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Experts Don't Need to Advertise – Do They?

By Rosalie Hamilton

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I Don't Need to Advertise, Do I?

To experts who say, "I do not need to advertise; I have all the business I need," I quote Confucius, "Dig the well before you thirst." In fact, one of the most perilous times in a business is when the business seems to have finally taken off, with a sufficient amount of work to be solvent and profitable. Murphy's Law being immutable, after the current business engagements are handled, the business may dry up without warning and, seemingly, with no explanation.

In my many years of working with expert witnesses, even after pointing to tort reform or the threat thereof, recession economies, and other vagaries, sometimes there seems to be no reasonable explanation for calls from attorneys having slowed or even stopped. The expert who has his name and credentials "out there" will suffer less in these times. Advertising will keep a stream of business coming in during the slow times, especially if done in conjunction with networking and other forms of marketing.

Some experts are understandably wary of advertising. I see forensic advertising that I consider objectionable, advertising that a skilled attorney could use to impeach an expert witness. On the other hand, the fact that one advertises is not in itself objectionable. Advertising is not the basis of being viewed as a "hired gun." That results, instead, from the prostituting of oneself by shaping the facts and opinions rendered to produce a desired conclusion.

If you are concerned about how you will look when answering questions about advertising your expert services, remember that the attorney cross-examining you is probably listed in local, state, and national bar association publications; Martindale-Hubbell®; local, state, and national legal magazines and newspapers; the Yellow Pages; and his child's athletic booster directory, as was the judge when he practiced law as an attorney! Do not take the questioning personally. Your responses to the questions, rather than the questions themselves, will determine jurors' and even judges' attitude toward you. You should practice maintaining your poise and articulating prepared responses to purposely emotion-loaded questions.

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Many successful experts tell me they let questions about their advertising "bother them all the way to the bank." They feel that questions regarding advertising comprise only one of many issues on the cross-examination list, and they answer them simply and truthfully.

My advice is to keep your advertising professional, conservative, and in good taste. You should also read "how-to" expert witness books and attend expert witness conferences and workshops in order to learn techniques for handling cross-examination questions in deposition and in court. After all, the opposing attorney has an obligation to ask every question that might even remotely discredit you to the jury. Sometimes this process takes the form of asking benign questions or questions with benign answers, but in phraseology or a tone of voice that attempts to evoke an emotional response from you.

Giving a matter-of-fact answer, using a normal tone of voice in a poised manner of speaking, will defuse such questions.

More often than objectionable advertising, I see advertising that is not cost-effective. Advertising is too costly for you to be careless in your selections. Beware, particularly, of using an advertising agency that is not familiar with the legal market. Ad agencies will almost certainly steer you to run display ads, which are effective for only a small percentage of expert witnesses, and only in specific situations. Agencies love to create display ads, because they tap their creative juices and usually merit large commissions.

How Much to Spend on Advertising

You will experience greater results from your advertising outlay if you regard it as a long-range investment rather than an immediate expense. Experts' budgets for advertising range from zero to approximately 15% of revenue and occasionally more. In the beginning of your practice, before you have much revenue, advertising is pure investment.

No one can advise you exactly how much to spend on advertising. Although you should notice where your competitors advertise, do not fall into the trap of matching their outlay. Your practice is unique. You may concentrate on other forms of marketing, such as building a superior referral system, or working twice as hard at networking.

Be diligent in asking others what works for them, and learn as you build your practice. It requires investigation and experience to determine what works for your professional practice area, your personality, your geographic region, and your target audience. And, like everything else in life, it can change over time.

Types of Advertising

The most cost-effective advertising for expert witnesses is advertising with an extended shelf life such as resume directories, and advertising that provides frequent and consistent exposure, such as classified ads and Internet advertising. Directory listings are so important that a complete chapter is devoted to them. Internet marketing also is discussed in its own chapter.

Standard advertising is of two primary types - display and classified. It runs in newspapers, magazines, journals, and specialty publications such as jury verdict reports. Display and classified ads are different from each other in both purpose and design, which will be covered in Part 2 of this series.

Time Wasters and Energy Suckers

By Dianne Salmon

Stop wasting your time and having your energy sucked dry! What do I mean by this statement? You're all over the internet trying to find out where to promote that new business you entered into, or trying to promote your own business. You've been told by so called experts to promote your new business to free classified ad sites or FFA pages.

They even told you that you will get a ton of traffic to your new site. And you will have 100's or even 1000's in your downline if you advertise your business this way. "Keep at it," they say, and within a couple of weeks you will see exponential results.

So you follow their advice. Night after night you come home from work and advertise your business to free classified ads and FFA pages. You just know that sooner or later your efforts will pay off.

And then reality hits like a ton of bricks! You've been advertising your business for two months now. To your dismay you find that you don't even have one lead or one referral.

What you might have though if you upgraded to the PRO version of the FFA submission is a credit card bill. The bill can be anywhere from \$20.00 to \$40.00 US dollars.

What you definitely do have is your email client filled with tons of counter ads. So what's the best way to advertise your new business?

Submit articles to ezines and promote your business with the help of others. This is the most cost effective way to promote your business. All it costs you is the time to write your article, and you don't receive a ton of counter ads in your inbox.

If you like this article and know of someone who may benefit from it, please feel free to forward it to them.

Dianne Salmon is the author of Time Wasters and Energy Suckers, and is the owner of

Dianne offers free tips advice and information on starting, growing,

and expanding your internet business. Subscribe to the Choice Resources newsletter by sending an email to "mailto:Dianne@choiceresources.com"

Time Wasters and Energy Suckers

ADVERTISE!

Essential Tips on Marketing
How To Write Lightning Fast Ebooks
Advertise to a Targeted Market

Baby's First Year –What Parent Needs To Know
Blogs and RSS Revealed
PPC Profits
The Classified List
The Golden Book Of Proof



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