WHAT IS THE RADIUS OF INFLUENCE?

RADIUS OF INFLUENCE

Marketing a Plaintiffs Civil Trial Practice:
THE RADIUS OF INFLUENCE APPROACH
by Nick Carroll and Tom Young

Ask most personal injury attorneys why they've chosen their field, and they will tell you it's because they really want to help. Because they care about people. Because they believe in fighting for what's right. If you push a little further, they may even tell you they've chosen tort law because every day is different. Because their pay is tied to how hard they work. Because of the results they achieve for their clients.

If you go deeper, you find that many attorneys chose this field because they want to make a difference. Because they want to leave something behind. Because they want to leave the world a little better than they found it.

But, primarily they say they joined this profession because they really want to help.

Somewhere along the way for most attorneys, however, things changed. The business stopped being about people and passion and purpose and somehow became about... business. Instead of practicing law and serving others, attorneys are forced to act as managers and marketers and pitchmen.

If you're an attorney who would rather be rewarded for your relationships and hard-earned reputation instead of for television and radio commercials, or billboards and ads on the back of phonebooks, then the following information may be exactly what you've been looking for. Radius of Influence is a systematic approach to word of mouth marketing for civil trial attorneys who want to get back to the reason they chose this profession in the first place...

People.

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The Basics

Three Simple Ideas that Make a Big Difference

IDEA #1 | Relationships & Reputation Beat Advertising

Personal injury law appears to be dominated by a handful of big advertisers. Billboards, television and radio spots, phonebooks, and even paid internet search placements all seem to point to the same few firms.

On this evidence, it's easy to assume the majority of people who need an attorney make their choices based largely on advertising. Struggling firms may even find it soothing to blame these circumstances for their lack of success. But if the majority of clients really based their decisions on advertising, then those who spend the most on advertising would have a majority of the clients.

And they don't.

Compared to any individual firm with a more modest budget, big-spenders clearly dominate in market share. But when you compare the total number of clients they serve with the *combined* client base of smaller, non-advertising firms, suddenly these big-spenders are a much smaller part of a much bigger whole. In fact, they represent only a tiny percentage of the overall market.

So how do the overwhelming majority of people needing an attorney actually choose one? What allows smaller firms to stand their ground against big spenders?

Relationships and reputation.

Most firms understand that referrals are a product of relationships and reputation. Many firms understand that the majority of their business comes from referrals. Very few firms, however, have a systematic approach to increase these referrals by growing their relationships and enhancing their reputations. Instead, too many firms spend too much time, effort and money chasing the big-spenders in the one area they'll never be able to compete — traditional mass-media advertising.

Playing a game you can't win is never a good strategy. Most attorneys don't even want to play this game in the first place. But what is the alternative? Is there another way? Apart from traditional advertising, can a firm effectively market a plaintiffs civil trial practice?

The simple answer is — yes.

The Radius of Influence approach helps you increase your relationships and improve your reputation — without growing your advertising budget — to create a more successful, more sustainable and more significant legal practice.

IDEA # 2 | The Opinions of Others Drive Our Decisions

A social network is a social structure made of individuals (or organizations), which are connected by one or more specific types of interdependency, such as friendship, kinship, common interest, financial exchange, dislike, sexual relationships, or relationships of beliefs, knowledge or prestige. — *Wikipedia*

From the beginning of time, humans have come together to create various social networks. While the form may differ (ranging from families, neighborhoods, churches, schools, sports leagues, and workplaces), the function is always the same – connection. Connectedness makes us better, smarter, stronger and more able to accomplish the tasks we determine to undertake.

In the past, our networks were limited in terms of geography, point in time, and the ability of the individual to communicate to the masses. Communities were disconnected and too far apart to work together effectively. The amount of time it took to define and reach an audience was prohibitive. An average person was limited by resources and technology to speaking to small, localized groups. In a very real sense, the world was too big for ordinary individuals to make much of a difference.

Today, our world is much smaller.

New tools like email, websites, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc., allow us to increase our personal connections by minimizing the barrier-effects of distance, time and audience.

As we increasingly rely on these connections, many of our decisions, from simple things like hotel or restaurant choice to the complexities of selecting and hiring an attorney, are more likely to be influenced by advice from a diverse range of individuals in our own personal networks.

THE MOST TRUSTED FORMS OF ADVERTISING:

1. **Recommendations From Friends**
2. **Other People's Opinions Online**
3. **Company Website**
4. **Editorial Content (News Articles)**
5. **Brand Sponsorships**

Source: Nielsen Online Global Consumer Study, April 2009

This increased reliance on relationships and reputation is dramatically changing how firms approach marketing. Once-standard tools like phonebook ads, television and radio spots, and even search engine optimization and pay-per-click advertising, are being preempted by personal advice from each potential client's network of trusted sources.

