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MOTIVATING NON-MARKETERS: TIPS FROM MARKETING PARTNERS

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Motivating non-marketing lawyers is one of the most difficult tasks a Marketing Partner or legal marketing professional can face. That's because lawyers have the arguing skills to support their decisions and if they decide not to market, they can appear to be a lost cause.

We interviewed seven Marketing Partners across the country to find out how they handled the problem. Here's what we heard:

“Build trust first,” says Cordell Parvin at Jenkins & Gilchrist

Many professionals have come to believe that “selling” displays neediness. Also, it makes many feel desperate or subordinate. These are strong feelings and need to be expressed. But remember; being empathic does not mean giving advice. “I have learned I can't motivate by offering my advice or pointing to my own success or techniques. I must first build trust. I can best motivate lawyers if I treat them the same as I treat my clients; make it all about them and *their* needs, not about me and what I can do for them. This requires a heavy dose of active listening,” says Cordell Parvin, Partner at

Jenkins & Gilchrist in Dallas. Never underestimate the power of negative feelings toward marketing. It is deeply rooted and the main reason attorneys resist marketing. Above all, never say they shouldn't feel these feelings. Doing so will only make your lawyers defensive and undercut any progress you've made. Support, don't criticize.

“Remind them of the benefits,” says Brian Kabateck at Quisenberry & Kabateck

More money is an obvious benefit of marketing. Money alone, however, will not motivate your people. “I remind my attorneys that they are directly benefiting from marketing because of *their responsibility to the firm*,” says Brian Kabateck, Managing Partner at Quisenberry & Kabateck in Los Angeles. “Not only do they benefit financially, but they also protect the future of the firm.” Moreover, attorneys like to hear how marketing will allow them to be more selective in their choice of clients and matters. Be sure to show them the greatest benefit of all: marketing is exhilarating. Even the greatest Rainmakers, who no longer need the income, continue to market because of the stimulation. It is a profound emotional and intellectual experience.

“Teach them to be proactive, not reactive,” says Maxine Hicks at Cofer, Beauchamp, Stradley & Hicks

One way to be proactive is to meet all of the executives at a client’s business. To market is to communicate value. “I impart on my attorneys how important it is to get out of the office and meet the client or prospect on their turf. This is the most effective way to begin to entrench yourself into the inner workings of their business. Make yourself known to every member of their business,” claims Maxine Hicks, Marketing Partner at Cofer, Beauchamp, Stradley & Hicks in Atlanta. “We have survived leadership changes with our corporate clients because we were so ingrained in their business and seen by *everyone* as an active, knowledgeable problem solver.”

“Make it a mutual process,” says Eric Joss at Paul Hastings Janofsky & Walker

Marketing requires teamwork. Many attorneys fail to market because they feel overwhelmed. One solution is to work together on simple steps. “The most important thing is the promotion of teamwork. For us, marketing is a mutual process. The first thing you need to do is create the impetus and then the environment. We have an entire marketing infrastructure within the firm. We provide continuous support. Everyone works together, based upon our firm-wide goals, to develop individual strategies,” says Eric Joss, Business Development Partner at Paul Hastings Janofsky & Walker in Los Angeles. “We provide ideas for each other. We aid our attorneys in the development process. We have business development training for associates. Occasionally we bring someone in from the outside to work one-on-one with our attorneys.”

“Remind them to have fun,” says Debbie Fischer at McCutchen Doyle Brown & Enersen

Marketing is an opportunity to combine business with recreation. Most lawyers find it easier getting to know their prospects while golfing, playing tennis, attending shows or parties. According to Debbie Fischer, Marketing Partner, McCutchen Doyle Brown & Enersen, Los Angeles/San Francisco, “One of my motivators is that I think people need to be doing something they enjoy. If an attorney is having a problem with marketing, it could be that he/she doesn’t like the specialty they’re trying to market. That needs to be addressed. You’re never going to be good at marketing something you don’t enjoy doing. You should be marketing in a way that makes you comfortable. If you don’t like making speeches, don’t do that. Write articles instead. It needs to be a part of their everyday life, and it can’t if they hate it.”

“Get them to commit,” says Dennis Marks at Querrey & Harrow Ltd.

An effective strategy for motivating lawyers to market is to have them identify the marketing tasks they would like to implement. However, it is not enough to simply ask lawyers what they are going to do. “No one’s going to tell you when you put them on the spot that they don’t have any ideas,” says Dennis Marks, Marketing Partner at Querrey & Harrow Ltd., in Chicago. “The key is to get them to articulate why they think their idea is good, why it’s something they think they can do, and then get them to commit to it. After that, see that they follow through.”

“Give them tools, give them encouragement,” says Lowell Rothschild at Mesch Clark & Rothschild

It is unrealistic to expect non-marketers to keep trying without the proper tools and encouragement. Marketing is a long-term process. It requires extraordinary patience. “We’ve found that encouragement is very important. We publish a newsletter three times a year so our attorneys have an opportunity to

be published. We give our associates an entertainment budget, which motivates them to take out clients. We run public seminars for each area of specialty and this has been a great incentive for our attorneys to do presentations and speak. We encourage them to join civic organizations,” says Lowell Rothschild, Partner, Mesch Clark & Rothschild in Tucson.

Motivating non-marketers may seem impossible. But like the partners in this article, you *can* help them develop their self-confidence and their skills. It is a gratifying experience to be a supportive and patient mentor. Doing so will increase the profitability of your firm, enhance your self-esteem and demonstrate your value as marketing director.

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