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## Marketing Through Public Speaking

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Today, more than ever before, lawyers are looking for effective marketing opportunities. With memories of a slow economy, lawyers are now seeking greater market share, better clients and future security. Of all the marketing techniques available to lawyers, we believe that public speaking stands out as one of the most effective.

Well-targeted public speaking provides exposure to large numbers of quality prospects and referral sources. The audience, by virtue of attendance, has demonstrated an interest in your topic and is more likely to perceive the need for your services. Even speaking to other lawyers can be an excellent marketing opportunity due to areas of specialty or conflicts of interest.

Another benefit of public speaking is in the effort of **preparing** the speech. The research, organization and scripting of a speech helps you clarify your thinking about a topic and creates not only the speech, but also valuable sales dialogue.

Once implemented, a quality speech will increase your self-esteem and self confidence. It will also position you as a leader in your field and enhance your resume.

Most lawyers use the technique of educating their audience as a method of marketing to prospects. While we agree that education is an important motivational element of your speech, we believe that education alone is not enough. We recommend two additional strategies. When giving a speech as a marketing technique you

should: 1) Strategically reveal numerous positive qualities you possess, and 2) Create opportunities for follow-through with your prospects. Thinking beyond the role of education as a motivator is a fundamental shift in thinking about public speaking.

### 1. **Reveal Numerous Positive Personal Qualities**

An important principle of legal marketing is that people hire you for many reasons in addition to your legal expertise. Before people hire you, they need to feel comfortable with your personality. In fact, many prospects are not sufficiently knowledgeable in legal issues to be able to judge legal expertise. These prospects judge your ability exclusively on the personal qualities you reveal. Therefore, you need to demonstrate not only what you know, but also **who you are**.

With this in mind, here are several positive personal qualities and methods for communicating them which, if communicated effectively, will increase the likelihood of making your speech a more meaningful marketing tool.

- **Demonstrate that you are understandable.** One way to be understandable is to learn how to communicate complex thoughts in brief sentences. An example in the advertising industry is the famous question, "Where's the beef?" This *'soundbite'* captures the concept of a competitor's inferiority, making it understandable and memorable. The

strategy of using *'soundbites'* is appropriately and easily applied to legal issues.

- **Communicate that you are approachable!** One way to establish approachability is to identify similarities between you and your audience. Try to reveal that you share common acquaintances, values, beliefs, hobbies and interests. We call these similarities, *'Connectables,'* because they create an emotional connection between you and your listeners.
- **Demonstrate that you are self confident.** One way of communicating self confidence is through your delivery. Make every effort to stand up straight, seek eye contact with your audience, try to smile as much as possible and project your voice with energy and authority.
- **Communicate that you are credible. Think of your speech as your *'verbal brochure.'*** Weave in facts about your background, such as articles you've written, speeches you've delivered, clients you've served (whose names you can reveal), and committees you've chaired.
- **Show that you are reasonable. Give an example of a transaction in which you were able to balance the business needs of the client with your legal concerns and still close the deal.**

**There are many more** personal characteristics which will help to motivate your audience to work with you too many to name here. We recommend identifying the characteristics that are most important to your

audience from a marketing perspective and including them in your presentation.

If you don't make an effort to reveal specific qualities, the risk is great that your audience will not perceive or appreciate those qualities. In fact, there is 'a greater risk. If you are not clear about your personal qualities, you may inadvertently reveal qualities that make you undesirable..

We recently coached a lawyer who, prior to our guidance, wanted to motivate his audience by proving that he was an exceptional negotiator. Unfortunately, he filled his speech with stories and examples that inadvertently positioned him as being a poor negotiator - using self-deprecating humor. While his comments made the audience laugh, the failure to communicate was anything but funny. Here are some other common mistakes to avoid:

Don't deliver too much technical information. An overabundance of purely technical information can be boring and position you as -an intellectual elitist.

Eliminate off-color jokes and cultural slurs. While this may seem obvious, people regularly make these mistakes. Be aware of bad habits which may be acceptable in your social dialogue, but disastrous in public presentations. Even minor infractions of this rule can be incredibly insulting.

Avoid weak phrases. Weak phrases such as, "Sort of,,"; "Kind of,,"; "I'm not sure but..." or "I'm afraid that..." can make you appear apologetic and insecure.

Finally, be careful not to show disrespect for clients. Lawyers sometimes forget that their clients are not supposed to know legal issues and then make fun of them for their lack of knowledge. This hurts you as a speaker because your prospects will logically assume that you will feel the same way toward them.

There are many more negative qualities that you should be careful to avoid. Maintain constant vigilance to select words and behavior that position you positively,

## **2. Create Opportunities for Follow-through**

Your next goal is to create mechanisms for furthering the relationship with prospects in the audience. The 'Old-School' approach is to give your information and hope that someone will be motivated to hire you. The reality is that the sales cycle for closing a deal with someone in the audience could be years. Therefore, you should be looking for ways of maintaining communication with your -prospects over an extended period of time. The following techniques will significantly increase the likelihood of your staying touch:

### **Call to action**

One of the ways you open the door to future interaction with your prospects is to make a call to action. At the end of your speech, you can offer some activity in which you invite them to participate. For example, you could invite them to join organizations in which you're involved. You could enlist their assistance on some project you may be implementing. Or, you could suggest that they participate in roundtables or brainstorming sessions you're coordinating. Most good prospects in the audience will not be ready to hire you immediately upon the conclusion of your speech. Offer them an interim opportunity that does not require as much of a commitment. The more interesting the offer, the more likely you will find eager participants which will insure the likelihood of developing, an alliance and ultimately closing a deal.

### **Request a business card**

Another effective technique for enhancing the likelihood of furthering interaction is to motivate members of the audience to give you their business cards. During your speech, offer to add them to your mailing list by promising to send them newsletters, articles, surveys, reports or Other informative correspondence. offer to send them invitations to programs such as seminars or workshops.

When you -get the business cards of your prospects, you create the ability to stay in touch. If you rely solely on your

prospects to call you, you will probably be sadly disappointed. Experience has demonstrated that after a speech, when members of the audience return to their offices, the pressures of their lives take over. Even if they intend to call you, they are likely to procrastinate or forget. A successful marketing speech always provides many reasons for prospects to give you their cards.

With the addition of these techniques, public speaking is clearly a powerful marketing technique. In fact, many lawyers rate it as the **most effective** marketing technique available. Of course, the more effort you put into the preparation and delivery of your speech, the greater the return. And while it's true that preparation is time consuming, keep in mind that one good client as a result of your speech could more than compensate you for your efforts.

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