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FAMILY LAW PRACTICE MANAGEMENT: Marketing for People Who Hate Marketing

MARK A. CHINN

This article is written for matrimonial attorneys, and all other professionals and business people, who think they hate marketing. It is for those people who view marketing the same way all people view having a root canal. In short, it is for all those people who bristle at the thought of having to market their business. I will attempt to show all of you who hate marketing how you can look at it from a different perspective and perhaps even enjoy it and not realize that you are actually "marketing."

First, let's take a look at all of the traditional marketing techniques which non-marketers absolutely abhor.

Self Promotion. People who like to market enjoy promoting themselves. Non-marketers view marketers as arrogant, narcissistic, and self-centered. View marketers as the Liberaces of business. The last thing non-marketers want to do are draw attention to themselves and appear to be promoting themselves.

Joining Things. Non-marketers hate to join things. They do not want to be a part of a group. They do not want to step out of themselves and join some group that requires them to attend some banquet or luncheon on a regular basis and follow some rules of social engagement. Non-marketers simply do not see the point of being forced to join a group and meet with people they do not really know.

Gregariousness. While many non-marketers are friendly and enjoy people, they have absolutely no interest in spending lots of time talking with every single person they might see. They have no need to shake hands with every person they might see at church, in the office, or in the grocery store. Non-marketers simply have no need to act like they are running for governor all the time.

Speaking. Non-marketers would rather have a leg amputated than speak to a group. First, non-marketers cannot imagine that they might have something important enough for a bunch of strangers to sit in one place and listen for an hour. Secondly, they have absolutely no need to be a hit for a bunch of strangers.

Writing. Non-marketers view writing an article in the same way they do public speaking. They do not see what they could contribute to society and they cannot conceive why anyone would be interested in reading something written by a complete stranger.

Media. Non marketers have absolutely no interest in promoting themselves through media, such as television, radio, or newspaper. Such activities are for self-promoting, arrogant narcissists.

Mission Statements and Goal Setting. Marketers are mission oriented and activity driven. Marketers set goals and desire to achieve certain results. Non-marketers view mission statements and goal setting as diminishing the significance of the variety of life. Non-marketers see such activities as unprofessional and mercenary. Non-marketers have a mission to help people, not to achieve results and make money.

We have just been through a basic list every good marketer would follow in order to have a successful, professional business. The question, then, is how can a person who does not want to do any of those basic things encourage and promote their

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own profession or business. Any marketer knows that trying to get a non-marketer to do any of the things on the list above is like trying to drive a square peg into a round hole. It just simply will not work. How then can a non-marketer approach pursuing his profession or business in a way which will lead to more clients or customers and a lasting business?

STEPS TO TAKE

Listed *infra* are some simple steps non-marketers can take to promote their profession or their business without feeling like they are marketing in the same way that marketers do.

Change Your Perspective. Instead of viewing marketing as an attempt at self-promotion designed to make more money, realize that marketing is really an effort to enrich the relationships in your life. Instead of viewing marketing as a glitzy campaign designed to bring in masses of business, realize that all good business, no matter how big or small, depends upon quality relationships with people. Even non-marketers can enjoy the thought of conducting their activities in a way which will enrich their relationships.

Think of Relationships and Not Gimmicks. Successful business is about people being aware of you; people wanting to send business to you; and people wanting to hire you. In short, successful business comes from having trusting relationships with the right people. Instead of viewing the right people as people who would bring you money and make you rich and successful, view the right people as people with whom you would like to spend time and with whom you would like to do business and have a relationship. Once you start to view the people that you would do business with in this way, you then become more interested in doing the things which are necessary to enrich those relationships.

Everyone Has Them. Realize that all marketers and non-marketers share the following:

- *Friends.* Everyone has friends whether they are a marketer or a non-marketer.
- *People Who Send Them Business.* Everyone, whether marketer or non-marketer, has a certain group of people who will send them business.
- *Clients.* All marketers and non-marketers enjoy a certain group of clients.

- *Interests.* Marketers and non-marketers alike all have interests, hobbies, and things which they enjoy in life.

The key to enhancing life and increasing your business without marketing is to take advantage of the things that non-marketers have in common with marketers and capitalize on those things.

Take Your Friends to Lunch. Non-marketers bristle at the thought of calling someone up for a marketing lunch or a marketing breakfast. However, there is absolutely no reason in the world why non-marketers would not want to take a friend to lunch or dinner. The lunch or dinner can then be made an enjoyable event where the non-marketer simply takes the opportunity to ask the friend about their business and then share their own business with the friend. The same can be said for people who send the non-marketer business. The non-marketer should simply sit down and take about thirty minutes to write a list of the people who have sent them the best kind of business. Create a list of the best pieces of work that have been done in the last couple of years and then see if you can remember who sent those pieces of business to you. In addition, create a list of the clients that you have most enjoyed representing or working for and then create a list of where those clients came from. Once you have that list of ten, twenty, or thirty people, decide to improve your relationships with those people. Improving relationships can take place by inviting those persons to do the things that you enjoy or to go places such as restaurants, movies, or games.

