on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and LinkedIn.

Tim keeps his website and blog regularly updated posting case results, testimonials, blog articles about new laws and cases. Perhaps his most popular posts are when he comments on a celebrity’s legal predicament. He has posted on legal affairs involving Tiger Woods, the Johnny Depp and the Trump trials and much more. Not only are his postings insightful but they are entertaining to read/watch. Tim successfully educates his mailing list and social media followers on the law—with him as the expert front and center.

Regarding his social media presence, Tim adds: “Social media and in particular video marketing, requires some thick skin. Not everyone will love what you do. In fact, I get jabs from time to time from family members and friends about ‘those videos’. However, those videos and my marketing activities have enabled me to grow an extremely lucrative personal injury practice from nothing”.

In the last 10 years, his fee revenue and compensation have both gone up by 300%. Let me reiterate: He started with zero and built his practice without any billboards, Google AdWords or any other significant advertising expenses.

Tim does not take every case that comes in the door. As he says, “I learned to refer out smaller cases to other lawyers whom I trust. I also recognize that for large and extremely complex cases, I need to affiliate with other lawyers, and I have good friends from the LLM program in trial advocacy that I went through at Temple University in 2008, with whom I work with regularly and to whom I also refer cases.”

He is not shy about sharing his personality and personal life on social media—regularly posting photos of his family and trips that they take and interesting hobbies that he has like surfing. In so doing—he has “humanized himself” and viewers/clients like this!

Said Tim, “Right now, the most effective marketing I have been doing is short form videos which are less than two minutes—usually a minute or less. I create this content using just my iPhone and a microphone. I edit my videos on Instagram or other editing software to add titles, captions, music, and other creative touches and then post them on all of my channels (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, LinkedIn and YouTube). I have gotten very efficient at the video publishing process. A one-minute video usually takes me just about 20 minutes from start to finish which includes thinking of the topic/script and posting on all channels.

Second, I continue traditional “handshake” marketing. I’m also a member of the Rotary Club and regularly attend bar association events. However, I find that Internet and social media marketing is much more efficient. I can “touch” so many more people in much less time.”

He added: “I love my job and I feel like I am doing a public service with my marketing by educating the public on important insurance choices, their legal rights and the insurance claim process. I always try to think about “what’s in it for the audience” and how I can educate and entertain them.”

Thanks Tim.



I think you have given us a blueprint for how to build a successful practice in the PI world on a very limited budget. For sure, your “secret sauce” is a combination of mastering an area of law, loving what you do (which includes regularly creating topical and helpful content for his wide audience) and then—delivering outstanding service to clients when cases come in the door. As you explained to me, “this leads to a substantial amount of repeat and referral business.”

OK folks, now it’s your turn. As always, I am rooting for you and I’m here to help.

Stacy West Clark *has been helping Pennsylvania, New York, Delaware and New Jersey lawyers and law firms succeed in growing their practices for more than 25 years. She is a former attorney with Morgan, Lewis & Bockius and was the firm’s first director of client relations. For free articles on numerous business development and marketing topics, as well as more information about Clark and her work, go to www.stacyclarkmarketing.com.*

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