The Radius of Influence approach teaches you to leverage today's tools and technology to become a trusted referral for a larger, more diverse group of people.

IDEA #3 | Successful Marketing Relies on Segmentation

For most of us, daily conversation means discussing different things with different people based on who they are, where they are and what types of interests we share. In marketing, however, we too often rely on a one-size-fits-all message, delivered over a handful of mediums to what we hope is a homogeneous audience.

This basic mistake is most apparent in online marketing where we tend to treat everyone as if they're the same. A single website delivers one message to all the people we're trying to reach. To "expand our impact" we simply broadcast the same material on Twittter, LinkedIn and Facebook. We would never bombard different people with the same message over and over again in our "real life" conversations, but we do it in our virtual conversations as a matter of practice.

Much of this disconnect has to do with the size of our intended audience. In "real life" we may have only a few dozen relationships. We can check-in, share a thought or message, hear a reply and move on. We can keep track of multiple ongoing conversations instinctively, all while treating people as the individuals they are. In marketing, however, we are trying to reach far greater numbers and must take a learned systematic approach to keep our conversations organized while maintaining their authenticity.

To successfully communicate with a more diverse and targeted audience and to effectively market to a larger base, we have to segment our conversations based on the ***people*** we're trying to reach, the ***message*** we're trying to communicate and the ***medium*** that bests connects the two.

The Radius of Influence approach gives you the strategic plan and practical steps you need to segment your relationships and reach your marketing goals.

In the following sections, we'll discover how to put these ideas into practice by exploring two key relationship categories that are critical to your firm's success.

Internal Relationships

Creating a Strong Foundation to Serve the Clients You Have

Your internal relationships — the way you function with your **partners**, **staff**, and **clients** — are the foundation of your firm's success. Without healthy relationships at the core, your office will be divided, distracted, and dysfunctional. With healthy relationships in these key areas, you will be able to connect, communicate and coordinate efforts to both serve the clients you have and secure the new clients you want and need to grow.

This section focuses on bringing each of these three core relationships into balance. Outlined below is a manageable program designed to help you: *Discover Your Purpose and Values; Engage and Align Your Staff; and Define and Deliver a Great Client Experience*. While each firm is unique in its structure, staff and standards, making sure you have the following pieces in place will lead you to success.

Some of your internal relationships may seem solid and secure, while others may have obvious gaps or more subtle opportunities for change. Consider each category closely and then use the practical steps provided to accomplish "quick wins" and build momentum in all three of your key internal relationships.

THE ROI FOUNDATION

Create a Client-Focused Culture

PARTNERS | Discover Your Purpose and Values

Healthy relationships among partners are at the center of every successful firm. From succession planning to client management strategies to outreach campaigns, the leaders of a firm must share similar values and develop agreed-upon goals. Partners must work together to align objectives, develop strategies and tactics, and focus efforts to achieve their vision.

To create a healthy working relationship among partners, every shareholder must agree on a common view of your firm's purpose and values.

Discover Your Firm's Purpose

Purpose is your reason for being. It's why your firm continues to work hard every day and do what's right. It gives you a competitive advantage because it helps keep everyone on the same page. Purpose drives everything.

Purpose can be a sophisticated philosophy, or it can be as simple as a few words, like — "We Help Others." Even a short phrase can give your firm direction, help keep you on track, or when things get hard, remind you why you got into this profession in the first place.

If your firm doesn't have a purpose statement, communicate that statement regularly and use it to guide your decision-making, it will be difficult to move forward. Purpose provides certainty, inspires confidence and reduces risk aversion and fear.

☐ *My firm has a clearly stated purpose that my partners agree with.*

ACTION STEP — Invest whatever time and resources necessary with your partners to first discover, then declare and, finally, deliver on your firm's purpose.

Determine Your Firm's Values

If your firm's purpose is your reason for *being* in business, your firm's values are your ethical foundation for *staying* in business. Values are powerful drivers of how we think and behave. They help us draw the line between good and bad and right and wrong. They tell us the shoulds and should nots, the musts and must nots, both in business and in life.

So what should your firm's values look like? Some firms rely on important-sounding values like "integrity" and "dignity" but may demonstrate neither when it comes to working with clients. Your firm's values should be a reflection of the character and actions of all of your firm's employees, both attorneys and staff. They should reflect what you value in your co-workers and what you hope your clients come to value in you.

