

Marketing Professional Services

In this article, I'll share with you my experiences in marketing my law practice along with some suggestions.

Rely On Yourself

Although I've been practicing law since 1979, I did not start to try to develop my own clientele until 1986. Before then, like many young lawyers, I worked for someone else and relied on that person to keep me busy. In late 1985, some of the partners at the firm where I worked left and took a lot of business with them. This event made me realize that my income and my future would be most secure if I could rely on my own clients for work, rather than on my boss. In other words, your future depends on you.

Ask For The Business

As my first step in seeking business, I went to the owner of one of the firm's largest clients, for whom I had handled many matters. This client had already elected to give all of its business to the departing partners. However, figuring that I had nothing to lose, I asked the client if I could have some of its business. To my astonishment and delight, he said "sure." The entire meeting took less than five minutes. Since then, I have continuously handled work for that client. So remember, ask for the business.

Become Well Known

After my success in asking for the business, I soon realized that I could never be hired by people if they do not know that I exist. So, I decided to become visible. I joined the local chamber of commerce, where I became active in committees and worked hard. Through my contacts in the chamber, I met many potential clients and sources of referrals, some of whom offered me the opportunity to lecture at several community colleges. Over time, these contacts have generated significant amounts of new business. In other words, become well known.

Be Alert For Opportunities

You really never know when or where an opportunity will arise, so you always have to be on the lookout. For example, I am a contributing editor to a business publication called *Svoboda's Home and Business*. I became involved with *Svoboda's* after I saw an issue at a local office supply store. After reading the issue, I called Jill Svoboda and offered my services as a

writer. It has been a rewarding experience, but I thought to call Jill because I try to always be on the lookout.

Be The Best At Whatever You Do

Of course, all the marketing in the world will fail if you are not the best at what you do. For example, several years ago, I realized that in order to be the best small-business attorney, I needed to know about the tax laws. So, I spent three years completing a graduate tax law program (while working full time), and I now spend several thousand dollars each year on a state-of-the-art computerized law library. I also realize that the little things, like prompt and attentive client communication, are so important. So remember, be the best at whatever you do.

Conclusion

Building and marketing a professional practice, or any business for that matter, takes patience and commitment. When I started marketing my practice in 1986 I had zero clients and zero contacts. Today, I have more than 330 clients, and my contact list exceeds 700 names. The security and self-esteem are well worth the effort. Good luck to all of you.