

The Fortune is in the Follow-up

Tell me if this has happened to you: A potential client call your office, and describes his legal problem. You decide after hearing him describe the problem that you want to take on his case. But, the caller says "Let me think it over before I commit to anything. I will call you back, ok?" Or you may hear "I need to talk it over with my wife." You respond with "Of course, no problem. I understand completely. Call us back because we would love to help you." The second that phone call ends is when your chances of signing that client plummets dramatically.

The lawyer has two options at that point: 1. Hope the potential client calls back (they almost never do, assuming of course they kept your name and contact information in the first place), or 2. Follow-up with the potential client through an intentional, well-designed, and well-executed follow-up marketing sequence that revolves around educating the client so that he is in a position to make the very best decision for his case.

The vast, vast majority of firms I have found rely on option # 1. However, that strategy does not work. The much more effective strategy is option # 2. That is because unless you follow-up with the potential client, he will almost certainly forget your name and will end up calling another lawyer to help him once he decides he is ready to hire a lawyer.

In such a highly-competitive field, follow-up marketing for a law practice is absolutely vital. When the hypothetical caller called the lawyer in the example above, the lawyer's chances of converting that caller into a client would have increased substantially if the lawyer had done a few simple things in order to engage the caller with a follow-up marketing sequence after the phone call ended.

The lawyer in that situation needs to get from the caller his email address so that he can nurture him by dropping him into an automated email sequence that provides valuable content. In addition, if the lawyer had obtained a mailing address from the caller, he could have sent out to him a shock and awe package in the mail that same day that provides additional helpful content for the potential client.

A good shock and awe package contains helpful resources such as answers to frequently asked questions, a free report pertaining to the potential client's legal issue as well as various merchandise adorned with your law firm's name. This is a sorely-underutilized tool in an attorney's marketing arsenal.

Additionally, the lawyer (or ideally, a team member) should call the potential client from time to time to touch base with the prospect. At our firm, we follow-up with a potential client through phone and automated emails until the potential client either signs, or tells us he is not interested. Until then, we continue the conversation and provide value to the consumer as he weights his options.

The really important key though is not to annoy the potential client. Rather, what you want to do is to continue the dialogue by periodically 'touching' the potential client by providing valuable educational resources that are designed to educate the person, rather than sell to him.

A great way to avoid the need to do follow-marketing in the first place is to sign the case on that first call. A great way to do that is to know how to handle common objections that many potential clients raise that prevents them from signing right away. The attorney (and his staff) should always have at their desk an easily accessible list of responses to common objections that can be quickly and easily deployed. Sometimes though, the client just needs time to think about the decision, and that of course is completely understandable.

In situations when follow-up marketing is necessary, it is important that it is done correctly. When that happens, it can effectively bring in a great deal of fence-sitting potential clients. That influx of cases can have a profound impact on the growth of a practice. Rather than giving up on these prospects (which is what the vast, vast majority of firms do), you can continue the conversation with the prospect. That puts you at a competitive advantage so that if he does decide to hire an attorney, he will choose you because you showed up differently. Your office stayed in touch and provided him with valuable content that helped him decide that he needed to hire a lawyer for his legal problem.

Always seek ways to improve your follow-marketing so that you do it better than the next firm. By doing that, you will separate yourself from the pack, and this will result in more retained clients for your practice.

The fortune indeed is in the follow-up.