



# Mission Accomplished

Melinda Guillemette, Marketing Consultant ♦ P.O. Box 1529 Corrales NM 87048  
Phone: 505.263.9460 ♦ Email: mguillemette@comcast.net



"Nothing happens by itself... it all will come your way, once you understand that you have to make it come your way, by your own exertions."

*Ben Stein*

## No Tricks, Just Discipline

During a training session last year, an attorney raised her hand and asked this question: "What tricks can you give me to get clients for my litigation practice?" I had the urge to dash behind a curtain and change into my top hat and tuxedo, magic wand in hand.

Although I resisted this temptation, I was a bit stymied by her question, because as a business developer I never think in terms of trickery. Marketing your practice is a

matter of discipline, just as learning the technicalities of your profession is a discipline. Developing business is no more and no less than developing relationships with people. As anyone who has ever been involved in a relationship knows, growing the relationship, nurturing it, taking it to a deeper level requires attention, focus, discipline.

To be effective, business development must be a daily

activity that becomes as much a part of your mindset as being a good lawyer or accountant. You must perceive your role as a professional to be one that includes better serving your current clients, finding ways to solve more of their problems, and getting new clients in the door.

## Five Ways to Lose Your Marketing Director

It is interesting that almost 30 years after marketing entered the professional realm, we still haven't figured out how to hire and keep marketing people. Here are the most common mistakes I have seen in working with accounting and law firms who have in-house marketers (forgive the feminine pronoun, which is not meant to exclude the many wonderful male marketers out there):

**Hiring someone before creating a job description.** That usually means the person with the best smile and peppiest personality gets the job. While smiling and peppiness are great attributes

in almost anyone, they are not enough to handle the rough seas in which professional service marketers must swim.

**A better way:** Write a job description after consulting with people who understand professional services marketing. Do your research, interview extensively, and choose for the long term.

**Hiring someone at the wrong time.** Just as everyone is a genius when the stock market is trending up, partners think they don't need business development when they are flush with cash. It is only when the pipeline sputters that you get worried and hire a

marketing person to create a quick turn-around.

**A better way:** Hire when things are going well in your firm, not when they are sliding. It usually takes a couple of years before many partners even begin to understand the marketing function's purpose. Think ahead. I have yet to meet a marketing person who has saved a firm from itself.

**Letting the new marketer sink or swim on her own.** Marketing directors must have the consistent support of your highest ranking firm members, particularly the managing partner, or they will, without doubt, fail. When the

# Mission Accomplished

---

Continued from Page 1

*Buying gifts for employees, planning and producing internal parties, and decorating the office at holiday time often fall to the marketer, usually because the partners don't know who else to turn to.*

honeymoon with the marketer is over, the discipline and focus need to kick in. Senior members of your firm must continue to support the marketing effort after the marketer has made her first mistake, had her first bad idea (or series of bad ideas) and had her first argument with a partner. If you have hired well, your relationship with the marketing professional will sustain the inevitable bumps and bruises. But, like your relationship with clients, the relationship of senior professionals to marketers must be nurtured.

**A better way:** Managing partners should hold regular weekly meetings with their marketing professional. Review workload, find out which partners are using or misusing marketing resources and why, and take a read on your marketer's pressure. If you sense something is wrong, ask her. She will tell you.

**Overwhelming the marketer with non-business development tasks.** This happens all the time. Marketing becomes the basket into which nonbillable tasks tumble. Buying gifts for employees, planning and producing internal parties, and decorating the office at holiday time often fall to the marketer, usually because the partners don't know who else to turn to.

**A better way:** use your administrative/secretarial staff more effectively. Broaden your perspective about what they can do; you will be surprised at the creativity waiting to be tapped at the administrative level. Using a marketer as an administrative assistant decreases her value to your firm.

**Expecting too little of the marketer.** Partners sometimes think they really do know everything when it comes to their firms. Some of you believe that, because you

are dealing with a marketer who is not a member of your profession, she probably doesn't have much of value to offer beyond the marketing basics. What a mistake! If you have hired well, you have someone on your team who can see your firm with the valuable perspective of an educated, informed outsider.

**A better way:** include your marketer in executive committee and other top-level meetings. Let her know what is happening internally so she can help you deal with the ramifications externally. Tell her what you are thinking about firm strategy, resources, and tactics and ask her what she thinks. Rather than seeing her as another part of your overhead, look at her as a trusted advisor. If you have hired well, she will not fail you.

*I help clients by:*

- *Helping professionals set and achieve individual business development goals through individual marketing plans*
- *Training all experience levels in marketing, including client service, referral development and cross-serving clients.*
- *Implementing the ideas you have discussed for years*

*Phone: 505.263.9460*

*Email: [mguillemette@comcast.net](mailto:mguillemette@comcast.net)*

## Respecting Your Employees is Good Business

---

It seems obvious that treating your employees respectfully is a good idea. What I have found in many firms, though, is that while lip service abounds, partner behavior often differs from the company line about "team", "family," and all that.

If you are not demonstrating respect for your employees and colleagues, your firm may suffer high turnover. Any managing partner will agree that personnel problems and turnover are among the thorniest issues they deal with. Solving these problems takes time away from the fun and profitable work, like bringing in new clients and finding new ways to help the clients you already have.

Your employees are a lot like your clients: they want you to *demonstrate* that you are glad they

are part of your day-to-day world. Employees want to know that they add value to the firm and to you. If you or your partners are behaving in ways that indicate otherwise, you may be costing your firm money.

It's easy to demonstrate respect: look people in the eye when you talk to them, ask what they think and listen to their response, keep your office door open as much as you possibly can, and greet an employee before issuing your first instructions of the day. Doing these little things will go a long way toward demonstrating respect for what your employees do for your firm every day. With any luck, it will also decrease turnover and, ultimately, improve profitability.