

LMA 2010 CONFERENCE PART 1: MY MESSAGE TO MARKETERS & MANAGING/MARKETING PARTNERS



Managing and Marketing Partners, my thoughts and suggestions for you will be coming in Part Two, so you might want to subscribe to this blog so you know when my post for you has been written. You should read this one too, because you definitely have a role to play in what I'm about to say.

Having just returned from the LMA annual conference in Denver, I find my mind is full of all things legal marketing. I know, what's new?! That's what I do for a living, right? But this is different. When I have the gift of being around over 800 legal marketers and attorneys, I become even more passionate in certain areas. When that happens, I find it's best to commit some of them to writing.

There were many lessons communicated last Wednesday through Friday, but some of the most burning thoughts I have are for the in-house legal marketers whose goal it is to help keep law firms moving in the right direction toward growth and strength. I have more burning thoughts for Managing and Marketing Partners. As mentioned above, I will write a separate blog post for you very soon.

I focus on in-house marketers because I was one of you, and because I work with you in my business. I know the challenges, thoughts, joys, frustrations, limitations, exhilaration and chaos that make up your lives.

Here is my suggestion for you....

Find out what you need to know, and go get it!

We all have parts of our jobs we don't understand, or would like to understand better. There are layers of information in every law firm, regardless of size, that go in to what makes a firm unique. It is challenging to understand every facet of running a firm...the financials, the compensation structure, what truly goes in to each practice or industry group, what clients you serve, what each of your internal clients does to make a living, what you could do to make their lives, and the lives of your firms, stronger and more profitable.

When you run across an area that seems a bit murky to you, or that you are feeling insecure about, write it down. Keep a separate document, and label it Very Important, because it is, and write down any subject that baffles you, or makes you feel like you don't know enough.

This next point is very important:

Don't underestimate yourself here. Don't fall in to the *I'm not worthy of knowing this information because no one has shared it with me, so it must not be meant for me* mindset.

This is *your* career, not your boss's, not your attorney's, not your staff's, but yours. You are in the driver's seat.

Don't let that list grow very long before you then attach a name or a source to it that identifies where, from whom and how you can learn more about that information. Just as with any good marketing or strategic plan, attach completion dates to it also.

One by one, ask for help learning about these areas. Let the source know you have a strong desire to learn more about firm financials, or the makeup of the firms' clients, or whatever the area might be, because you are truly interested in becoming better at what you do so you can become more valuable to the firm. Let them know that understanding the big picture is going to make you a stronger asset as you will be equipped to contribute to the strategic discussions taking place.

Don't feel silly admitting you don't understand something. You will look much stronger asking for help in an area than you will once someone finds out you don't understand something they assumed you knew because you didn't speak up. There is strength in the honesty of admitting you could use a little help.

If there is an area no one else in the firm understands either, such as Social Media, or Alternative/Value-Based fee structures, then go outside the firm to learn all you can. The past few weeks, when doing pre-conference research about Social Media, along with discussions I had at the conference, I heard "I don't have time" countless times. I understand how busy you are, but if it has serious long-term implications for your career, and the life of your firm, then you need to find the time. Maybe it's just 15 minutes during your day, at the end of your day, once every two days, before you go to bed, you name it. Just consider it important, and a priority.

Subscribe to trade journals, newsletters, engage a consultant advisor, have lunch with people who know, call or email the colleagues you met at the LMA annual conference, and begin to become familiar with whatever this mysterious area might be. This is not to say you need to become proficient in every detail, that's what the experts are for, but you should develop a broad knowledge of what the particular tool or area does, what the impact on your firm might be, and what is being said about it in the marketplace. Who knows, you might even decide you want to become the expert in a particular area because of what you learn.

This sometimes means you might have to invest your own money and/or personal time if your firm won't support your quest for improvement. I'll address this when I write my next post to Managing and Marketing Partners. Feel free to share it with them if you think it will help your cause.

Picture this:

Instead of being a remote part of a discussion taking place in your firm, you step up with real, current, working knowledge in a specific area. Your firm is struggling with Alternative Fee Arrangements, you catch wind of this, and let your Managing or Marketing Partner know that you'd like to meet with him/her to share the knowledge and information you have learned about this subject because it's important, and you've been studying what is going on in the marketplace.

Picture this:

Your firm starts to become interested in, and probably a bit nervous about, Social Media and Social Networking. Instead of saying, "I will look in to that because I don't understand it yet either," you are able to say, "You know, knowing our firm needs to understand how it can differentiate itself through the use of Social Media, I've been spending time learning about this. Can we schedule a meeting so I can share what I've learned with you?"

You then go from an innocent bystander, and frequent victim of random acts of marketing, to a position in the firm as a valuable, go-to marketing and business resource. Isn't that a position of strength you'd rather operate from on a daily basis? Wouldn't that be a great feeling to have? It's possible if you commit to taking the driver's seat, however challenging that might be.

Remember, find out what you need to know, and go get it! As always, I'm here if you need me.

Nancy Myrland, President, Myrland Marketing, is a Social Media Consultant, Speaker and Trainer, as well as a Professional Marketing Advisor. She works with law firms and their clients to help them grow by strengthening their relationships with their clients through the strategic use of Social Media. She started Myrland Marketing in 2002, and has over 20 years of strategic marketing and sales experience.

Nancy has spent a great deal of time immersing herself in the worlds of Social Media and Traditional Marketing, and understands how to wisely and efficiently blend the two areas to help you accomplish your goals.

(Cont'd)

Nancy is innovative, passionate, loyal, strategic, wise, and has a depth of knowledge to share with her clients that comes from working in sales/business development, in management and marketing in corporate America with Time Warner and L. M. Berry, and in law firms and other professional services firms.

To find out more about Myrland Marketing, or to hire Nancy to come to your firm to speak or train, or to read Nancy's blog, please visit <http://www.myrlandmarketing.com>, or email Nancy at nancy@myrlandmarketing.com.

She also invites you to follow her on:

Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/nancymyrland>

Facebook: <http://facebook.com/nancymyrland>

LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/myrlandmarketing>

Facebook Biz Page: <http://www.facebook.com/nancymyrland>

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/nancymyrland>

You may also reach her by calling 317-370-9684.