

More Pain More Gain

By Tim W. Hrastar



Business development isn't necessarily easy, but spending the time to do it well is rewarding because it results in new business from new clients, and additional business from current clients.

Two Ends of the Spectrum

You can look at marketing and business development as sitting at two ends of a spectrum. On one end you have marketing with passive image building activities such as branding, advertising, website, brochures—all those things, which are not inherently bad or ineffective, but certainly not as effective in getting and maintaining business as direct client contact on a regular basis is.

On this passive marketing end of the spectrum there is very little pain, meaning that once you initially do the work to create your message you don't think much about it again. However, the end result is very little gain in new business.

On the other end of the business development spectrum is direct client contact, especially with targeted clients, which results in more pain because you have to actively, consistently and persistently work at it, when in many cases you'd rather be doing something else. However, there is much more gained as you acquire new clients and new business.

Article Writing and Presentations

Along the continuum, between 'less pain and more gain' spectrum are many methods to achieve the best results; two of these methods are writing articles and giving presentations—seminars for clients, and speaking engagements to clients and prospects. The article writing is more passive, while presentations are more active.

These two activities, especially article writing, don't necessarily end in direct business, although many times in my experience they do. Giving

presentations put you in direct contact with clients and prospects—and that's where you want to be as often as possible. Delivering presentations to prospects and clients sets you up as the subject expert, gives you an opportunity to educate the audience, and they get to see you as someone knowledgeable they would like to do business with.

Develop Good Habits

The legal profession is a relationship building profession. You're not going to get a lot of business by acting passively. General marketing activities may be painless, but it's also gain-less compared to business development activities. You need a lot of direct contact with clients to ensure repeat and additional business.

Unfortunately many lawyers are reluctant to spend a lot of time nurturing client relationships—to them it is somewhat painful. It takes patience and persistence to ensure healthy long term and profitable client relationships. You can't expect to get a new client with one meeting. It takes several meetings to establish a relationship where a person will feel comfortable enough to do business with you. Unless of course you are fortunate enough to have that person referred to you with a current matter.

However, if you develop some good habits, it's not as difficult as you may think. Here are some things to consider.

Show your clients and prospects you talk with that you are truly interested in their well-being—their dreams and their challenges. Communicate with them frequently while providing them with ideas that will help make them successful, and keep them out of trouble.

Write articles on your area of expertise for publications your clients and prospects read. Give presentations to groups of clients and prospects to demonstrate your knowledge and abilities.



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Perform five business development activities per day. That's 25 per week, 100 per month, and 1,200 per year. These activities can be as simple as calling a client you haven't talked to in awhile and inviting them to lunch in order to catch up, or touring a client's plant to see how they operate, without billing them for it. The more you know about a client the better you can help them. Organize your contact data base to make sure you are reminded daily about contacting specific clients, prospects, and your network on a regular basis.

Remember, passive marketing activities may be painless, but they are also gain-less compared to business development activities. Although it may cause you some pain initially because you are not used to doing it, spend the time to make as much direct contact with your clients, prospects, and network as possible this coming year. It will pay-off handsomely for you by December.

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