



## More Effective Marketing in 2008: Five Actions for Greater Impact

By Sharon Berman

If you want to increase the potential for making this year better than last year – no matter what your level of business was – do things differently. A change in your marketing efforts now can lead to tremendously positive results for '08. A change in your business development efforts in just a couple of the following five areas can take your business to new levels.

### Develop a plan

First, develop a plan. A plan brings tremendous value in terms of allowing you to think ahead, so that you have time to evaluate options and efficiently allocate limited resources. It also helps you avoid the temptation of going off on tangents because you have laid out specific goals and how you are going to achieve them. In short, a plan lays the foundation for taking your results to greater heights.

Your plan can be simple bullet points, but it must be specific. You can specify, for example, what percentage of additional revenue will come from expanding your relationship with current clients, and what percentage will come from new clients. Drilling down further, you can stipulate how many new clients you plan to acquire, at what revenue level, and for which services. Then, estimate how many prospects and referral sources you need to “touch” in order to convert the desired number of qualified prospects into clients. Finally, list the action steps you need to undertake to reach out to prospects and referral sources. As you detail your desired percentages and figures, it's important to keep in mind that an effective plan must be more than a wish list. It must be an action plan.

### Commit to consistency

Very often, marketing programs fail, not because you are doing the “wrong” things, but because you are implementing them inconsistently – they get off the ground, everyone loses interest, and they stop.

Consistency may sound like a “no brainer.” In theory, it is obvious, but in practice, it is anything but. Consistency in implementing a plan is its own strategy, just as targeting a niche is a strategy. Being consistent does not mean persisting against all odds, or continuing to do something that is clearly not working. Rather, being consistent means doing what you are doing steadily until you can judge whether it is effective and evaluate how you can tweak it. The difference between doing something on a steadfast basis and doing it on a sporadic basis can be measured in clients and dollars.

### Repackage and showcase

Firms often overlook the potential in their own materials and work, which could be “repackaged” and showcased. Repackaging means taking existing material, such as web pages and client lists, and remolding it to differentiate your firm or substantiate your expertise. For example, if you take a closer look at your client list or the services your firm provides, you may notice that you have had several clients in a particular industry. You can then investigate the potential of expanding your work in that industry.



try. And, you will have an easier job of penetrating a specific market if you can repackage your material (e.g., a brochure, bios, web page, etc.) to showcase your expertise in the area.

### Electrify your website

Take an objective look at your firm's website. Is it static or dynamic? A website can be “brochureware” – basically an online version of your brochure – or it can exude energy and position your firm as a dynamic leader. How can you create a powerful website? By communicating your achievements in your markets and by keeping the site “fresh” so that it radiates energy. For instance, you can post announcement notices that highlight speaking engagements or new hires, or reference media that have quoted your attorneys. In addition, you can post press releases about your wins, deals and transactions. You can even provide podcasts of your attorneys' talks. If you keep adding information, such as new case studies, your site will remain fresh and inviting.

The web has greatly leveled the playing field. You do not need to be a big firm or the biggest name in your practice area in order to make an impact on the web. Rather, on

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## More Effective (Cont.)

the web, the leadership race is won through communication – by those who tell the world what they are doing, not by those who are merely doing it.

Your website is a key element of your marketing. Although prospective clients may not find you “cold” through an online search, people who have received a referral to you and another firm will check out both websites, and if yours is more dynamic, it will give you the edge. Ask yourself honestly, who, in today’s world, does not check the web first before doing anything?

### **“Milk” your marketing**

Since you put a significant investment of time and money into your marketing, why not get the most out of it? The way to do so is by extending the “shelf life” of your marketing activities. For example, if one of your attorneys has written an article, you can develop reprints, post the article on your website, distribute copies and display them in your reception area. Similarly, talks may be converted into articles and podcasts. If you get hundreds of downloads, so much the better, but the idea is not to count how many people actually download the material.

Rather, it is to demonstrate your firm’s leadership by having powerful and new content on the site.

### **Don’t Stand Still**

The beauty, as well as the challenge, of marketing is that it is always evolving, not just scientifically as new technologies become available, but also as an art in how creative you are with old and new tactics. More can always be done, and what you are already doing can be taken to the next level. Using the action steps above as a guideline, revisit your marketing efforts and make 2008 your best year ever.