

Courting Your Clients on Valentine's Day (and Every Day)

By Margaret Grisdela

Valentine's Day serves as a legal marketing reminder that attentive service fosters success. While flowers, chocolates, and cards are typically intended for family and close friends, similar holiday concepts can also strengthen business relationships.

Here are five ways the spirit of *Courting Your Clients* can reinforce the bond between attorneys and clients:

1. **Stay in touch.** Regular client updates on the status of legal matters in process show the client that you care about them. Whether monthly or weekly, a "no surprises" policy helps to instill confidence and loyalty.
2. **Return phone calls promptly.** Surprisingly, this remains a common complaint among clients. Responding to client calls is an easy way to maintain a competitive advantage.
3. **Meet periodically.** A face-to-face meeting with priority clients that you don't see often due to distance or scheduling conflicts can keep a relationship from going stale. Hold competitors at bay with an off-the-clock client get together; chances are you will walk away with new business.
4. **Show attentiveness.** Send articles or news updates of interest to clients who you know are tracking a particular issue. It's easy to monitor a topic with Google Alerts. You'll demonstrate your understanding of client priorities, and may generate possible new solutions to a challenging situation.
5. **Remember holidays.** Birthdays, major business events, or the opening of a favorite sporting season are all reasons to reach out to clients selectively, based on their preferences.

Clients frequently report that they hire the attorney and not the firm. This was most recently noted in a February 8, 2011 *Wall Street Journal* article, which reads in part:

Clients generally care more about which lawyer, and not which firm, will be handling their affairs, driving up the value of those lawyers who command loyal client followings. Stars are particularly sought these days, lawyers said, partly because their rates are less apt to meet client resistance.

Obviously legal expertise and competency are assumed skills in any high profile matter, but the personal touch can make a winning difference when it comes to client retention and referrals.

Happy Valentine's Day!

About the Author: Law firm marketing consultant Margaret Grisdela is the author of *Courting Your Clients: The Essential Guide to Legal Marketing* (now in its 2nd edition, www.courtingyourclients.com) and president of Legal Expert Connections (www.legalexpertconnections.com), an international legal marketing agency. Contact her at mg@legalexpertconnections.com or 561-266-1030.

© Legal Expert Connections, Inc.