



How to Market a Small Law Firm for Less Than \$500

By: David V. Lorenzo

PO Box 800509
Aventura, FL 33280

(888) 692-5531

www.RainmakerLawyer.com

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Written by
David V. Lorenzo

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Whenever a client walks into my office to discuss marketing for his small law firm, the conversation invariably starts with: “I don’t have enough money,” or “Where can I get the money to market my services?”

The reality is that money is not a big problem when it comes to small law firm marketing. You can bootstrap a law business exactly the same way an entrepreneur bootstraps any other start-up. Too many people think of law firm marketing as television advertising, full-page ads in the Yellow Pages, and your face plastered on bus stop benches all over town. While those methods may be effective for some firms, few—if any—solo attorneys or small law firms have the money to use them.

It has always been my position that any start-up business needs a marketing plan that is 80% hustle, 5% creativity, and 5% smart spending. This is always good news for the client who walked in thinking that he was going to need to dip into his kid’s college fund to start his firm.

Here is a starter list of things that you can do today (and over the next six months) to jump-start your solo law practice.

Focus on Your Natural Network First

Each of us has a network of people we know, like, and trust (to varying degrees). Leverage this network to the hilt. Call everyone—your friends, relatives, and business associates—past and present. Let them know that you are on your own and explain to them the value you provide.

The purpose of these calls is not just to get business in your specialty area; it is also to convince them to come to you *first* with *any* legal work. If you cannot handle the work, you can refer them to another attorney, who will (hopefully) return the favor with a referral to you in the near future.

Seize All Opportunities for Free Media with a News Hook

Every day, there are news items in the newspaper and on television and radio that fall into your area of expertise. Your local newspaper editor is always looking for expert commentary on these topics. A news story without a quote is not a true news story.

Fax and mail a press release every month to the local editors and reporters who cover relevant stories. Include a business card or two with your full contact information—including your home and mobile telephone numbers. The editors will most likely throw away the press release, but some will save your contact information.

Write, Write, and Write Even More

Every solo attorney or small law firm should have a niche or a specialty practice area. Do some deep research into the people who will be good candidates for your services. Read what they read. Shop where they shop. Most importantly, see what they see. Once you learn their habits, get your name in front of them as often as possible.

One good way to get in front of your target market is to write and pitch articles to trade magazines that target your niche. Trade magazines are always looking for good content, and they include a byline with your name and contact information. This will not produce immediate results, but it will have a cumulative effect if prospective clients keep seeing your name and information.

Speak for Free

There are hundreds of trade associations in every market niche. Almost all of them have an annual event (some have events more frequently). Put together a good press kit and send it, along with a letter offering to speak at their next event, to the event coordinators.

Although some of these groups will pay you a small fee, the value is in obtaining the contact information of the attendees. Segment this list into people who attended the event and people who did not attend (they generally have a list of people who register but don't show up). Organize a mailing to the folks who attended and offer them the slides from your presentation (or a summary of your speech). Once they respond, subscribe them to your e-mail newsletter.

The people who didn't attend should receive a similar offer, but you should also extend them the courtesy of a 30-minute phone conversation—a live briefing. Anyone who takes you up on that offer is highly likely to become a client at some point.

Volunteer

Helping out a charitable organization is always rewarding, and sometimes it can pay off financially. When you first start your solo practice, volunteer to help out with a charitable organization that takes a high profile within your market niche. Volunteer to serve on a committee or on the board of directors. Your efforts will pay off not only for the organization—they may also pay off for your law firm.

Conduct Sponsored Education Events

Educational events always lead to new client generation. The challenging part of these events is getting enough people in the room to make it pay off. A good strategy for leveraging your expertise in front of as many people as possible is to partner with another business that is targeting the same audience.

Many times an established business in town will be happy to host, promote, and cater the event. They want the chance to get all of the decision-makers in a room at the same time, and you will be their “hook.” Setting up such an event takes a good deal of networking and relationship building, but it is well worth it.

Marketing a small law firm or solo practice doesn’t have to be financially daunting. A little creativity, a lot of sweat equity, and a small investment will go a long way toward landing your first few clients.

Dave Lorenzo teaches attorneys how to make MORE MONEY with LESS EFFORT. To learn how to build a big roster of clients with little marketing dollars, visit <http://www.RainmakerLawyer.com>, or call Dave Lorenzo toll-free at 1-888-692-5531.