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Don't Have Time to Market?
10 Tips for Every Swamped Lawyer

No matter what law firm I am working with, I always encounter lawyers who say: "I would love to market, but I do not have any more time in the day and I am just trying to keep my head above water with client demands."

Now some marketing consultants might say: "I get it. No problem. Making sure that current clients get tremendous service and legal advice is paramount."

I don't disagree with this. I just think you can do both — work and market.

Here's how:

1) Don't shoot for the moon. Make a list of clients and referral sources you want to focus on for the next six months — preferably no more than six — and only use your limited marketing hours on *them.* Do not engage in any random acts of marketing. Stay focused. Give your secretary and associate the list, too. Get everyone on the same page as to who is in your marketing sights.

2) Calendar marketing as you would a court appearance. Set aside one hour a week — at the same time every week — to meet with your secretary and map out who you need to meet with, have lunch with, need research on, return calls to, send a personal note to and more. Use that time to call one or two — that's right, just one or two — clients and check in on them.

3) Every Thursday breakfast or every Thursday lunch, meet with a client or referral source. So for one hour a week, you will break bread with someone who already gives you business or might. Make sure your calendar is filled.

4) Outsource ministerial marketing tasks to your secretary. Make it a team sport! You do need help. Hire great secretaries or assistants and explain to them their vital role as part of your client service/marketing team. Work *together* to set up a system for your assistant to help you return e-mails and phone calls when you are out of the office or tied up — just to let the client know you got the message and will return the call shortly. Everyone just wants to hear they will get some attention soon.

Ask your secretary to stay on top of Google or LinkedIn updates on clients and referral sources, news about you that should be posted to your bio or issued in a release, client birthdays and more. Have your secretary help you set up a doable amount of lunches or face-to-face meetings for you with your targets. He or she can also identify which seminars or trade association meetings your clients and prospective clients are going to — a wonderful LinkedIn tool — and help you schedule these activities.

5) Mentor a terrific associate so he or she can help you deliver responsive service to the client. In fact, consider setting up a client service team for every client — consisting of you, an associate, a paralegal and secretary — so that the client is comfortable with many people at your firm and can be assisted by any one of them in your absence.

6) Make marketing part of something you really like to do so it becomes part of your relaxation time. Do you like to go to sporting events or museums, eat great food, play golf? Well, do these activities with your target list of clients and referral sources if they also enjoy them.

7) Create fast and easy communication devices to let clients know you are thinking of their business needs and goals. These should go out even when you are swamped. Again, this is a great area to enlist staff or associate help. Create a one paragraph e-mail alert to go out monthly — consisting of just one paragraph on news that is hot to your current clients. Or, if your clients are not e-mail savvy, create a postcard mailing.

8) Look at where you spend your time. If some of it involves working for "C+" rather than "A" clients — or taking part in activities that have never paid off for you — cut them out! If going to the monthly Chamber of Commerce meetings has been fruitless because the wrong audience for your particular practice shows up — or you feel you know everyone and there is no chance of ever getting a referral or a new matter — stop going and use that time to visit a client.

9) Focus your marketing activities on things that have the biggest payoffs. They are:

• Visiting clients off the clock at their place of business to meet key staff or discuss the company's goals or challenges.

• Sitting in for free at board of directors or other kinds of strategic company meetings.

• Interviewing a client on satisfaction with your services.

• Providing something of *value* to a client that does not appear on the invoice but helps the client personally or professionally.

• Assuming leadership roles in groups that clients are part of — industry or trade.

• Doing free briefings on compliance or preventive matters for clients and potential clients.

10) Use "downtime" to check-in with clients and referral sources. Waiting for a train or plane? Arrive too early at a seminar and have 20 minutes before it starts? Pick up the phone or your personal note card stationery, which you can keep in your briefcase too, and reach out to a client. Or scan the *Wall Street Journal* or *New York Times* for an article that could rock your client's world.

Now I know you are very short on time, so stop reading this article and get up, get started, get going!

Stacy West Clark has been helping Philadelphia lawyers and law firms expand their practices for more than 20 years. She is a former attorney with Morgan Lewis & Bockius and was the firm's first marketing director. She is president of Stacy Clark Marketing, www.stacyclarkmarketing.com, a firm that helps law firms grow their businesses.