If your firm values "honesty," then clients should expect you and your staff to be direct and straight-forward from the first time they meet you all the way through the resolution of their case. When there are difficulties, they can trust you won't exaggerate. When there is bad news, you won't hedge. And when there are hard questions, you won't avoid the call.

Values help us prioritize our actions and efforts. With everyone on the same page about values and the behavior that's built around them, your firm is in a significantly stronger position, culture-wise, to compete against firms without articulated values.

☐ *My firm has a list of values that are authentic to us and help define our culture.*

ACTION STEP — With a purpose statement in place, work with your partners to develop a list of values that will help shape the culture and actions of your firm.

STAFF | Engage and Align Your Staff

Whether working with clients, interacting with colleagues, or engaging the public, your staff represents your firm in ways that profoundly impact your professional reputation and financial bottom line. You should develop the skills to effectively execute your corporate strategies by communicating the vision, mission, and values of the firm, creating unity among the front-line staff and empowering them to evangelize your practice.

To engage and align your staff, every employee must understand your firm's service standards and what it means to be a part of a client-focused culture.

Establish Service Standards

Service standards are the expectations you set for every client interaction and the operational criteria that ensure consistent service delivery from your staff. A service standard of "courtesy" guides your staff to treat every client as if they were your most important client. A service standard of "efficiency" reminds your staff to constantly focus on new ways to improve all aspects of client service.

☐ *My firm has clear service standards that are known and practiced by staff.*

ACTION STEP — Brainstorm your firm's service standards with key staff members. If you have a defined purpose statement, explain how the service standards fulfill that purpose. Ask for staff input as to what kind of service your firm should deliver.

Encourage a Client-First Attitude

An attitude of "clients come first" helps unify your team to deliver a great client experience. Encouraging this kind of perspective may seem like a fairly mysterious process, but it can be done with proper modeling, a unified purpose and well-defined values. Remember partners can't say one thing and do another when it comes to putting clients first. If you expect staff to do whatever it takes to deliver a great experience, you have to demonstrate you're willing to do that too.

☐ *My firm has a "client-first" attitude, and it's something we measure regularly.*

ACTION STEP — Use these tips to help build your firm's client-first attitude:

» **Make it global**: For a client-first attitude to become a reality in a firm, everyone, including partners, must participate.

» **Make it measurable**: Create specific guidelines for putting clients first and make them a part of the performance assessment process.

» **Provide training and coaching**: Incorporate elements of "clients first" into staff training and performance coaching. Encourage peer-to-peer coaching.

» **Get feedback:** Foster a sense of ownership and expand creative input by allowing employees to contribute to improving the client experience.

» **Recognize and reward performance:** Build employee motivation through formal and informal reward and recognition programs.

CLIENTS | Define and Deliver a Great Client Experience

Your clients can represent either the greatest asset or the greatest liability to your personal and professional relationships and reputation. A single disgruntled client can make life miserable for you and your firm. A single satisfied client can become an enthusiastic evangelist and enhance your relationships and reputation throughout your community. Successful firms share their visions and values, properly manage expectations, maintain contacts and work to make fans of every client.

To define and deliver a great client experience, partners and staff must work together to identify key moments in client interaction, communicate effectively - especially during those milestone moments, gather feedback and create measurements to help their firms stay focused and ensure their future success.

Define Your "Great Client Experience"

Client experience encompasses every aspect of how a law firm presents itself to its clients and to the world. It's primarily about how well a firm takes care of clients through the course of their cases, but it's about everything before and after that, as well. Most importantly — it's essential for generating word-of-mouth. Client experience is how a firm presents itself even before a client walks in the door. It's how it expertly tracks the day-to-day details and effectively communicates the key points of every case. It's how it thinks about and manages every client interaction. It's how it keeps in touch with clients weeks, months and even years after litigation has been resolved. It's how it lives up to its own unifying purpose and well-defined values. Client experience is the emotional response clients have to any direct or indirect contact with your office. That response often becomes the primary basis for a client's opinion about your firm and the primary driver for whether they'll recommend you to colleagues, family and friends.

☐ *My firm knows what a "Great Client Experience" looks like.*

ACTION STEP — Have partners and staff look at your firm from a client's perspective. What is attractive or inspires confidence? What leaves you cold or wanting more? Have each person make a list of specific items that get their attention — good and bad. Together these help define your great client experience.

Identify Your "Moments Of Truth"

"Moments of Truth" are those times when a client consciously or subconsciously decides if you are worthy of a recommendation to friends, family or colleagues. These moments may include how a client first learns of your firm, the first interaction with a firm representative, the first interaction with an attorney, the call where you accept or decline the case, or your response to a variety of questions and issues.

