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## Unconventional Wisdom for Practice Development

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A prospect's decision to hire a lawyer is often based upon many complex issues. Usually, an emotional bond must be established between the lawyer and the prospect. This requires the communication of many intangibles such as creditability, empathy, creativity and trustworthiness.

Oddly, most of the conventional wisdom for practice development doesn't address these issues. Rather, many lawyers cling to old-fashioned and ineffective stereotypes of selling. They pursue marketing activities based upon their experiences with salespeople, and copy the techniques of other lawyers. We believe it is time to take a stand against conformity. With this in mind, here is some **Unconventional Wisdom** for practice development.

### 1. Hide your brochure.

Lawyers often like to create expensive brochures. After all, prospects ask for brochures. Marketing consultants tout the importance of brochures. They see their competitors producing fancy brochures. It is very appealing to imagine that your brochure will inspire a prospect to hire you.

The fact is, brochures have little value. Consultants push brochures because that's how they earn a living. Prospects ask for brochures, but rarely read or base their decisions on them. To prospects, all law firm brochures look the same. There is nothing about a brochure that creates an emotional bond. And yet,

lawyers regularly rely on brochures as a substitute for selling.

We recommend that you hide your brochure. The way to build an emotional bond with prospects is through ongoing personal interaction.

### 2. Don't try to explain what you do.

Networking groups and consultants often advise you to describe the value of your service in ten words or less. At networking events you typically don't have much time to spend with any one prospect. So, the theory is to use the fewest words that will stimulate someone to hire you.

But, the fact is, you cannot package your value in a sound-bite. It could take years to communicate value. Instead of telling others what **you** do, focus on asking questions which will help you to qualify someone as a prospect, and to learn about their needs. The purpose of networking is to identify prospects, with the intention of staying in touch for many years.

### 3. Never "Ask for the business"

Conventional wisdom says, "You've got to ask for the business!" One problem with this approach is that it can create a terribly awkward situation. It can also make you feel **needy** and **pushy**. And, these feelings will minimize your desire to pursue marketing in the future.

Instead of "Asking for the business," focus on communicating your value so clearly, that it becomes apparent to others that they should hire you. Give lots

of ideas and guidance. Provide introductions to valuable contacts. Invite people to interesting events. Giving **value in advance**, will position you as an ally, and ultimately, as the provider of choice.

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