

THE **7** FATAL MISTAKES

LAWYERS MAKE



IN MARKETING THEIR PRACTICES

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The 7 Fatal Mistakes Lawyers Make In Marketing Their Practices

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Many lawyers think that if they spend a load of money advertising or marketing their firm, people will come. This is DEAD WRONG! Over the years, I've seen many lawyers make mistakes when trying to attract new clients. I've made many mistakes myself. After years of observing what works and what doesn't, I've seen seven specific mistakes that lead to the downfall of law firms.

Below are the Seven Fatal Mistakes repeatedly made by lawyers attempting to attract new clients.

Mistake # 1

Copying what every other lawyer is doing in their market

Let's be honest, copying what your competitor is doing is easier. It must be working or they wouldn't continue to do it. Their ads must work, so why not copy them? This is suicide in the long run! Doing what everyone else is doing is like incest. Your ads keep getting dumber and dumber! You must be different! It's ok to do the same type of advertising but in a different manner. The key is to differentiate yourself from the competition, not BE the competition. (i.e. Yellow Page Ads is a type, but the copy, size and layout needs to be in a different manner)

Mistake # 2

Not Having a Unique Selling Proposition (USP)

Not having a U.S.P. simply means that you do not differentiate you or your firm from the other lawyers who offer the same services you do. You must answer the question all potential clients are asking themselves when they see your ad. Why should I do business with this lawyer over the other lawyers in town? Why should I do business with you period? Until you answer this question and come up with a compelling offer or guarantee, you are wasting a large chunk of your marketing budget.

Mistake # 3

No Consistency in Marketing Message

I have seen law firms use different logos on their letterhead, Yellow Page ads, TV ads, and business cards. This is a surefire way to waste your marketing dollars. You must decide on a logo and stick with it. Use the same font and same colors on everything you do. Consistency also means stick with your marketing strategy. You can't give-up after 30 or 90 days. The Rule-of-Thumb is that it takes 21 times of seeing an ad before it sinks in. Give up too quickly and you'll be making a costly and fatal mistake.

I have also witnessed lawyers trying to be all things to all people. Build your brand and stick to it! You can't capture the entire legal market. Find your niche and build from there.

Mistake # 4

No Marketing Plan

Many Lawyers don't plan out their marketing strategy. They simply react hastily to whatever their competition is doing. Be proactive with a solid well thought out plan. Decide what kinds of cases you want to handle, who are the people that have these cases, what marketing strategy you are going to use, and how you will implement the strategy.

Before you understand your competition, you must first understand yourself. Do a SWOT analysis to analyze your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Your strengths and weaknesses are things you can control internally. Opportunities and threats are external factors. Once you identify all of the characteristics of your business, do a SWOT for your competition. The more truthful you are when doing a SWOT the more it will benefit your business. Analyze the results and exploit your competitions weakness with your strengths. Build your plan in a way that emphasizes your strengths and takes advantage of existing opportunities.

Decide what you can afford; then budget accordingly. To do less is like throwing a bunch of gook on the wall and hoping some of it sticks! "A goal without a plan is nothing more than a wish".

Mistake # 5

Not Tracking Your Marketing

After sitting through a legal marketing seminar, I asked the so called "lawyer marketing guru" a question.

“What’s your return on investment for this marketing strategy you’re advocating for us to try,” I asked.

“I’m not quite sure,” he said.

“Well, do you at least track where your cases are coming from,” I asked.

“Not really,” he said.

I was not only surprised but somewhat disappointed in his answers. If he was truly a Guru, he would at least have the numbers to back up his promises. To spend money on marketing and not track the results is just plain ridiculous! If something isn’t working after 6 months or more, you must tweak it or stop it. To do otherwise is a waste of your hard earned money. On the other hand, if you track it and find positive results, you want to increase your line item budget for the marketing that is working!

Mistake # 6

Lack of Follow-Through

It is so easy to do it later...or tomorrow...or next week. Lawyers are notorious procrastinators. Part of the reason we procrastinate is because we are scared of failure. Some of us are even scared of success. But fear is the number one reason people procrastinate.

The best way to overcome the fear is to non-personalize it. Make a list of things your firm will test in order to attract clients. By thinking of it as a test, you won’t personalize it. You will say, “I tested that and it didn’t work. Now I’ll test something else.” Doing this, allows you to attribute the failure to the strategy you were testing, not yourself. Marketing is simply testing strategies to attract clients. We learn from our mistakes. We keep learning and growing from failures. Learning experiences aren’t always fun, but we gain knowledge from them.

The best way to overcome a lack of follow-through or procrastination is to make your marketing objectives accountable to you AND someone else. This could be a coach you work with, a mastermind group, or simply a business friend or law partner. Have you ever tested working-out alone versus with a workout partner? With a partner, you will almost always push yourself harder because you can’t let them down. In business, a partner can produce the same results!

Mistake # 7

Not Getting Everyone in Your Firm on Board with the Marketing Plan and Goals

You can have the greatest law practice marketing plan of all time, but if the entire office isn't on the "same page", it will fail. Some lawyers come up with great ideas but fail to get their lawyers and staff to buy into it. A chain is no stronger than its weakest link.

There are many ways to get your team to come aboard. One way is to involve everyone in the office. Seek input at every office meeting. Explain how vital the plan is for success, theirs and the firms. You can even make a contest out of your marketing strategy. The key is to keep your team involved and informed at all times.

Conclusion

Avoiding these 7 Fatal Marketing Mistakes, will greatly increase your law firm's chance of success. It's important to start thinking in terms of marketing. Keep track of your ideas, and begin to implement them. Seek input from your co-workers and peers. Just don't put it off! "Procrastinators Unite...Tomorrow!"

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