Marketing is really an effort to enrich relationships.

Do What You Enjoy. Non-marketers should focus their attempts on improving relationships, not on the marketing activity or the thought of marketing. Focus on doing things which interest you or the people with whom you want to have a relationship. For example, you are a non-marketer who absolutely is repulsed by the thought of making a speech to a local group. However, you do enjoy wine and having meals with friends. Instead of focusing on your inadequacy in marketing yourself in traditional ways, focus on improving relationships with your friends and referral sources by taking them out to dinner and perhaps taking them to wine-tasting parties where you can engage in doing

the things that you like to do and begin enriching your relationship. Another example is a non-marketer who enjoys sailing. The non-marketer probably finds himself sailing with the same people all the time or simply with family members. Instead of keeping that part of life separate from business, the non-marketer can, instead, block out an afternoon away from work and invite a client or referral source to go sailing.

Let me give you another, personal example. I have always enjoyed golf but felt that golf and business were antithetical. However, at the encouragement of a business coach, I took an afternoon off to play golf. While I was preparing for the game, I had a guilty conscience about all of the work I was not doing that afternoon and worried about the negative impact on my business. When I got to the golf course, I ended up partnering with three other businessmen who were also off for the afternoon and to my surprise, the parking lot at the golf course was not empty, but full. It seems that a lot of business people were not actually working during the week like I had always been taught to do. As it turned out, I developed a very close relationship with a local banker who ended up providing the financing for a new building I had always dreamed of for my business. Simply put, this building may not have come to fruition had it not been for my willingness to merge my golf interest with my business interests.

Enrich Relationships with Present and Former Clients. I realize that non-marketers are probably not as into list making as marketers are, but I am going to ask you non-marketers out there to sit down for a few minutes and make a list of the clients you are working for and have worked for in the past and that you really have enjoyed. All professionals, and business people, have those certain people that they just really enjoy representing. Unfortunately, those relationships usually end when the undertaking is over. The non-marketers should simply take advantage of the relationship and not let it end when the business relationship ends. For example, you are a lawyer who has just represented someone in a difficult family situation. You found on the way back from court that you really enjoyed spending time with the client. Under normal circumstances you would let the relationship end when the representation ended. However, this is the loss of an opportunity to have a wonderful and enriched relationship with another person. Instead of letting the relationship end, send that person that you enjoyed a card and then follow that up with a phone call to have lunch or dinner together. Reassure yourself that this is an opportunity to have a

better relationship with someone you enjoy and that it is not marketing. Develop a habit of taking the time to enrich those relationships which you already enjoy. This will ultimately lead to the same result achieved by the traditional marketers.

Marketing is not about manipulating people.

Say Thank You. I find in the professional and business world that very few people say thank you. Failing to say thank you is losing a wonderful opportunity to enrich a relationship effortlessly. Not too long ago, a friend of mine from Atlanta, Georgia referred a client to me for a domestic relations matter. I was thrilled that my friend had thought of me and I wanted to make sure that he knew how much I appreciated it. I went to the bookstore and bought a signed copy of a John Grisham novel and sent it to him along with a simple thank-you card. A few days later, my friend called saying that he had never received a thank you like that from anyone before and he was so impressed with what I had done. A few days after that, he sent a two-page letter telling me again how much he appreciated the book and how he would make sure that he always thought of me in making referrals. You non-marketers might view the sending of the thank you and the book as mere manipulation designed to get more business. However, I would encourage you to view it as one friend saying thank you to another in a very special way, and thereby enhancing the friendship. It should also be viewed as doing the right thing, which is to say thank you to someone who helps you. Doing positive things for one another leads to better and more enriched relationships and a better life.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I would like for all of you non-marketers to take from this article the following simple concepts:

Be Comfortable with Being a Non-Marketer. Since you are not a marketer, do not try to be a marketer. Remember the futility of driving a square peg into a round hole. Realize that all is not lost, and that there are many ways you can enrich your business through your natural talents.

View Marketing Differently. Marketing is not about manipulating people to get more business or to show yourself off to the world. True marketing is

about creating good and trusting relationships with the people who will enrich your life.

Use What You Have. Everyone, whether they are a marketer or not, has the things which are needed to promote their business. Those are: friends, referral sources, clients, hobbies, and other interests.

Capitalize on those existing friendships, referral sources, and clients by merging your personal and business relationships with your personal interests and hobbies. This will lead to a better personal and business life and to enriched relationships with the people who matter to you.