

Your Marketing Efforts Sink, Swim Or Soar Depending On How Well You Satisfy The

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**By Trey Ryder**

A few years ago I created a to-do list for my business (different from my to-do list for clients). Nearly every day I would add something to the list. Soon, I had over five pages of things to do --- tasks I viewed as important enough to interrupt what I was doing so I could add them to my list.

Before long, every time I opened the document I got depressed. I was always adding to the list, but almost never crossing anything off.

Why? I discovered I had a number of well-worn excuses: I don't have enough time. The project seems too big. It won't hurt to put it off a little longer. I feel no pressure to get it done. Maybe it isn't important after all.

When I looked at the tasks I did complete, I assumed they would match my highest priorities. Right? Wrong!

I surprised myself to learn that priority had almost nothing to do with it. Instead, the major factor in my decision to complete these tasks was the "Big C" --- Convenience. I could finish them quickly and easily. I could complete them in one sitting. And I felt really good when the job was done: instant gratification.

So, what did I do with my 5-page to-do list? I deleted it. Now I feel much better.

When your prospective clients need to hire a lawyer, do they hire you? Or are they skilled at finding ways to "put it off until tomorrow" --- or much later?

I encourage you to make every aspect of your law practice convenient for both your prospects and clients --- because if they face any obstacles, they may have all the reason they need to do nothing. Now, here are 12 smart ways to make your law practice more convenient: Smart Way #1: Make sure prospects find it easy to learn about you. This includes having an education-based web site that answers their questions and explains in detail how you can help them. Also, I suggest you have an educational packet that contains articles and information about your services, which you can send by

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mail or e-mail.

**Smart Way #2:** Make sure prospects find it easy to reach you. Do you accept phone calls from prospects — or do you insist that they come into your office before you'll speak with them? Do you offer a toll free number — or do prospects have to pay to call you? Do you respond to e-mails from prospects? The more convenient you make it for prospects, the more calls you'll receive.

**Smart Way #3:** Make sure clients find it easy to reach you. Are you available by pager or cell phone in an emergency? Can a client reach you quickly and easily on the phone? Do you return calls promptly?

**Smart Way #4:** Make sure prospects find it easy to get to your office. Is your office on or near a major street? Is your parking area close to your building or office? Is your office at a convenient location in the building? If on the second floor or higher, is the elevator close by?

**Smart Way #5:** Make sure prospects find it easy to meet with you. If prospects have a hard time coming to your office, will you go to their home or office? If weekdays are difficult for them, will you meet with them in the evening or on a weekend?

**Smart Way #6:** Make sure prospects find it easy to hire you. Can they hire you without having to drive to your office? Can you send your engagement letter or contract by fax or e-mail? If you have an established relationship, can they hire you simply by calling you on the phone? Or by sending you an e-mail? Can they hire you without a retainer?

**Smart Way #7:** Make sure prospects find it easy to pay you. Will you accept personal checks? How about credit cards? Do you offer a payment plan? Do you provide postage-paid business reply envelopes to make sending their check more convenient?

**Smart Way #8:** Make sure prospects and clients find it easy to provide you with the information you need. Do you have a form they can fill out and send by fax or e-mail? For larger packets, do you provide self-addressed UPS or FedEx labels?

**Smart Way #9:** Make sure prospects and clients find it easy to remember appointments and other important dates. Do you send them a calendar of upcoming dates, including what you need from them — or expect of them — by those dates? Do you send letters or e-mails reminding them of appointments? (A more tactful way to remind them is to ask if this time is still convenient for them.)

**Smart Way #10:** Make sure clients know when to call you to update documents. You might provide them a list of criteria or events that should prompt them to contact you.

**Smart Way #11:** Make sure clients find it easy to refer their friends and colleagues. You might mail to each client your referral brochure, which contains a complete listing of your services and contact information. Consider providing clients with referral postcards they can give to friends and colleagues to request a meeting with you. Offer educational seminars so clients can bring friends to meet you and hear your message in person.

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Smart Way #12: Make sure clients find it easy to remember you. You might provide things that contain your contact information, such as calendars and paperweights. Send cordial–contact letters. Mail them your newsletter. Don't overlook greeting cards, gifts and donations given in their name. Also, consider hosting special events like art walks and wine tastings.

In summary: Convenience is a big factor in how prospects and clients respond to your marketing efforts. Don't allow even the slightest obstacle to come between your prospects and you. Instead, emphasize how easily prospects can do business with you. In this way, you melt the ice that freezes many prospects in place — and help them realize that working with you is an easy, positive, rewarding experience.

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### **The Sink Or Swim Approach To Leadership**

**By Lora J. Adrianse**

Looking around in most corporate environments today you'll find mission, vision and values statements proudly displayed on the walls, in print materials and even engraved in granite. Often, they've invested a great deal of time; effort and expense in crafting just the right message to best describe the foundational principles of the company. I can't help but stop, take notice; and then wonder how this foundational wisdom is incorporated into the day–to–day operations. What's in it for the operational leaders to carry out the mission in ways that align with the vision and values? How are they taught to walk the talk?

Many operational leaders today were developed and promoted from inside the ranks of the organization. In fact, most internally developed leaders were promoted without consideration of the potential to lead and inspire others. They're "crowned" with a title and thrown into the corporate waters to sink or swim. Those that swim have enough stamina to figure out what it takes to stay above water. Those that sink are simply in over their heads and can't find a way to surface for air.

I can't help but wonder how the "sink or swim" approach fits into those mission, vision and values statements. The new leaders who are trying to learn on their own without a coach or a trainer take longer, make more avoidable mistakes and often lose their motivation and enthusiasm. Multiply that by the number of their direct reports and the equation becomes an issue that's costing the organization dearly.

If your organization is one that values development and promotion from within the ranks, make a commitment today to establish a new process, and most of all provide the support and training to

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ensure success. The future leadership within your company depends on it.

Lora J Adrianse is the owner of Essential Connections. She is a Coach, Consultant and Facilitator who specializes in the development managers and business owners. She recently left a long-term corporate career to focus on her passion for helping others bring out the best in themselves through the use of Emotional Intelligence. She can be reached through her website

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