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**How To Build Your Law Practice With Dignity**

**By Trey Ryder**

Lawyers spend thousands of dollars on complex marketing plans.

But then, often, other priorities seize their attention and their marketing plans gather dust. Here's the marketing plan I use for my clients.

STEP #1: Identify the services you want to market and the niche you want to fill. When prospects hear your name, you want them to associate you with a specific type of services. For example, John Wilbanks is an estate planning attorney. Karen Ambrose is a tax lawyer. Mark O'Connor is a corporate lawyer.

STEP #2: Identify the clients you want to attract. If you expect to hit your target, you must know where to aim. Identify your prospects by

**Demographics:** These are characteristics that identify individuals by who they are (including gender, age, marital and family status, and occupation) — and what they have (including education, income, car and home).

**Psychographics:** These are characteristics that identify individuals by what they like and how they live, such as hobbies, interests, and leisure activities — anything that will connect you with the audience you want to reach.

**Geographics:** These are characteristics that identify individuals by where they live, where they work, and where you can find your prospective clients.

STEP #3: Identify what you can add to your services so prospects consistently choose you over other lawyers. Ask yourself how you could provide services more efficiently, effectively, completely, or faster — with your client benefitting from less risk and more value.

I had a problem with the dealership that services my car. I lost one hour in the morning taking the car for service, and another hour in the afternoon retrieving the car. So I explained my situation to the service manager. He said, "No problem, I'll send someone to pick up the car."

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In just ten words, he added tremendous value to his services, at a cost of almost nothing. And I added two billable hours to my day!

**STEP #4:** Identify how you and your services differ from those of your competitors. Positive differences are your competitive advantages. Negative differences are your competitive disadvantages. Identify both so you'll know your strengths and weaknesses.

Competitive advantages can include (1) your education, background and experience, (2) how well you serve and meet clients' needs, and (3) the physical environment in which you serve clients. As a rule, the deeper your knowledge, skill and experience, the higher the fees you can charge.

Everywhere you deliver your marketing message — in written materials, at seminars, during interviews, on your Web site — clearly spell out your competitive advantages.

**STEP #5:** Learn how to establish your credibility and interact with prospects without selling. Today's clients want confidence in your abilities, personal attention, and value for their money.

When you interview your prospect, (1) ask what problem he wants to solve or goal he wants to achieve, (2) listen carefully so you know which points he considers most important, (3) offer information about your prospect's problem and the solution you recommend, (4) provide facts about your background and qualifications, (5) explain how you've helped other clients in similar situations, and (6) allow your prospect to make his own decision without pressure from you.

**Step #6:** Compile and keep on computer a comprehensive mailing list. Your mailing list is your most important business asset. Whether your list contains 20 names — or 2,000 names — these people are the core around which you build a successful firm.

Your mailing list should include (1) past and present clients, (2) prospects, (3) referral sources, and (4) editors and producers at media outlets that reach your target audience. Code your mailing list so you can call up whatever names you need.

The critical element in your marketing program is your ability to add prospect's names to your mailing list at whatever rate will bring you the number of new clients you want.

**STEP #7:** Make sure prospects and clients can reach you easily without hassle. If prospects have a hard time contacting you, they will often call another lawyer.

**Menu of Options:** Consider a voice mail menu to route calls quickly: "If you'd like to receive our new Consumer's Guide for Accident Victims, press one now. If you'd like to speak with Mr. Jones, press two now." If your menu is long, you might tell callers they can skip the menu and make their selection at any time.

**Direct-Dial Numbers:** If you want prospects and clients to call you without going through your switchboard, offer your direct dial number so they can reach you immediately.

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**Toll-Free Numbers:** If you are marketing to prospects who are a toll call from your office, install a toll-free number because, in many cases, prospects won't pay to call you.

**Never-Busy Fax Numbers:** Most phone companies offer a fax backup service. It detects when your fax line is busy and reroutes a second fax into its computer. When your fax line is free, the backup service sends the fax to your fax machine.

**Voice Mail:** Set up a voice mail system so you can answer calls 24 hours a day and assure that no one gets a busy signal. During one series of radio commercials, I had a client who received 80 calls per commercial. (Do not use answering services with live operators because often, during peak hours, callers get busy signals or no one answers.)

**Pager Notification:** If you want to be notified when you have after-hours messages, you can add a pager to your system and it will page you according to your instructions.

**E-mail:** Prospects often want to send you a note, but don't need to talk with you. Make sure you accept

e-mail messages and check your mailbox often. Recently a lawyer contacted me by e-mail to set up a phone appointment. I asked why he didn't call instead. He said he always makes his initial contacts by e-mail.

**STEP #8:** Compile your information and advice into your own unique educational message. Title your message so you attract the prospects you want — and so they realize that your materials will help them solve a problem or achieve a goal.

A personal injury attorney might offer "5 steps to getting a fair settlement for your injuries." A domestic relations attorney might offer "9 ways to reduce the pain and expense of divorce." A business lawyer might offer "6 ways to reduce liability exposure and cut insurance costs."

On a sheet of paper, list each point along with your suggestions in plain English. Often, after doing nothing more than reading your materials, prospects will hire you because they trust you and believe that you know how to achieve the result they want.

To increase the persuasive power of your materials, include more than one list. Start with an umbrella title, such as "guide." For example, you might offer a Consumer's Guide to Child Custody. Then you could offer a number of tips, secrets, mistakes to avoid, misconceptions, and more.

