

Booster shot Marketing Section offers tips for keeping your legal edge

By Brian Cox

Legal marketing is similar to exercise. The more you do it, the better you look. And attorneys should make time for it even if they feel they haven't another spare minute in their day.

That's according to attorney Darryl Horowitz, who is the marketing partner at Coleman & Horowitz in Fresno, Calif.

"Marketing is like exercise. It's something you should do every day because it's very good for you. Unfortunately, very few people will do it consistently," he says.

Horowitz has been involved with legal marketing since he started his own firm a year out of law school in 1983. He quickly set about learning how to market and develop business. He began writing articles on the art of ensuring happy clients and participating on bar committees and bar events.

One marketing tip he offers: Learn what your clients are interested in.

"If you're marketing, you have to learn what your clients are doing. If they follow baseball, you should follow baseball," he says. "When we formed our own firm here, we wanted to make sure that we provided clients with value. That involves not just representing your clients, but thinking about how you can benefit



their business by providing a service, such as sending articles on subjects that affect them or providing free, in-house seminars on topics of interest to your clients so they receive value."

As a member of the executive committee for the Primerus Marketing Partners and Staff Section, Horowitz is eager to share his marketing experience with others. For attorneys with limited time, he says the Marketing Section can be a valuable source of information to help their practices and firms grow.

"If you have an idea you've been thinking about it, it's a great way to vet the idea with marketing professionals who have been successful already," he says.

The Marketing Section is a collection of attorneys and marketing professionals from Primerus firms who share ideas on how to generate awareness, establish authority, increase leads, and convert leads into clients. The section organizes a conference call once a month to discuss tactics that work and those that don't, and how to effectively harness available tools and technology. Once a quarter, the section brings in a guest speaker to present on their area of expertise.

The blend of marketing professionals and attorneys makes the section unique, according to Anne Parys, the director of



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marketing at Rothman Gordon PC in Pittsburgh who also is on the executive committee. She says the section welcomes anyone who is looking to gain a marketing edge, regardless of their marketing experience.

“Whether you’re a marketing professional or you’ve never touched it, we’re looking for all perspectives,” she says. “Interacting with the Marketing Section group will help attorneys not only get more out of the Primerus membership, but it’s going to give them skills they can take back to their firm and implement to help their firm’s marketing as well.”

Parys has more than 20 years of experience in legal marketing. She joined Rothman Gordon after a marketing stint at Deloitte & Touche. She says part of the attraction in making the switch to legal marketing was the opportunity to build the firm’s marketing program from the ground up. She oversees all aspects of marketing, including budget, PR and advertising, market research and market analytics, branding and print collateral, website management and social media. She develops and implements annual and long-term marketing plans and has published articles in ABA’s Law Practice Today, TechnoLawyer, ACBA’s The Lawyers Journal and The Pennsylvania Lawyer.

She has been on the Marketing Section committee for several years and says that if an attorney “can take away one nugget from each presentation, I think we’ve accomplished something.”

Sheenika Gandhi, the chief marketing officer at Los Angeles-based Greenberg Glusker, says she chose to serve on the Primerus Marketing Section executive committee because she enjoys contributing suggestions on trending marketing topics and effective speakers.

“For me, it’s really important to connect with marketing directors or partners at other law firms to see what everybody is working on and what their priorities are,” she says.

Gandhi, who is also an active leader in the Legal Marketing Association, leads Greenberg Glusker’s marketing and business development as well as the firm’s diversity, inclusion, and corporate responsibility initiatives. She started her career in legal marketing after graduating from California Western Law School when she took a job as a website coordinator for an IP law firm as a way of getting her foot in the door. During her undergraduate studies in business and international relations, she had worked in the college’s technology department where she learned HTML and how to update websites.

When she saw the job description at the IP law firm, it seemed like a perfect mix of law, technology, business, and marketing. “This speaks to me,” she thought.

Gandhi joined the firm’s marketing and business development department where she launched and managed the firm’s redesigned website before eventually taking on the responsibility for all of the firm’s digital marketing. Five years later, she was recruited to be the marketing director of a 50-attorney employment litigation firm where she was able to further hone and broaden her marketing skills before joining Greenberg Glusker as CMO, where she has been for four years.

Gandhi sees the Marketing Section as a forum where attorneys and marketing professionals alike can share ideas in particular on how they can best take advantage of Primerus and its resources. Believing it has never been easier for attorneys to engage and participate, she encourages attorneys to “go all in on Primerus and take advantage of every opportunity.”

