The Rulings

Zen and the Art of Marketing Maintenance

When I hear the word "marketing," I think of a used-car-salesman screaming at me through the television about how low his car prices are. During his tirade, he's usually riding a large animal – like an elephant or a camel – and wearing some bizarre leprechaun, gorilla, or Uncle Sam outfit.

Then, I think about what it would be like for me to market like the used-car-salesman.

Hmmmm… That has potential.

Start the dream sequence. Flicka-flicka-flicka-flicka-flicka…..

"So, Tim, everything you've said today sounds really wonderful. How can I order an estate plan from you?"

"I'm really glad you asked, Larry! If you order today, you'll receive a personalized Last Will and Testament and your own special Revocable Trust. I'll even autograph the documents, as a witness, for you. Now imagine, Larry, you're likely to pay $3,000, $4,000, even $5,000 dollars for these documents somewhere else. But, today, you can have all of this for three easy installments of only $699!"

"$699! That's unbelievable!"

"Yes! It is! And, if you act now, I'll even throw in a Durable Power of Attorney and a Designation of Patient Advocate form, all with easy, extra-long, fill-in-the-blank spaces for you to place your personal information!"

[Cue to uproarious audience applause and cheering.]

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Ok. Ok. Maybe that's not the best way to market legal services.

So, you might ask, "What is the best way to market?"

The answer to that question is extremely simple: HAVE FUN. That's it. That's all.

Do something you love with the intention of meeting as many people as possible and letting them learn about you. Then continue doing what you love over and over and over and over again.

It doesn't matter if you love collecting stamps, attending Star Trek conventions, bungee jumping, hiking in the Himalayas, or attending UFO conventions. Some strange lawyers actually enjoy – believe it or not! – whacking little white balls all over God's green earth. Crazy, I know. I much prefer UFO conventions!

So here's a list of 22 tasks you can do to propel your marketing proficiency to the stratosphere:

(1) Take someone – anyone – to breakfast, lunch, and/or dinner and repeat;
(2) Attend a marketing workshop to hone your skills [hint, hint - read below];
(3) Write a newsletter, any type of newsletter, and send it to people;
(4) Meet someone – anyone – for coffee or tea;
(5) Join the Rotary, the Moose Lodge, Toastmasters, the Elks, Young Republicans, Young Democrats, Young Libertarians [you pick];
(6) If none of the organizations above suit your fancy, write down five organizations you'd actually enjoy joining and join two;
(7) Create a cool brochure and send it to everyone you know;
(8) Throw a lavish party and invite 547 of your closest friends;
(9) Read books on marketing such as *Get Clients Now!* by C.J. Hayden;
(10) Attend raucous rock concerts and hand out your business cards denoting your specialty in class-action, loss-of-hearing legal actions (if you use this method, wear earplugs and laminate your business cards);
(11) Hire a public relations consultant to promote your business;
(12) Hand your business cards to five potential clients every day;
(13) Develop ten creative methods for handing out business cards;
(14) Define your target market (who do you really want as a client anyway?);
(15) Write down 15 different ways to reach your target market;
(16) Write silly and interesting articles;
(17) Obtain testimonials from your clients;
(18) Develop a website devoted to all of your testimonials;
(19) Design a really exceptional business card;
(20) Take classes on pottery, Spanish, French, guitar, sitar, motorcycle maintenance, or Zen Buddhism [you pick];
(21) Buy gifts for people for no reason whatsoever;

- and the last and certainly not [ahem] the least -

(22) Consider what you'd really love to do as a lawyer so potential clients will sense your enthusiasm and seek out your services.

Remember, you want them to hire you. The trick is not – I repeat – IS NOT to find one person who may have a slight, slim, molecular-level interest in what you do and continue to beat them over the head about your legal services.

The trick is to meet as many people as you can and tactfully let them know what it is you do for a living. Build friendships and trust. Now get out there and HAVE FUN!

Timothy D. Batdorf is a legal career coach and consultant. Tim is hosting an intensive marketing workshop for lawyers in the spring of 2005. If you are interested in obtaining more information, please contact Tim at 248.457.1343 or at timbatdorf@comcast.net.