



MOTIVATING NON-MARKETERS

by: Lawrence M. Kohn

All law firms need new clients. And all law firm administrators can be a powerful force in the process of identifying opportunities and acquiring profitable business. One approach which is often frustrating, is trying to motivate non-marketers to become more pro-active. While the effort may feel almost overwhelming, the fact is that any lawyer can learn to be an effective member of the marketing team. The real surprise is that many will not only learn how to market, but also they will learn to enjoy the experience which they thought they would despise.

One reason it is so difficult to motivate non-marketing lawyers is that lawyers are skilled in the art of arguing. They are trained to push for their position. They get pleasure and increased self-esteem when they beat, or better yet, crush their opponent. So, if they decide to be hostile to the concept of marketing, they will be outstanding adversaries.

Of course this personality trait will win the battle against Rainmaking but increase the risk of a drought. One well-spoken, negative voice will rationalize personal exemption and could easily destroy an entire firmwide marketing effort.

Following are ten techniques for law firm administrators to motivate non-marketers to become more effective:

1. empathic. Show the lawyers in your firm that you understand their dilemma. There are many valid concerns about

marketing. Let them know that you can relate to the fear of having to do something that is new and different. Tell them you know there are lots of reasons lawyers don't want to market. It feels shameful. Professionals are raised to believe that great skills alone will attract new clients. Therefore, any effort to market reveals self-doubt about skills. Selling legal skills feels beneath them. Most lawyers did

10 Tips to Motivate Non-Marketers

1. Be empathic.
2. Clarify the benefits.
3. Prove that marketing is honorable.
4. Demonstrate that success is achievable.
5. Show them they have the necessary skills.
6. Teach them the process.
7. Remind them it will be fun.
8. Get their commitment.
9. Create deadlines.
10. Coach them through the process.

not go to law school to ultimately go into sales. Acknowledge their fear of failure, the fear of feeling subordinate to prospects or appearing to be needy or dependent. These are powerful negative feelings and easily destroy the willingness to give marketing a try. The worst thing you can say is they shouldn't feel these feelings. That approach makes you the enemy and they will fight you.

2. Clarify the 'benefits. The obvious benefit of marketing is more money. But money alone is by no means a motivator. Explain that marketing makes the practice of law easier and more fun. Marketing allows lawyers to be more selective in their choice of clients and matters. When the pipeline is full, they can upgrade, they can diversify. Marketing regularly results in acquiring new friends. It allows for more recreation. Marketing builds team spirit. It holds firms together in difficult times. And, marketing is exhilarating. Even the greatest Rainmakers, who no longer need the income, continue to market because of the thrill of the hunt. Marketing is more than money. It is building a machine that will protect the future quality of the firm. It is a profound intellectual and emotional experience.

3. Prove that marketing is honorable. Prejudice about marketing comes from blatant displays of dishonorable behavior. However, the abusive and manipulative techniques that exist are not indicative of the methods that are appropriate or effective. Dishonorable sales people must look only for short-term results. Once their lies are uncovered, they lose relationships. Lawyers are marketing for the long term and therefore, can only be successful by both acquiring and keeping clients. Manipulation does not work over time. While there are dishonorable marketers, the honorable marketers tell the truth, respect the needs of prospects and accurately communicate value. These are the marketers who will prevail among preferred prospects.

4. Demonstrate that success is achievable. One reason lawyers fail to market is they spend too much time planning and not enough time marketing. Planning creates

an overwhelming objective - too big to tackle. Throw out the plan to plan. Non-marketers can't be expected to create a plan of activities which they don't even want to implement. Instead, identify one beginning step: Create an accurate data base. Document the current relationships that could be clients, referral sources or influential resources. Success comes in small steps. Lots of small steps make for a meaningful marketing effort. Identifying good contacts will be a reassuring step and will open the door to further movement.

5. Show them they have the necessary skills. Effective marketing means communicating value. It requires intelligence, communication skills and the ability to do good work - all qualities possessed by your lawyers. The key is the ability to prove these skills before being retained. We suggest focusing on providing Value in Advance. Your lawyers can give free advice. They can make referrals to other needed advisors. They can be a sounding board. They can be an ally. They can have a sincere interest in the well-being of their prospects. These are the skills for communicating value - not the caricature of the fast-talking, pushy, joke-telling, uncaring salesperson.

