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5 Universal Laws of Marketing

By Sharon Berman

Crazy as it sounds, getting results from marketing is about creating movement in the marketing universe. Of course, such a concept strays far from the analytical world in which lawyers dwell and sounds much too “touchy feely” to most. However, there are universal laws of marketing, which apply, yes, even to lawyers and law firms. And, it’s more than praying to the marketing gods.

Here are Five Universal Laws of Marketing:

1) The investment of focused, sustained effort shifts things in the universe and brings results.

We would all like to see hard facts and count on the laws of causation to predict the outcome of our actions. It’s only natural to ask, if I make this investment in this specific marketing activity, what return can I expect? If I give this talk, will X more people call to use the firm’s services? If I invest in updating my website, will I get X more prospective clients contacting me each month? Unfortunately, when it comes to marketing, there is much that cannot be measured in terms of cause and effect related to one specific effort. Rather, marketing results are the culmination of many actions and, often can only be measured in the aggregate (e.g., we implemented our marketing initiative and generated 10 percent more leads this year than last).

Making the effort, over time, brings results – provided you are strategic and analytical about where and why you invest the time and effort. Take your best educated guess, then if the next “Big One,” a major client, comes out of left field, it’s not by luck or accident. It’s because the firm took action.

2) One is the loneliest number.

Marketing is a numbers game, and the numbers add up. “One” usually does not work because there is nothing to add up. If it worked once, you just got lucky, but I wouldn’t stake my billings on it happening again. Getting results is about the number of prospects you “touch” through consistent communication – email or direct mail. It’s the number of times you reach out to them. It’s persistence and diligence.

3) And, it just takes one.

This may seem contradictory in comparison with the last universal law, but it’s really not. Here is an example. If you give a talk expecting an audience of 50, and only five people show up, will you have wasted your time? My answer is no. First, you have taken an action and thereby set things in motion in the marketing universe. Second, all it takes is the right individual sitting in that audience of five people to bring you the payoff for all the talks you have given this year. Or, it just takes one client obtained through a mailing to pay for every mail campaign throughout the year.

4) It’s not to whom you gave the speech. It’s how many people you let know about it.

It’s also not whether you published the article or were interviewed on CNN. It’s how many people you let know about it. Giving a talk at a prestigious conference is terrific. But when it’s done, it’s over with. Who knows about it? Is it listed in your biography? Is it on the firm’s website? Can you summarize the ten most important points your prospects need to keep in mind based on your talk and distribute them to everyone in your database, while

just happening to mention that you gave a talk on the subject? What kind of material could you pull from your talk and incorporate into a pitch to the media?

5) Perfection is the enemy of getting it done.

Many attorneys are perfectionists and won’t take any marketing action until they think it’s perfect. They won’t update material on the current website because they plan to have the entire website redone next year. The firm brochure is 90 percent written and designed, but the partner isn’t sure it will have a “shelf life” of ten years, so the firm continues using its dated folder of tired-looking word-processed documents as leave-behinds. Just accept that it won’t be perfect and get it done.

Of course, I’m not condoning taking wild guesses and throwing things at the wall to see what sticks. Arranging the marketing universe in your favor with the above laws presumes that you have done your homework; that you have tracked and analyzed your sources of business; that you know your most profitable areas; and that you have harnessed all of your firm’s brain power in pursuit of making the most strategic and educated guesses possible.

So, forget the incense and chants to the marketing deities. You have it in your own power to make things happen.



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