

A New Way to Motivate Lawyers to do Law Firm Marketing and Sales

By **Larry Bodine**, a business development advisor with a nationwide practice. He has helped 250+ law firms generate new revenue by devising strategies, conducting business development retreats and individually coaching attorneys. He can be reached at www.LarryBodine.com and 630.942.0977.



In law firms, the attorneys are not only the service providers -- they are also the sales force. I advise many law firms on business development, so I know that motivating lawyers to market is a universal problem.

Attorneys were first attracted to the law because of the intellectual challenge. They did not become lawyers so that they would have to sell. So what methods work to motivate a sales force?

Money beats whatever is in second place. If a salesman brings a ham through the door, he or she expects to get a slice. Accordingly, many law firms offer an origination fee, which is a percentage of the net receipts collected from the client whom they originated. This works very well for lawyers who are “hunters,” according to a recent issue of the McKinsey Quarterly.

The problem is that many hunters to settle into being “farmers,” who concentrate on keeping existing clients happy. However “farmers” and “service partners” are often not motivated by money. No amount of lucre will make them leave the farm to go hunting in the woods again.

As the sales manager at a financial services firm explored alternatives, he observed something important: successful advisers often spoke passionately about the sense of fulfillment that came from helping clients realize their dreams. That was why these men and women had become advisers.

So the sales manager worked with individual advisers to develop specific goals that would help the adviser feel they had genuinely helped clients, for example:

- Prioritizing quality over quantity by working more intensely with fewer clients.
- Giving advisers a wider range of service to endure that they had all possible options to meet their clients’ goals.
- Removing potential bottlenecks at the firm, such as a lack of coaching, training and management tools. As a result the firm reduced the attrition rate among advisers, became more successful at winning business and found that clients entrusted them with more of their work. It’s an approach you might try at your law firm.

For more on this topic, call:
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- Training lawyers at firm retreats.
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