

Bentley Talk, well-known legal marketing expert, wrote an article on his blog last night titled Will Law School Ever Teach Marketing for Law Firms?

In his comments section, I shared my thoughts with Bentley that yes, marketing and sales/business development should definitely be taught, and that a colleague, Nancy Roberts Linder, has written and taught marketing curriculum in law schools.

The more I thought about the topic, the more thoughts kept running around in my head, so I added another comment to Bentley's blog, which I also share with you here. I look forward to your comments as well.

Here's what I shared with Bentley:

Bentley, to further this discussion, I will add that just having marketing and business development instruction as part of law school, which I still think is critical, then expecting new lawyers to "get it," is also not the solution.

As part of my business major in college, I had to choose 3 minor areas of emphasis. They were management, marketing and sales. As you might expect, I had wonderful instruction in each. My career started in sales, for which I am eternally grateful because I now know how to blend and teach the skills of sales/business development and marketing, and how they work together. I was nowhere near prepared to sell when I got out of college. I'm sure I would have done "okay," but not until I had extensive, continuous, on-the-job sales training did I truly engage and understand what I needed to do. Sales, or business development as we are still tempted to call it in the legal profession, needs to be taught at every level; in law school, to new Associates, and even through to Partnership depending on the skill level achieved.

Likewise, my marketing education in school gave me a foundation to understand marketing, but not until I joined Time Warner and was around bosses, colleagues and a corporate culture that focused on marketing did I learn how to operate a marketing function.

All that to say that yes, we must incorporate and introduce marketing, business and business development in law school, but no one can expect their lawyers to be taken care of and ready because they've had this instruction.

Firms must still commit time, dollars and other resources relentlessly to help attorneys become successful in these critical areas if they are to protect and grow their valuable firms they have worked so hard to build.