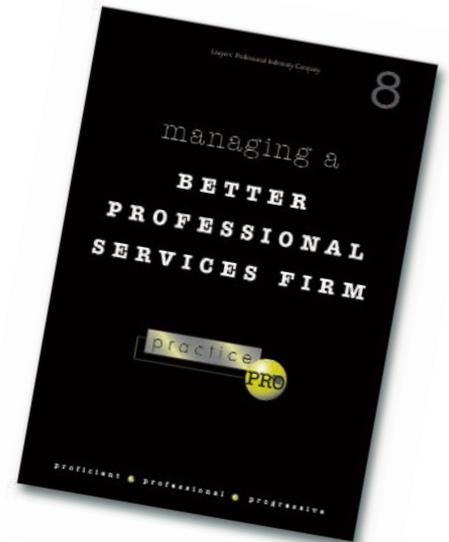


# In this issue:

## Managing a better professional services firm

The articles on marketing and yellow pages advertising are excerpted from **managing a better professional services firm**, the eighth in the **managing** series of booklets from practicePRO. These booklets provide practical tips to help lawyers better manage the risk in law practice, and adapt to the changing environment and capitalize on the opportunities that this change presents. A copy of this newest booklet from practicePRO is included with this issue of LAWPRO Magazine.



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# Marketing plan ABCs

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*Slow times, tough times, times when you really do have time on your hands: That's when the need for a sound marketing plan to promote your firm really hits home. But if you're waiting for just such a time to tackle your marketing project, think again.*

Marketing yourself and your practice is a long-term proposition: Good marketing pays off over the long haul. It is critical that you spend some time marketing every month, especially when business is good. Good marketing efforts require a steady investment of your time.

Your individual marketing plan does not need to be lengthy or complex. You need to write down goals for yourself and your firm – benchmarks against which you can measure success. Set some target dates for completing various goals and projects. For most lawyers a six-month marketing plan might be as simple as:



### Each week:

- I will take at least one person who has referred cases to me in the past, or one potential client, to lunch.
- I will send a letter of appreciation to every client whose file I close. I will include an outline of all my other practice areas and a client satisfaction survey.
- I will send a thank you note to someone who did something nice or beyond the call of duty for me.
- I will record on Friday all of my marketing efforts that week so I can see how I am doing.

### Each month:

- I will attend at least one civic, church or community meeting.
- I will try to meet at least five new people.
- I will make a telephone call to an old friend whom I haven't talked to in a while and just chat.
- I will send someone that I know who received some good press, a copy of the newspaper article with a congratulatory note.
- I will attend my county bar monthly meeting and sit with some lawyers whom I do not know that well.

### During the next four months:

- I will schedule a public speaking engagement or seminar. (I might even send the local newspaper a press release in advance).
- I will read a book on either marketing or law practice management.
- I will schedule time for myself to review my marketing efforts during the last four months.

- My spouse/partner and I will host a small dinner party for some people that we don't often see.
- I will spend some time touring a client's place of business at no charge to the client.
- I'll present a CLE program or do some other volunteer work for my local bar association.

### At the end of six months:

- I will sit down and review everything I have done and recorded during the last six months on my marketing plan. I will note any areas of great success or failure, try to think of new ideas for marketing, and revise my old six-month marketing into a new plan for the next six months.

Make sure your plan reflects your individual strengths and your unique situation. If you feel that you are a great public speaker, then make speaking engagements. If most of your business comes from referrals from other lawyers, attend local bar meetings, serve on bar committees and attend bar social events can result in business. If your practice focuses in a narrow area, such as entertainment law, you need to be in places where people who may need those legal services congregate.

For an excellent outline of the steps necessary to create a detailed marketing plan for a firm, see *The Attorney's Guide to Marketing Your Practice, Second Edition*, edited by James A. Durham and Deborah McMurray and published in 2004 by the ABA Law Practice Management Section.

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<sup>1</sup> Portions of this section came from *Marketing Magic for Lawyers*, by Jim Calloway, originally published in the *Oklahoma Bar Journal*, Vol. 71, No. 26, September 9, 2000.

# Effective Yellow Pages Ads

## It's Not Just Size and Colour That Matter

Does your yellow pages ad jump off the page? Does it stand out from the crowd sufficiently to prompt a potential client to call you first? Chances are it does neither.

Most firms do not take the time to create yellow pages advertising that really works. With their eye on costs, they focus on the size of the ad, and/or whether or not to include colour elements.

Too often firms forget a unique characteristic of the yellow pages shopper: Unlike most situations, where the consumer tolerates the advertising, the yellow pages consumer is contemplating or has decided to make a purchase. S/he is now looking for direction on where to go to make that purchase.

To work, a yellow pages ad must be constructed specifically for the yellow pages. A well-constructed yellow pages ad not only attracts more clients, it can also help improve all of your marketing efforts as you must go through essentially the same process to create the marketing content and messaging for any other medium.

To create an ad that works, you need to spend more time understanding how best to construct your ad. To do this, you have to work to gain a better understanding of:

- who your potential customers are;
- who your competitors are;
- which content works most powerfully;
- how to speak effectively to your audience;
- how you can prevail by marketing over, under, and around your competitors; and
- how to transform readers into callers.

At its simplest, you are trying to get people to call you by offering them exactly what they are looking for. Keep in mind that you go through similar steps to create just about every marketing message.

Now get a copy of your current yellow pages ad and compare it to the six elements for creating high-performance ads that Kerry Randall lists in the *Effective Yellow Pages Advertising for Attorneys, A Complete Guide to Creating Winning Ads* published in 2005 by the ABA Law Practice Management Section:

1. Strong headlines that command attention and engage readers.
2. A laser sharp focus; a willingness to ignore most readers.
3. Arresting, eye-captivating illustrations or photographs.
4. Clearly identifiable differences (from competitive advertisers).
5. Relevant copy (text) that covers less than 50 percent of the ad space.
6. Professional looking, clutter-free layouts.

Arresting, eye-captivating illustrations or photographs help get the reader's attention, and distinguish you from other ads on the same or nearby pages. To stand out, you must do something different.

But also keep the ad simple: Relevant copy or text should cover less than 50 percent of the ad space, and the final product should be professional looking and clutter-free. Resist attempts by yellow pages salespeople to include more words, colour and graphics.

The right ad grabs and engages potential clients. It delivers a message to a core group of the best potential clients. Remember, you don't want to appeal to the broadest range of possible clients. For long-term practice development, you want to bring in the **best** potential clients.

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