

Attracting New Clients

By Tim W. Hrastar



Let's take a look at a typical question lawyers ask me about marketing; "How do I attract new clients?" A lot can be said about this very broad question because there are a lot of different ways to attract new clients. As a matter of fact there is no one-way to do it. You need to use a lot of different things to accomplish this. Let's talk about just one of them—referrals, and responding with the right words.

Doing Good Work to Obtain Referrals

Doing good work goes without saying—you have to perform well in your client's eyes in order to be considered for additional work, and to get referrals to new clients. It used to be that that was all a lawyer had to do to expand his or her practice, and many older lawyers still think that way.

Asking for Referrals

But competition has changed the playing field. You have to do exceptional work, because that's the expectation, but you also have to think about planting seeds with the right people—clients and other referral sources—it just doesn't happen the way it used to.

After you have completed a matter with a client you can plant the seeds for more work, or request a referral by saying something like this; "I really liked working with you, and I am glad we were able to help you in this matter; if you know of anyone else who may need my assistance in this area please let me know, I would appreciate it." It's a soft-sell approach and fits within the model rules guidelines—they are already an existing client. Asking for referrals from other lawyers who don't handle the types of services you do is another source of new business. Let them know specifically the kind of clients and matters you are looking for—and remember the referral process works both ways, refer work to them if at all possible.

Say the Right Things

Here's another tip about getting additional business from existing clients and new business from new clients. When someone asks how things are going, don't respond with, "I am really swamped," or something similar, even if you are very busy. I know you want people to think you are a great lawyer and have more business than you can handle, but it gives the client or prospect the feeling that you are too busy to handle anything for them and they will go somewhere else. You just missed an opportunity to serve an existing client, or take on a new client. Instead your answer should be something like, "Business is good, and I am always looking for more—and I always have room on my calendar to serve you!"

These ideas are practical and expected from clients and prospects. It shows that you care and want to be of service to them. Try it!

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