

Top 10 Tips Paralegals Can Use to Market Their Firm

guest author: Jay S. Reischman

Paralegals and other non-lawyer staffers are a great untapped resource when it comes to marketing a law firm. After all, these are the people on the front lines every day, dealing with clients and doing most of the heavy lifting when it comes to the office.

Here are 10 ways non-lawyers can get involved in marketing the law firm:

1. **Business Cards**

The lawyer isn't the only one who meets people who might be interested in learning more about the firm. Give every staffer business cards with their name, title and area of law in which they work. Add in the law firm website URL. As an added benefit, giving staffers their own business cards tells them that their contributions are valued and they are a part of the team.

2. **Social Media**

Encourage non-lawyers to get on Twitter and Facebook for their professional as well as personal needs. Given the tools to communicate about the firm and the work they do in an unfiltered way, they will begin to show the world exactly how your firm can help.

3. **Blogging**

Who says the law firm blog should be reserved for the lawyers? After all, the paralegals and other staffers have a finger on the pulse of the client's needs and concerns. Train your staffers on how to blog, and the limits on what they can and cannot say in public. Exposing them to the world will give them a chance to help build their own personalities online, enabling clients and prospects to bond more fully with them.

4. **Education and Industry Events**

Don't keep your staffers holed up in the office, staring longingly out the window as you go from event to event. When your staffers are given the chance to learn more about the area of law in which you practice, they'll be better prepared to handle the issues that arise in the office.

5. **Bond With Clients**

Clients are more likely to enjoy working with your firm if they work well with your paralegals. After all, the paralegals are on the front lines of client communication.

6. **Think About a Modified "20% Time"**

Google gives staffers 20% of their work time to play with cool stuff. Though it's unlikely that your law firm has much going on in the way of such innovation, perhaps giving non-lawyer employees some extra time to work on community projects isn't a terrible idea. Let someone coach a kid's sports team, volunteer at a local not-for-profit, or something else that feels good to them. They'll get their creativity flowing and they'll do something of interest to them. In turn, they'll be representing your firm as a good member of the community.

7. **Brown Bag It**

Invite your staffers to a monthly brown-bag lunch meeting to talk about specific issues in the law and how they can best handle them. By making them better informed, they'll do more positive work for clients.

8. **Ask the Clients - And the Non-Clients**

Your clients - and those who never become your clients - hold the keys to understanding what you're doing wrong in your firm. They're more likely to talk with the non-lawyers in your office about their concerns, their frustrations, and what they'd like to see you do better. Encourage your staffers to engage in these candid discussions on a regular basis so they can make suggestions on improving your client service.

9. **Send a Welcome Letter**

Why not have the paralegal pick up the phone and call the new client to welcome him or her to the firm? The lawyer should send one first (if he or she doesn't then a call from the paralegal will look like the lawyer is too busy to care about the client once the check clears), but a call from the paralegal serves to let the client know who to contact when the lawyer's unavailable.

10. **Rewrite a Form Letter**

Your clients probably aren't lawyers. But you are, and you're probably the one who put together all those form letters you've been using since you started the practice. Chances are excellent that you understand what they mean, and your clients fight to comprehend them (much less stay awake until the end of the letter). Having a non-lawyer employee re-write them will make the letters flow better and will result in something better understood by clients. When clients understand things, they're happier.

I encourage every paralegal and non-lawyer staffer to print this article and hand it to the boss. Get involved in your firm's marketing efforts and see your value to the boss skyrocket!

Jay S. Fleischman is a New York Bankruptcy Lawyer (www.NewYorkBankruptcyHelp.com) and a legal marketing consultant for bankruptcy and consumer protection lawyers (www.LegalPracticePro.com).

***This is an expanded version of an article that appeared at the Paralegal Gateway Weblog (paralegalgateway.typepad.com/my_weblog/2009/11/4-ways-that-paralegals-can-get-involved-in-marketing-the-law-firm.html)*