

Kowalski & Associates

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Why Do Lawyers Wonder Why Their Telephones Aren't Ringing?

**Jerome Kowalski
Kowalski & Associates
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How many times in the past week did you check your telephone to see if it's still got a dial tone?

By this time, two full years in to The Great Recession (with no immediate end in sight), I sometimes wonder why lawyers tell me that they aren't busy. Sure, long standing clients may not be sending as much work over the transom as they did just two short years ago. The days of lawyers simply being order takers rather than active marketers are gone.

Law firms often require (and those who don't, should require) that every partner have a business plan. Every lawyer having even a passing interest in earning a living needs to have such a plan. Once you implement the plan, your telephone will return to its natural place crooked in your ear. Not every conversation will generate business; in fact count on 75% of the folks you call on or reach out to won't be sending you some business. [But, each time you get yourself knocked down, pick yourself up and get back in the race.](#) And, given market realities, devote at least two hours daily to implementing your plan.

Ideally, at the end of each month, partners should report in some detail to management on the his or her own prior months marketing activities, with a copy to the firm's marketing director. Each lawyer, for his or her own sake, should review the previous month's activities, make a list of where follow up is required and do so. Study the results achieved, and continue to refine your plan accordingly.

The simple elements of the plan:

1. List the clients who have historically retained you on a regular basis and call upon them, [following the steps I previously outlined](#).
2. Identify the clients who have retained you on sporadic instances. Call them, following the steps in the preceding paragraph. Sort of like apply shampoo, rinse, repeat.
3. Cross market. The most basic tenet of marketing is that your most receptive target for a successful marketing are existing clients. Law firm partners should regularly get together both in formal and informal settings, as well as in groups and in pairs, and explore cross marketing opportunities.
4. Blog. [Blogging is quickly becoming the most potent force in driving new business in the door](#). Since we started advising our clients about the effectiveness of blogging a year or so ago (and certainly since my first post on the subject in June, 2010, which has literally attracted tens of thousands of readers), those clients who jumped in to the blogosphere with both feet consistently reported remarkable and consistent production of new business.
5. Roam through your Contacts list (we used to call them Rolodexes). Call lawyers around the country who served with you as co-counsel or even as adversaries. Remind them you're around and would welcome to work with them on new matters.
6. Regularly issue clients and bulletins. [We've explained the do's and don'ts before](#).
7. Become a master networker. In my [previous post on basic marketing](#), the importance and effectiveness of networking is outlined in some detail.

Take these steps, as we have been counseling our clients to do and you'll stop checking to see if the phone is still working.

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