

MARKETING MISTAKE: NETWORKING TOO MUCH OR IN THE WRONG PLACES

By Stephen Fairley

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I recently met an attorney who was struggling to find new clients. When I asked her the primary way she was looking for clients, I discovered she belonged to more than 30 networking groups. Assuming she attended only one meeting from each group each month, she could have easily visited a new event every day of the week and never hit the same one twice.

Here are the problems with that approach:

She was spending so much of her time networking that she **didn't have time to do any other lawyer marketing activity. Networking is often not the most effective form of marketing for lawyers.** She didn't have enough time to **properly follow up with any leads** she received during the events; she was always on the way to her next meeting.

She could probably **stop attending 80-90 percent of those groups and still had the same results in her small law firm marketing plan.**

In my research, I have found that networking works really great for some people, and not at all for most people. The only way to be sure which category you fit in is to track the results you achieve from particular networking groups and actively cut out the ones that don't produce results then integrate your findings into marketing your law firm.

By asking yourself these three critical questions, you can assess the effectiveness of your networking.

1. Am I networking to my peers or my prospects? I'm continually amazed at how many business owners go to networking events in their own industry looking for new clients.

2. What is my goal in going to this networking event? Is it to:

- Find new clients?
- Build my database with prospects?
- Understand the major points of pain in my target market?
- For professional development and connecting with others in my field?

3. What results have I received from this event in the past? You have to be clear about your objective and measuring your results. Set up a simple Excel spreadsheet that tracks your results from various networking events you attend:

- How long have you consistently attended the meetings?
- How many people did you meet?

- How many were qualified prospects?
- How many face-to-face meetings or presentations did you land from that group?
- What business can you directly attribute to those meetings?
- How much longer are you willing to attend before seeing solid results?

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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.

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