

21 Ways to Bootstrap Your Way to Marketing Success (Part 3 of 7)

By: Stephen Fairley

<http://www.TheRainmakerInstitute.com>

The first two posts focused on follow-up and marketing practices. This post continues those thoughts.

Speed to Market Wins Every Time

If I had to choose, I will bet on the law firm that consistently uses three simple marketing strategies over the firm that takes three months to write a long, detailed annual marketing plan. Plans do not win the game!

Attorneys are notorious for over planning everything. This is a fatal mistake when it comes to marketing. Your plan should only be focused on what actions you are going to take in the next 90 days. Keep it simple and focus on taking action now.

Under Staff for Success

I was recently speaking with an estate planning attorney here in Phoenix. His business is about the same as last year, but he isn't willing to do any marketing right now. Why? Because he just fired an associate who wasn't performing well and he doesn't want to take on any more work because he isn't sure he can handle it alone.

Even when I pointed out, rather obviously, there are a lot of out-of-work attorneys right now who would love the chance to work and even more who would entertain an Of Counsel relationship, he wasn't interested. Seriously?

Now is not the time to staff up hoping for massive success. Now is the time to keep your team "lean and mean" while putting everything you can into effective marketing. Marketing takes time. Many attorneys do not see great results from their efforts for three or four months after they fully implement. This leaves plenty of time to set up an Of Counsel relationship to handle the overflow or even find an associate if needed.

I remember working with a two-partner firm out of Los Angeles about two years ago who insisted on waiting to fully implement their marketing plan until they hired at least two more associates.

Finding and hiring the first associate became an arduous process over a three month period. The second associate took even longer. Then one of the partners was convinced they needed to upgrade their offices and move to a bigger and better location to attract the higher end clients they wanted.

So after the second associate was hired (they both were paid six figures) they decided to put off marketing for a few more months in order to track down new office space. They went from 2000 square feet in a Class B building to 6000 square feet in a Class A building. Their overhead tripled, the economy tanked and the firm has never regained their footing.

Here's the moral of the story: Market now. Wait until your efforts pay off. Then ramp up your staff to handle the increased work load.

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Stephen Fairley, M.A., RCC, CEO

Law Firm Marketing Expert • Master Business Coach • Best-Selling Author

Stephen@TheRainmakerInstitute.com

Stephen Fairley is a nationally recognized law firm marketing expert and has helped more than 6,000 attorneys from hundreds of law firms across the country to discover the secrets of generating more referrals and filling their practice.

He is the international best-selling author of 10 books and 5 audio programs.

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