

In Black & White

COMMON SENSE STRATEGIES FOR GROWING YOUR LEGAL PRACTICE

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The Plan: How Your Client Service Relates Back To Legal Marketing

As you know relationships are at the heart of business development and great client service is really about connecting with people. **Strong relationships can not only spark more business from the client, but encourage them to refer friends and colleagues as well.** From how you answer the phone to how often you communicate, every interaction is a form of client service. Take a few minutes to truly evaluate your client service and think about where you could improve. **It's one of the fastest and easiest ways to experience results from your daily marketing and business development efforts.**

Think of it like **James R. Courie**, from **McAngus Goudelock & Courie, LLC**...

"It's all about personal relationships. Get to know your clients, their employees, their children and family. Remember birthdays and special occasions. Start every conversation with a minute or two about family, sports, etc. People enjoy doing business with people they like and trust."

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

What aspect of your client service could you improve on?

RESULTS

I could work on:

1. More phone, less e-mailing - **30%**
2. Keeping up with my client's industry news and trends - **7%**
3. Going to their place of business - **27%**
4. Asking for feedback - **16%**
5. Connecting on a personal level - **11%**
6. Giving them something for nothing - **9%**

Thanks to everyone who participated in this week's poll...

Relationships are the base of most successful marketing and business development efforts. If you make your interactions meaningful it will make your business development even easier...

Not surprisingly, 30% are guilty of phone neglect! Another 27% need to work on going to visit your clients at their place of business. See a pattern? In order for client service to truly make a difference we need to abandon technology once in a while and get in front of our clients. On the other hand... bravo to all of you for being on top of client industry trends and news--a great way to keep in touch and show your interest and dedication.

My Thoughts: Though you may not recognize it, **every time you interact with a client you're marketing yourself.** Take advantage of it. Here are a few of my tips for making the most of your client service:

- **Get in front of them!** Nothing can replace face-to-face meetings.
- **Show an interest!** Send them interesting articles that relate to their industry.
- **Prove you're an expert!** If a law that effects their business changes—let them know.
- **Take notes!** It shows you're paying attention and gives you a reference point for later.
- **Get feedback!** Be direct and ask them what they think of your client service.
- **Pick up the phone!** Take an e-mail break and let them hear your voice.

Lee Thuston of Burr & Forman shared this story:

"In the end analysis, it's all about relationships. I had a young lawyer that made a mistake with one of our clients. She was upset because she let something get by that was going to cost the client some money (but not a great deal). I called up the general counsel and said, 'Hey Joe. I'm sitting here with Mary who tells me she let this deadline get away from her.' I quantified that it was going to be about X-thousand dollars and that I'll take it off next month's bill. He said, 'Okay, I really appreciate you calling.' I looked at her and said, 'That's called having a good relationship.' First of all, I called the client and brought the situation to his attention. He might never have known about it, but it's better to tell him up front. That keeps our integrity intact. Was he happy about it? No. But was he really upset? No."

Black Pearl: For a daily dose of client service commentary stop by **Patrick Lamb's "In Search of Perfect Client Service" blog.**

For more legal marketing strategies and insights visit inblackandwhiteblog.com.