“The advantage about Primerus is that there are so many ways to be involved,” she says. “You can become a thought leader in a particular subject area through writing, networking, and leadership opportunities.”

Those opportunities closely mirror what marketing consultant



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and coach Amber Vincent regularly advises clients across the country.

“There are really four core ways to market,” she says. “Speak, join, write, or party – which is networking and client entertainment activities. You can do all of them, one of them, or a blend, but, ultimately, lawyers should select the ways that work best with their interests and personalities.”

The owner of Alyn-Weiss & Associates, Vincent has provided guidance on succession, marketing, and business development to small and midsize law firms and lawyers for more than two decades. She creates marketing plans and strategies within law firms to meet their overall marketing goals. Her specialty is coaching and developing young lawyer programs within firms looking to build a next generation.

Vincent focuses on offering lawyers insights and planning structured to create personal relationships with potential clients.

“At the end of the day you still have to create relationships with real people,” she says. “There are a lot of ways to generate work. Creating relationships and maintaining them is critical no matter how the work came in.”

She encourages attorneys to keep a list of people important to their practice – the VIP list of referrals. She suggests preparing a “hot sheet” of the top 10 people your practice can’t live without and tracking when you last spoke to them and connect at least quarterly.

Not unlike the exercise analogy, Vincent urges her clients to find at least 15 minutes a week for some marketing activity, whether that be brainstorming topics for a blog or videoblog, reaching out to a contact to schedule a lunch, updating your LinkedIn profile, or sharing an interesting article with contacts who might find the information helpful.

“The schedule in the life of a lawyer is demanding and we all struggle to find time to market,” she says. “Scheduling yourself 15 minutes a week to focus on one marketing activity can help lawyers progress toward their long-term goals.”



Vincent has been involved with Primerus for 15 years and represents a number of Primerus law firms as their marketing strategic adviser, director of marketing, or as part of internal marketing teams. She has served on the Marketing Section’s executive committee for several years.

“The section is a great source to learn what firms like yours are doing,” she says. “We try to have open discussions or speakers come in who speak to the concerns of small- to mid-size firms.”

Topics might involve Google business ratings and reviews or marketing budgets.

“There are a lot of incredibly brilliant marketers in Primerus working in-house and as marketing partners who have done it a long time and you can come get the resources of decades of experience,” Vincent says.

One of the secrets to marketing a practice or firm is focusing on what an attorney is good at and comfortable with, according to Gandhi.

“I think it’s about meeting the attorney where they’re at,” says Gandhi, who adds that legal marketing is not one-size-fits-all. “I’m very much of the mindset that I’m going to focus on what an attorney wants to do and is passionate about.”

“The key when you’re in legal marketing is to be able to figure out what is important to each attorney,” says Parys. “You’ve got to figure out what can they do that they’re comfortable with and that they can be successful in. When they start to see results, that’s when you’ve got them.”

“There’s no reason everybody can’t do something, even introverts,” says Horowitz. “You don’t have to do everything in marketing. Pick something that makes you comfortable.”

Another simple secret to improving any marketing effort is doing a little at a time.

“Everybody thinks they have to hit a home run in their marketing, but they don’t,” says Horowitz. “Tony Gwynn had a pretty good career hitting singles.”

Vincent calls it “bite-size” marketing.

“The way you’re successful about marketing, you’re consistently doing bite-size pieces of the goals you’ve set,” she says. “You never stop marketing.”



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Parys says a third secret to successful marketing is identifying and commanding a particular area or subject of law.

“What actually hooks people is niche and thought leadership in a space,” she says. “If you put out a message nobody else is doing, people will find you at that point.”

Future trends in marketing encompass video and artificial intelligence, according to Vincent and Parys.

“The next generation is consuming video as their informational platform so the sooner firms can embrace that and participate in that, the better,” she says, pointing to the popularity of TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook reels.

Parys says artificial intelligence is dominating conversations in marketing circles.

“We’re still trying to get our heads around it, but this is a game-changer,” she says. “Law is going to look very different in the next 10 to 15 years because of it.”

The Primerus Marketing Partners and Staff Section is available to help attorneys figure out how to best use emerging technologies such as AI and video in their marketing plans.

“Participation in the marketing section is like participation in Primerus,” says Horowitz. “The more you put into it, the more you’ll get out of it like any marketing effort.”