

## *Is it time for a marketing tune-up?\**

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The market appears to be picking up. Clients are getting back to work. New opportunities can't be far behind. What are you doing to find them? To make sure they show up on your radar? To put yourself in a position to see those opportunities that do present themselves, and to land the work when you pitch for it? Maybe it's time for a marketing tune-up.

Just like you regularly perform maintenance on your car, you need to perform regular maintenance on your marketing efforts, objectives and plans. You need to modify them to reflect the constant evolution of your practice, your client base, your experience and your network. And as you do that, you should keep in mind some basic notions:

- **Planning is everything.** Know where you want to go? How to get there? What it looks like when you've arrived? You need a plan. Not a complicated one that accounts for every contingency and takes two or three or six weeks of reflection and drafting and editing. It does have to set goals, realistic, achievable, measurable goals. It does have to understand the clients you want, the work they need, and your ability to perform that work. Plan your route so you don't end up someplace you don't want to be.
- **You're not out to change the world.** Yes, you need a plan of action, but you don't need to change the world, to solve every problem, to cure cancer on your first try. You just need a road map to start. You can build the atlas as you go along. And you can always change your mind when an idea doesn't work or a potential client doesn't pan out or a deal falls through. Just don't get hung up on making it perfect, because that will get in the way of making it in the first place.
- **Focus on opportunities.** It's easy to spend time picking apart ideas, looking at what won't work, what you can't do, what you'll never be able to achieve. But that won't get you anywhere. Spend your time looking at what you CAN do, not what you can't. Isolate the opportunities—true opportunities, ones measured in terms of probability not possibility—and the steps needed to realize them. You'll solve the real problems when you get to them.
- **Be realistic.** It's only an opportunity if you could realistically get the work and do the job better than your competition. If you can convince your client that it makes sense—for them, not just for you—to give you a new assignment. If your experience allows you to tell a credible story, a story that convinces someone who doesn't know you that they should trust you with the future of their company. If you can't do that, then you're probably not going to get the work, and you shouldn't waste your time chasing it.
- **Don't neglect your existing clients.** Relationships are relationships, and those with clients require the same amount of work as those with potential clients. Providing good legal advice,

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answering questions, dotting the i's and crossing the t's isn't enough. Anticipating client needs, addressing their concerns, understanding their objectives, communicating early and often are essential to maintaining the types of relationships that will not only keep clients coming back, but lead to increased referrals.

- **Don't forget your homework.** Think you know what your clients need? The services they're looking for? The business problems they're struggling to solve? Do your research. Read what your clients are saying. What the press is saying about them. What their competitors are doing, what's going on in their industry, where the growth is in their markets. If you can, talk to your clients about their business, their industry, their competition, their challenges, and most of all how they define success and how well they are achieving it.
- **Execution is everything.** You've set your objectives. You've identified realistic opportunities. You know where you want to go and what you need to do. But a plan is only the beginning. To generate results, you need to execute with discipline, follow-through and flexibility. Sound easy? It really isn't. If it were, everybody would be doing it already. The part that drives success is execution, and it takes time, commitment and hard work.

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As the economy improves and opportunities increase, there's no time like the present to review your marketing efforts, rethink your marketing objectives and tune-up your marketing plans. You'll be glad you did.



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