



Marketing That Works: Ten Tips from Top Marketers

By Ursula Furi-Perry

Business is still business when it comes to the law. Like any other entity, a firm must stay visible and competitive in its market. "Legal marketing is more important today than at any other time," said Susan Sipe, president of Sipe & Associates, Inc., a legal Internet marketing firm. "In any business that's run like a business, whether a firm or a corporation, if no one knows what you do or what you are capable of doing, there's no way they'll purchase your services," explained Nat Slavin, publisher of Corporate Legal Times and board member-at-large at the Legal Marketing Association (LMA).



In today's world of savvy legal marketing, a catchy business card and that ad in the phone book simply don't cut it—and law firms are taking note. "I'm seeing more and more marketing officers, and marketers are definitely rising up in the ranks," said Suzanne

Donnells, chief marketing officer at Allen, Matkins, Leck, Gamble & Mallory, LLP, and board member-at-large at LMA. Yet many firms simply can't afford to implement a marketing department; at smaller firms, marketing responsibilities may be handed to an able legal professional. To shed light on successful marketing techniques, LawCrossing asked top legal marketers for their tips about marketing that works:

1. **Promise only what you can keep.** "The number-one thing you need to do is to make sure the messages taken to the market are realistic. Make sure you can deliver on your message," Slavin said. "Keep the client's expectations within reason from the outset so that you don't set yourself up for failure," Sipe agreed.
2. **Stay in touch with your existing clients' expectations.** "The best thing for retaining existing clients is to establish an in-person direct interview process," said Donnells, recommending that firms periodically consult clients about their level of satisfaction with the firm's services and ideas for improvement. As current and returning clients often account for a high percentage of the firm's revenue, "it's really important to keep these clients happy," Donnells stated.
3. **Train your attorneys to think like businesspeople.** "Put attorneys through intensive business training and orient [them] to have more of a needs-focus and product-push approach," said Donnells. While marketers and other non-attorneys often take on the bulk of the

firm's marketing tasks, it's just as important to get the attorneys on board. Simply put, "What you're selling is your attorneys and their expertise," Donnells explained.

4. **Consider a second opinion.** When it comes to marketing, two heads really are better than one. Involve others from the firm in brainstorming for new marketing techniques, proofreading marketing materials, and coming up with ways to increase visibility. "It's important to go to a 'fresh eye,'" Donnells said.
5. **Get on the net, already!** "It is an expected courtesy for a law firm to have an informational website available for prospective clients and other lawyers looking to refer a client or case," Sipe said. "In this age of technology and instant gratification, firms must market effectively so they can be found by prospective clients and...satisfy that need for information."
6. **Keep up with the trends.** Before undertaking any marketing efforts, a firm should note its strengths and best sales points. "Figure out what you're offering to the marketplace," said Donnells. "Then, you can seek out each individual niche area and figure out the next big wave." By keeping informed about trends in your area of the law, you'll present yourself as knowledgeable and trustworthy to clients—not to mention understand what potential new clients are likely seeking.
7. **Turn to the experts.** "Spend the money to hire consultants and/or advisors who can not only do the marketing, but can also teach," Sipe advised. Consultants can be a real asset if marketing duties fall on the shoulders of an inexperienced legal professional. "If you don't want to invest in a marketing department, consultants are your best friend," Donnells said.



Feature

8. **Don't snub public relations.** Attorneys are often nervous to talk to the press, Donnels explained, so "PR is a great tool, but often underutilized by attorneys." To achieve better visibility, a firm can turn to local and national press and stay in touch with the community. "Network with other lawyers; get involved in community events; write articles for your local paper," Sipe listed.
9. **Improve your writing skills.** "Lawyers give higher value and credibility to individuals who are good writers and have a mastery of the English language," Donnels believes, adding that good writing skills are necessary for any marketing materials that will leave the firm.
10. **Study marketing perpetually.** "Anyone who ventures into this area needs to think of themselves as a student," said Donnels, who swears she learns something new every day, even after 15 years of experience. Attending seminars and conferences, joining a legal-marketing organization such as the LMA, and finding an experienced mentor for guidance can help newbies and old-timers alike. Said Donnels, "You'll do really well if you're constantly refining your skills."

EmploymentCrossing is the largest collection of active jobs in the world.

We continuously monitor the hiring needs of more than 250,000 employers, including virtually every corporation and organization in the United States. We do not charge employers to post their jobs and we aggressively contact and investigate thousands of employers each day to learn of new positions. No one works harder than EmploymentCrossing.

Let EmploymentCrossing go to work for you.