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Teaching Lawyers to Market

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One of the most significant untapped resources in law firms are the partners who are not living up to their marketing potential. Over the past several years, marketing has gained recognition as an essential part of every law practice. However, very few firms assist their lawyers in developing their personal marketing skills.

Rainmakers in law firms are often reluctant to promote marketing among their partners. They may be of the opinion that rainmaking skills cannot be taught. Or, perhaps they have tried to teach marketing skills and found that their partners, who often have a severe distaste for marketing, resent the idea of being instructed to market.

In an effort to motivate non-marketing lawyers, firms usually begin by asking them to create a marketing plan. Unfortunately, this is one of the biggest mistakes a law firm can make. Since most non-marketers begin with the belief that marketing is an unpleasant and distasteful task, the exercise of creating a marketing plan forces them to imagine doing precisely those things they find so distasteful. Rather than motivating them to market, the agony of creating a marketing plan actually reinforces their hostility toward marketing, and as a result, strengthens their resolve against participating in marketing activities.

Stop planning and start doing!

The only effective technique for motivating non-marketing partners is a technique called "Coaching." A marketing coach helps lawyers identify marketing strategies that are ethical, comfortable and affordable. And then, a coach helps to convert marketing strategies into precise, "actionable" assignments. Often, these action items are as simple as "Who to meet with?," or "What organization meetings to attend?" The coach then follows up on a regular basis to ensure that assignments are being implemented in a timely manner. This follow-up by the coach relieves the partners of the responsibility of pressing their peers.

As a result of coaching, we have found that non-marketing lawyers can overcome their distaste for marketing. With consistent reinforcement, even the most reluctant of marketers change their behavior and learn to incorporate marketing activities into their daily routine. Over time, they will become more aware of the marketing opportunities available to them and develop new skills which will serve them for their entire careers.

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