To be effective, your educational message should (1) identify and explain your prospect's problem, (2) prove the problem exists, (3) identify the solution, (4) prove the solution works, and (5) build you into the solution so your prospect hires you.

**STEP #9:** Educate your audience with written information and advice. Write your message in a form that you can send to anyone who calls your office. Then, by offering to mail copies without charge, you attract calls from genuine prospects. When prospects call, they give you their names and addresses, which you add to your mailing list.

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Important: The longer your materials, the better. The longer you keep your prospect's attention — and the more information you provide — the more likely he is to hire your services. Not all prospects will read everything you send. But many will, provided your materials are well written and relevant to the person's problem. The current fact kit I offer varies from 40 to 50 pages in length. Many lawyers tell me they read every word.

STEP #10: Educate your audience through articles and interviews. Media publicity provides you the opportunity to educate prospects, offer your written materials, and invite prospects to seminars. When you become the center of media attention, you establish a high level of credibility and — when your program is properly designed — you attract calls from prospects. One of my news releases landed my client on the CNN Headline News. Another client received 426 requests for his written materials after offering them on a radio talk show.

STEP #11: Educate your audience through paid advertising. To assure that your message appears at the times and places you desire, buy advertising time on the broadcast media and space in the print media. Your ads' focus should be to persuade prospects to (1) request your free written materials so they will call your office and give you their names and addresses, or (2) attend your free educational seminar.

STEP #12: Educate your audience through free seminars and roundtables. Seminars save time

because you present information to many prospects at once. Also, seminars enhance your credibility and allow you to talk with qualified prospects in a non-threatening educational setting. Plus, seminars give prospects the opportunity to ask questions, discuss problems and request an appointment with you.

STEP #13: Educate your audience through direct mail. Direct mail provides the opportunity to educate your prospects, offer your written materials and invite prospects to seminars.

If you can identify prospects you want to reach, a brief letter from you that educates your prospects — or offers your educational materials — can be a powerful marketing tool. Make sure you review your local Bar's ethical rules about mailing information to non-clients. Usually, these rules relate to targeted direct mailings to persons known to need legal services, such as accident victims, and do not apply to prospects who may someday need your help.

STEP #14: Educate your audience through a newsletter. Mail your newsletter to prospects, clients and referral sources. Your newsletter reinforces your marketing message, continues the flow of information, and serves as an ongoing contact. It adds value to the services you provide and acts as a tangible tool to increase referrals.

Your newsletter can be as short as a one-page letter — or as long as you want. Frequency is more important than length. Mail your newsletter at least quarterly. Monthly is even better. Also, consider sending your newsletter by e-mail.

STEP #15: Educate your audience with cassette tapes. If you want to reach people who cannot attend

your seminars, record your seminar or dictate the information onto audio cassette tapes. This helps busy people who can listen whenever they have a break or when they are in their car on the way to work.

STEP #16: Educate your audience through an Internet Web site. When you put your educational information on the Web, it's there 24 hours a day, whenever your prospect wants to read it.

Include articles, checklists and recommendations. The more you educate your prospect, the more he trusts you and the more he values your knowledge. Try to answer every question your prospect might ask. The more information you provide, the more you help your prospect qualify or disqualify himself as a candidate for your services.

When you use different educational methods together, they reinforce and clarify your message. This brings you more new clients than if you were to use any one method by itself.

These 16 steps can attract new clients, increase referrals, strengthen client loyalty and build your image as an authority without selling. What's more, this plan gives you complete control over your marketing future.

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## **Dalton's law and diving**

**By Jakob Jelling**

### **Dalton's law and diving by Jakob Jelling**

Dalton's law refers to the effects which partial pressure might have on divers. This law says that the pressure of mixed gases is equal to the pressure produced by the individual gas. It can also be explained by saying that the total pressure of a mixture of gases equals the sum of the partial pressures of gases which are part of it.

This means that the number of molecules present in the total volume of a gas is proportional to the number of molecules present on each one of the gases which compose it. This way, while the total gas pressure increases as a diver goes deeper into the water, the partial pressure of each gas involved increases as well, and the effects which might cause on the divers body also increases with it.

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For example, air is a mixture of gases which contains about 80% of nitrogen and 20% of oxygen although it also includes small amounts of other gases as well. According to Dalton's law, the partial pressure exerted by the nitrogen and by the oxygen which make the air will be equal to the total pressure of the air; and they will increase simultaneously.

A specific case in which the effects specified by Dalton's law should be seriously considered by divers is regarding nitrogen. Whenever there is an increase of the partial pressure of nitrogen, this would cause a higher nitrogen concentration dissolved in the diver's blood, and this could cause him to suffer a nitrogen narcosis. This, among many other situations which might arise due to the facts stated by Dalton's law, should be prevented by a proper planning of the diving activities which a diver intends to practice.

The effects which a gas might cause on a diver are based on the pressure which such gas exerts on his body. This explains why Dalton's law is so important for divers and why they should understand it and prevent the effects it explains. Partial pressure related problems can affect the human body in several ways, such as causing nitrogen narcosis or ear canal damage among others, and therefore divers should pay attention to these dangers and take the necessary precautions.

Jakob Jelling is the founder of <http://www.divepilot.com>. Please visit his website to discover the world of diving!



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