6. Teach them the process. Marketing requires organization. Explain the importance of identifying only the most appropriate targets. Too much time is wasted marketing to non-prospects. Then, help them create a systematic method for meeting and following through over many years. We recommend a simple, manual contact management system. A contact management system helps lawyers create individual strategies for each prospect. They can choose strategies that are comfortable and appropriate. This simple step stops complaints about being too busy and promotes pro-active behavior during a busy day. An organized process makes marketing manageable - not a black hole. Without a process, a non-marketer will fail.

7. Remind them it will be fun. Marketing means more golf, tennis, shows, parties or any other recreational activities the lawyers enjoy. I've interviewed hundreds of CEO's and in-house counsel, and they all say that they enjoy getting to know their advisors in a social environment. It creates and solidifies relationships. Marketing regularly proves itself to be fun. Over fifteen years of coaching lawyers to market, I've

seen so many lawyers (who love the law) minimize their lawyering for the preferred activities of Rainmaking.

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8. Get their commitment. How can you get the commitment to market from every lawyer in the firm? The answer is: One at a time. Never try to motivate a group. The risk is too great that in a public forum, someone will once again demonstrate their ability to destroy the marketing monster. Approach lawyers individually and negotiate their support. If they don't want to participate, ask for their commitment to let others give it their best - without criticism. Acknowledge their adversarial skills and ask them to keep them in check. This may seem impossible, however it is not. You must silence the naysayers. They will haunt you. They will undermine your entire effort. If you can't take on a lawyer, ask the managing partner. If it is the managing partner who is a non-marketer, discuss it with others on the managing committee. Marketing is valuable and fragile. Protect it with all of your energy.

9. Create deadlines. Marketing steps must have clear deadlines. If you're planning a seminar, start with the date of the event and work backwards for a responsible timeline. If you're planning an article, call prospective editors by a specific date. If you're planning to take someone to lunch, make a deadline to call as well as a deadline for the date of the lunch. I regularly hear lawyers postpone marketing calls for no valid reason. If you want to create the positive reinforcement of happy endings, you need beginnings. Deadlines make things happen.

10. Coach them through the process. Marketing needs continuous support. It is unreasonable to expect non-marketers to keep trying without support. Lawyers are accustomed to instant gratification. Work and bill. Bill and (hopefully) collect. Hear a problem and solve a problem. Marketing is a long-term process. It requires incredible patience. The sales cycle for many prospects and referral sources can be five years or longer. We've coached many lawyers once a month over several years

before they actually started bringing in business. I've heard hundreds of complaints about lunches with prospects that failed to produce immediate business. I've heard hundreds more complaints that speeches didn't create a cascade of inquiries or that networking was a waste of time. Lawyers need to be reminded of their small successes - the tasks they accomplish on the way to closing deals. They need to be congratulated for their efforts - not criticized for a lack of results. They need help in creating creative strategies for pursuing their targets. Sometimes even obvious strategies are hidden behind emotional barriers. They need support in choosing organizations to join, articles to write and activities to attend. Coaching lawyers is a supportive method for making a non-marketer a successful Rainmaker. You can't tell lawyers to market. You can't beg them. You must be there with them in the battle. It's no different than going on a diet or learning a sport. Coaching is the only method I've seen that works.

Over the years, I've seen many marketing successes. The most gratifying are the non-marketers who learn how to market. A whole new world opens up. The fears fade away. They develop a "marketing awareness" so they see opportunities in every thing they do. They learn that marketing is not implemented when lawyering stops. Instead, it becomes a part of every aspect of their practice - in court, in negotiations, in meetings, in drafting documents. The world of marketing is infinite and skilled lawyers can find an infinite number of opportunities when they open their thinking to the opportunities that are available to them. As a law firm administrator, you have the ability to help that happen. It will help the lawyers and it will help you to administer a more profitable and positive organization.

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