

# The Managing Partners' Report

## A SUCCESS GROUP NEWSLETTER

MARKETING PUBLIC RELATIONS AND NEW MEDIA FOR PROFESSIONALS

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## Staying Visible: Communication with Clients Increases Your Referrals

"I would have referred my friend to you, but I didn't know you did that," is a common refrain lawyers and other professionals hate to hear. You have your brochure, your web site and maybe you have advertised. That is all fine, but your clients and contacts have to remember what you do if they are to refer new business to you. Remembering requires visibility, literally, since most people process and store in pictures, or visual data. A friend mentions divorce, the IRS, or an employment contract, and your face comes up on the radar screen of memory. That's the process.

How do serious rainmakers increase their visibility? Here are five steps you can take this year to increase your business through profitable referrals.

### **Pick up the phone!**

Many professionals call clients primarily when they have a business purpose. Start looking at the phone as a social instrument as well. It's the way the world chats, makes dates, expresses concern, and empathizes in real time, together, not e-mail time. What do most people think about when on the phone? The caller's face. The more you talk, the more you know, and information gives the relationship more facets. Understand, too, that while it is human nature to avoid difficult conversations, the more time you spend communicating, the better the result.

### **Meet at your office first.**

Having lunch or dinner with a client? Meet at your office first so they can see all that you and your cohort do. Take them around like you would a guest at your home and introduce them to everyone (including staff) and say what each

person does. Professional services are intangible and transparent. Your digs are your "factory" for outsiders to see. Get the picture? Other events to hold at your office might include the meeting of an organization you belong to, the board of directors you sit on, or any other group or event that needs space. Let everyone see what you do.

### **Join up.**

I am not in favor of joining groups to stay busy, but marketing *is* a contact sport. Join an organization whose purpose is one you are passionate about or interested in. Get to know people by serving on a committee and being an active member. The more people you know, the more marketing opportunities you will have. But the corollary to this rule is that people will choose to refer their friends when they see that you are respectable and reliable. They see those attributes over time and through multiple interactions.

### **Mail information the person needs, even if you didn't author it.**

Helpful mail, not a bill and not advertising. Now that might be a welcomed event for a client or contact. You don't have to be the author or be a specialist on the subject. As a professional, you have access to millions of on-line sources and research that you should use for the benefit of others and yourself. A lawyer knew that his contact was considering a private school for his daughter; he found recent ratings articles in which the school was mentioned, which he mailed with a short note. Then got his contact together with a friend who attended the school in question.

### **Remember birthdays.**

Few people are so old or so thoroughly jaded that they do not appreciate being remembered on their birthdays. Send a card, call up, show up; every other important person in their life will. By the way, do you realize that people are more amenable on their birthdays? Getting to yes could be easier on that special day.