

Incorporating Marketing Into Everyday Activities

By Lisa Young and Jorri Heil

Trying to properly service your clients, meet billable-hour expectations, and make it home at a decent time is challenging. These demands often mean that marketing falls near the bottom of the to-do list. With a little bit of invention, you *can* find time for business development activities by incorporating them into your everyday activities.

So, how many nonbillable hours should be allotted for marketing? Sources differ in their recommendations, but all fall between 100 and 400 hours per year. For example, in an article written by independent marketing consultant Patricia Davidson, it is recommended that attorneys who bill 2,500 hours per year spend at least five hours each week on marketing activities.

With a busy schedule, it might seem impossible to squeeze out those five hours per week, but there are some no-hassle ways to do it.



Never Eat Lunch Alone

Everyone has to eat: referral sources, potential clients, friends, fellow board members, etc. So why do so many of us eat alone at our desks? The next time you run to the local deli alone, ask someone to

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break bread with you. You will fill your stomach and maybe get some new business at the same time.

Make End-of-Matter Meetings Count

The ink is dry on the estate plan. The client walks out the door. The file is sent to storage. That is the end of that relationship for awhile. But wait! Did you tell your client that we could also help him with his construction contracts, land purchase, and business entity formation? At the end of a matter (or the beginning if you prefer), try taking time to introduce the client to the firm's other services. Bring a marketing packet along to your final client meeting and make sure that the client knows that we would

look forward to getting a call from her in the future.

Try Marketing During Enjoyable Activities

Ellen Freedman of Freedman Consulting relayed a story in her article "Reinforcing Basic Marketing Concepts" that shows how you can employ marketing in any situation. One of her clients coached his son's soccer team, which let him spend quality time with his son. Parents of the team members knew the man was an attorney but knew nothing more about his work. After years of coaching, the man realized the parents were potential clients. He did corporate work and the soccer stands were full of business-owning parents. He later talked to parents letting them know what work he did and how he could assist with business problems—turning soccer moms and dads into clients.

Make Marketing Personal

Ellen Freedman uses the quote, "your best referral sources become your friends, and your friends become your best referral sources."

Recommended reading: *Never Eat Alone: And Other Secrets to Success, One Relationship at a Time* by Keith Ferrazzi

Marketing Myth

When prospective clients have questions, they will call.

False. Potential clients will often hesitate to call unless they know their call will be welcomed. In all communications, invite prospects and clients to call you with their legal questions or problems. Often, their questions will lead to work that can be done on their behalf.

Source: "Bench and Bar of Minnesota" a publication of the Minnesota State Bar Association, 2004

Do You Know Your Neighbor?

Maria Saez (Pronounced Cy-ez, like Joan Baez)

Can you describe your practice?

Currently, I divide my time between medical malpractice defense and employment law.

What do you find interesting about this area of law?

Employment law is like an ongoing soap opera. The most outrageous facts come to light in employment cases, which makes it fun. With medical malpractice, it is the science-related aspects of it that I enjoy. I am a science geek at heart.

Why did you become an attorney?

I became a lawyer to help people. I was a social worker before going to law school, and I felt a law degree would be a great complement to my social work background. I needed an air of legitimacy to go with my "save the world" mentality.



How do you define marketing success?

I feel marketing is successful when the target audience does not feel that they are a marketing target. They just feel like they know a great, personable, knowledgeable lawyer.

What one marketing activity has been most successful for you and why?

Nothing beats doing a great job for an existing client. That way, they won't hesitate to recommend you to friends and colleagues. Also, I try to get involved in my community but not with an eye for good "marketing" opportunities. I do what I enjoy and the opportunities find me.

Who are some of the clients or organizations you represent?

University of Michigan Health System, Central Michigan Community Hospital, a private physician practice in Detroit.

What do you think is most important in serving your clients?

Great communication is key. Respond to their concerns as quickly as possible.

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The People We Serve

The Traverse City North Stars is Traverse City, Michigan's Junior A hockey league and is a member of the North American Hockey League (NAHL). NAHL teams compete mostly within their own division during a 56-game regular season, which runs September through April.

NAHL is a league designed to help players transition from midget and high school hockey to college hockey. The league strives to enhance its players skills through quality coaching, extensive practice, and a rigorous game schedule.

The team, which plays at the Centre Ice Arena, boasts alumni who now

play for teams at the University of Michigan, Grand Valley State University, Lake Superior State University, and many more.

In 2007, a dispute arose between the team's owners. One of the team's owners, Steve Fournier, is a long-time family friend of Scott Harvey. Steve contacted Scott to help resolve the dispute. Scott, along with Adam Lett, helped the owners resolve the dispute and crafted an agreement making Steve the majority owner of the team.

Traverse City North Stars

Client since: 2006

Primary contact: Scott Harvey

Location: Traverse City, MI

traversecitynorthstars.com



The firm has continued its work with the Traverse City North Stars as their general counsel. Smith Haughey also supports the team through sponsorships and ticket purchases.

Scott Harvey has received referrals from the client. Also, Steve is president of Farrington Construction Company of Traverse City, and Scott hopes that they can gain the client's construction business in the future through cross marketing.

Marketing Meditation

Don't forget your business cards. Always carry extras. Forgetting sends the message that you don't really want to be at the meeting or conference.



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Be forthcoming with information so they do not have to call you to check on the status of things.

What is one client service practice that works well for you that others can use?

Be clear about what you can and cannot do for a client up front. Setting clear expectations at the beginning is very important for both the attorney and the client.

What are some issues in your area of law that you believe are going to be important in the near future?

Employees and their attorneys are getting more creative in their employment law claims. Benign disputes, like a dispute over the office thermostat, can easily escalate into costly discrimination suits.

