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DEVELOPMENT COUNSEL

Linda Julian JULIAN MIDWINTER & ASSOCIATES PTY LTD

Marketing mindset — a constant

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Too often, marketing is the province of a 'department' subdivided into a series of programs, tasks and tools. But the most effective business development often comes from having a 'marketing mindset'.

Being in the marketing mindset

A marketing mindset is the difference between a lawyer saying: 'You're asking me to do something more? How can I be expected to do that as well as get my work done?' and 'Every time I interact with a client, I know it's a marketing moment.'

Marketing and business development are not:

- an 'extra' layer of work;
- just one more 'thing to do';
- an unreasonable imposition by management; or
- a purely optional extra-curricular activity.

True, there is plenty of pressure on fee earners — especially in early and mid-career stages — to bill their time. But it's marketing quality rather than quantity that yields impressive business development outcomes. Effective marketing is about lawyer behaviours and quality interactions with clients.

Indeed, the best marketers are doing it all the time — it informs their every contact with clients and deeply imbues their professional personas.

A positive frame

Being in the marketing mindset says:

'Every time I'm in contact with a client, I'm out to build our relationship and secure a stream of valuable work for our firm.'

'Marketing moments? They're every day — all day some days. You never know when opportunities will arise or who will refer work.'

'Marketing mindset? That's "thinking client", and thinking!'

Professional opportunism isn't nasty pushiness. It's:

- being truly attuned to the issues that matter to clients;
- constantly adding value;
- being genuinely interested;
- taking time to recognise people who support and help you along the way;
- saying a sincere 'thank you' — better still, lots of them; and
- incorporating positive business development behaviours into your everyday work.

Rewards of the marketing mindset go well beyond making a few sales of your services. Almost certainly, professional practice is more satisfying — you'll build better client relationships, enjoy a higher profile and become a 'hot commodity' with lots more control over your professional destiny.

A mind to benefits

Investing mental energy and a small amount of time in doing the 'little extras' over the long run will:

- increase client satisfaction;
- encourage more work;
- yield referrals; and
- cement valuable and satisfying relationships.

Ideas to get your team started

You've just concluded a major project, transaction or case — do the following:

- immediately send out an appropriately crafted client satisfaction survey;
- suggest a project review;
- list key issues, potential ramifications and learnings;
- jot down some ideas to avoid angst and do it even better next time — circulate it to your client and other selected key advisors;
- send a card with a small gift (a bottle of wine, small hamper, business book, bunch of flowers) as a tangible 'thank you';
- follow up on any offers or promises you've made along the way — introductions to other experts, copies of articles and so on;
- identify useful documents and materials for the future, burn a CD for your client and dispatch it with a friendly note; and
- put a reminder into your calendar to follow up in a couple of months to see how things are going.

Total marketing time: two to three hours.
Likely return on investment: excellent.

You need a lengthy personal meeting with your business client:

- schedule it to conclude so you can invite your client for a quick lunch or drinks;
- offer a car space or voucher for local parking;
- conduct it on your client's premises and look over their facilities while

you're there;

- include another lawyer from your firm — clearly at 'no charge' — so your colleague can learn about the client, add value and showcase his or her skills.

Total marketing time: one to two hours.
Likely return on investment: very good.

You're reading an industry or professional journal: find an article of relevance to a client, contact or referral source — copy and send it with a short, handwritten note.

- Constantly ask yourself:
 - how does this issue/development affect my clients?
 - how does it change their competitive landscape?
 - what business risks does it present?
 - how can I help them deal with these challenges?
 - have I followed up?
- If there's an issue or item to which you can add professional value, write a short article, commentary or letter and send it to the editor.
- Add selected contributing authors to your industry contacts database.
- Check that the publication is on your list to receive relevant media releases.

Total marketing time: one to four hours.
Likely return on investment: good.

These few situations illustrate marketing mindedness in action.

Instead of just sitting at your desk and ploughing through the files, look for opportunities to be marketing minded. Small investments of time can produce worthwhile returns. ●



*Linda Julian,
Consulting Director,
Julian Midwinter &
Associates Pty Ltd,
<www.julianmidwinter.com.au>.*