What is a memorable moment you have had with a client?

When I left my former firm in Chicago, I called a client in Florida to convey the news. He told me that in the 40 years he had worked for the company, I was his favorite attorney because within five

minutes into every conversation, he forgot he was talking to an attorney. I made him feel more like a friend and less like a paying client.

How do you like to spend your spare time?

I like to travel and play golf.

Is there something fun that no one in the firm would know about you?

I love to make pottery.

Where did you take your last vacation?

Northern Italy.

4 Rules For Successful Marketing

Rule 1: Pair Credibility and Direct Marketing

Credibility marketing offers visibility, but direct marketing brings in business. Credibility marketing involves speaking at seminars, conferences, or similar events and writing newsletters or other articles. These activities work best when industry groups are targeted, but they are not as effective as they once were and are best used in combination with direct marketing, which involves networking, visiting clients or prospects, and formal bidding.

Rule 2: Use Team Marketing

Previous methods used by

many rainmakers to bring in business no longer work. This includes old-boys' networks, social or civic contacts, golf outings, and individual attorney visits. Data shows that today, clients select a law firm based on "demonstrated expertise" more than on personal loyalty; personal loyalty (or the "good-old-boy network") does not work like it used to.

Team marketing efforts are critical because top decision makers rarely make decisions unilaterally. However, team marketing doesn't mean that a team of four or more meets with those who influence the decision to select a law firm. It

does mean that each person in a firm who knows someone in the company develops a strategy and then approaches individual contacts in an organized way.

Rule 3: Entertainment Has Lost Its Effectiveness

Golf outings, fishing or hunting trips, and sporting events are no longer the way to gain clients. Reasons for a decline in entertainment's usefulness include:

- Many companies have informal or formal policies limiting or discouraging it

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- Many busy executives would rather have an evening with family than out being wined and dined
- Entertainment is not a way to establish credibility or sell a firm’s services

Better ways to market involve networking at trade association meetings, business lunches (with a business purpose, not simply to participate in talk), relationship management visits to existing clients, and more.

Rule 4: Marketing Takes Time, Persistence, and Patience

Data shows that to have an effective marketing program, partners in firms must average 400 nonbillable hours on marketing per year. Those who bring in significant amounts of business spend even more. This can be an issue with attorneys who are already struggling to balance work and personal time, but in the long-term, it results in more control over one’s life and practice, more power within a firm, and a more satisfying practice.

Taken from “Keys to Successful Marketing for Women Lawyers,” July 1999, Susan Raridon Lambreth



How Women Benefit from the Four Rules

- More companies are seeking to hire women attorneys and more influencers within companies are women or prefer to hire women lawyers.
- The best years for marketing your practice are between 35 and 50 years of age. This is because most of the influencers of decision-making for legal services are between 35 and 50. This group is also more likely to be female or hire females.
- Women are better at setting aside ego and short-term gains to work together; and team marketing works, giving women an advantage.
- The most important skills in relationship building are active listening and demonstrating understanding of a prospective client’s situation. Studies show that women excel at both.

In the Loop

Marketing Success

Ed Bailey, director of campus services at Northwestern Michigan College, called **Chuck Judson** to tell him how helpful he finds the Construction Law Newsletter. After reading **Ben Hammond's** update on residential contractor requirements, the college called with questions.

A Smith Haughey health law advertisement generated an inquiry from an existing client. The new principle in charge of health care projects, John Edison of architectural firm Beta Design, contacted **Mike Roberts** after seeing the ad. John asked to arrange an introductory meeting with members of the health care practice group to receive counsel on current industry trends.

George Bearup had lunch with Circuit Judge Phil Rodgers on June 7 during which the judge complimented **Todd Millar** as an exemplary trial attorney. The judge said that Todd is always prepared, civil to opposing counsel, and pleasant to have in court because of his orderly and organized presentations. "You can just tell that Todd never asks a question that he has not thought through well in advance, and for which he does not already know the answer," said Judge Rodgers.

Aileen Leipprandt received a thank you note from a client who had a falling out with her contractor who was constructing a custom home valued over \$650,000. The client did not have the contract reviewed prior to construction and found it unfavorable when problems arose. Aileen's work led to the client making a final payment of only \$12,000 as opposed to \$45,000 to the contractor, who eventually backed off because of Aileen and her client's perseverance with the case. In the thank you, the client said Aileen's "support and expertise throughout the process was incredible."

The new shrr.com has landed two new clients. **Adil Daudi** and **Veronica Marsich** met with a potential client in the life sciences field after the pharmacy consultant saw the Web site. The client selected Smith Haughey from a list of three other law firms because he was impressed with our Web site and because of our office locations. Also, **Jeff Wonacott** and **Stacey Bivona** received a new client. The client was impressed with the site's information and easy navigation, which led to her hiring Jeff to provide legal counsel regarding the sale of her business.

In June, **Dave Vinocur** presented "Legal Issues in the Medical Care of Minors" to a group at Mercy Hospital in Cadillac. The presentation was highly rated by attendees. Dave received ratings of "agree" to "strongly agree" on all evaluation categories, including: will use material in clinical practice, presentation was free of commercial bias, and the material was scientifically sound. Participants also made comments, including: "excellent speaker, very interesting topic" and "invite him back to speak on HIPPA, disclosure issues."

George Bearup's recent Estate Planning Legal Alert struck a chord with our contacts. To date, he has received four phone calls from folks who want him to review their documents.

Recently, at the CFMA golf outing, **Ben Hammond** received positive comments on his spiffy new SHRR construction team shirt. We're not sure if it was the shirt or the guy wearing it, but either way, it is good marketing.