The consistent point is that Moments of Truth are shaped by how well the firm manages the emotion of a client at any point of interaction. Your firm's goal must be that the client, or potential client, feels like he received the best possible service at each milestone event under the given circumstances. To know your Moments of Truth is to identify them, measure them, and then work to improve them.

☐ *My firm has identified at least 4 or more "Moments of Truth".*

ACTION STEP — Create a Client Journey Map that identifies key interactions a client has with your firm.

Communicate at Every Stage of the Client-Cycle

To provide a great client experience at every stage of the client-cycle, you must make efforts to openly and effectively communicate at every stage of the client-cycle. Creating a relationship before a case, continuing a relationship during a case, and staying in touch after a case all mean communicating regularly to grow and maintain the social capital you've worked hard to establish. Here are some important times in the client-firm relationship you may want to consider:

» **Pre-Client Period.** Whether intentional or not, you're already communicating to potential clients through your reputation, advertising, reports from former clients, etc.

» **Intake.** This is a time to set the tone and establish expectations. How your partners and staff communicate (or don't) during these first crucial meetings can make or break any future relationship.

» **Investigation & Negotiation.** Many cases begin with a lot of activity and then go through a "quiet period" while you work to resolve the case. Be sure to let the client know this beforehand and put systems in place to keep in touch during this important time.

» **Settlement.** Try to meet with clients personally to discuss any offer of settlement. Make sure to communicate how the funds will be allocated and deliver a clear position on whether you think it's a good offer and why.

» **Litigation.** Going to court comes with a lot of risks for both you and the client. Make sure that there are no "surprises" and that you are clearly communicating the potential risks as well as the rewards.

» **Post-Case Period.** After a case is resolved, there are fewer and fewer reasons to communicate. You've spent a lot of time and effort building this relationship. To maintain it, you have to be intentional about finding ways to stay in touch.

Remember that the client-cycle does not end when the case is resolved. In many ways this is when the most important part of your relationship begins. How your client feels about you after the case is the single largest driver of whether she will recommend you to others. To ensure future referrals, make sure you continue to communicate for many more years to come.

☐ My firm effectively communicates throughout the entire client-cycle.

ACTION STEP — Use these simple tools to help boost your client communications:

» **Phone Calls.** A simple "How's it going?" phone call can mean a lot to a client going through a difficult case. It's also a reminder that your firm is in the business of helping others.

» **Emails.** Whether sent individually, or as part of a larger "letter from a friend," email is a simple way to help you maintain a connection.

» **Newsletters/Magazines.** It takes considerable effort to design, print and distribute a periodical, but newsletters and magazines help move your client relationships from simple updates to education. This increases the likelihood your information (and brand) is studied and shared.

» **Cards and Small Gifts.** A personalized birthday or holiday card is a great way to "check-in" on clients throughout the year. Small gift cards to a coffee shop or restaurant are simple, unexpected ways to remind a client how much you value the relationship.

» **Events.** From a simple cocktail party for a select group of past clients to an annual picnic for a larger invited group, face-to-face events help cement long-term bonds.

Ask Two Key Questions to Gain Client Feedback

To fully understand and improve your client's experience, you must take the time to ask your clients how you're doing. At first, this may seem daunting, or even invasive, but it's not. Clients who respond to your request for feedback will appreciate the opportunity to share. The key is to keep your survey very, very short. The easiest way to do this is to ask just two questions.

Since most law firms largely depend on referrals, your first question should be: *"How likely are you to recommend us to friends, family or colleagues?"* The most effective way to ask this question is to make it quantitative and have your clients rank their responses from a low *"1 - Not at all"* to a high *"10 - Absolutely."*

Your second question should be open-ended and qualitative: *"Can you tell us why you answered that way?"* While more difficult to score, the answers to this powerful question will help you identify your firm's key strengths in service delivery, as well as the weak points that should be examined and addressed.

☐ My firm has a system in place to gather meaningful client feedback.

ACTION STEP — Create a simple system to gather feedback from clients. The Moments of Truth you've identified above are the most critical times in the client-firm relationship, so it's a good idea to gather feedback around those events. Here are five examples of when you can and should ask clients (or potential clients) for feedback to make sure you're providing a great client experience:

» About one week after accepting or declining a case
» Periodically during investigation and negotiation phase
» Periodically during case litigation phase
» About one week after case conclusion
» About six months after case conclusion

Turning Core Relationships into a Community of Referrers

By focusing on three core relationships, you position your firm for success against competitors who don't think about, don't care about, or simply don't execute a comprehensive plan to expand their relationships and reputation by creating a client-focused culture.

What is a "client-focused culture?"

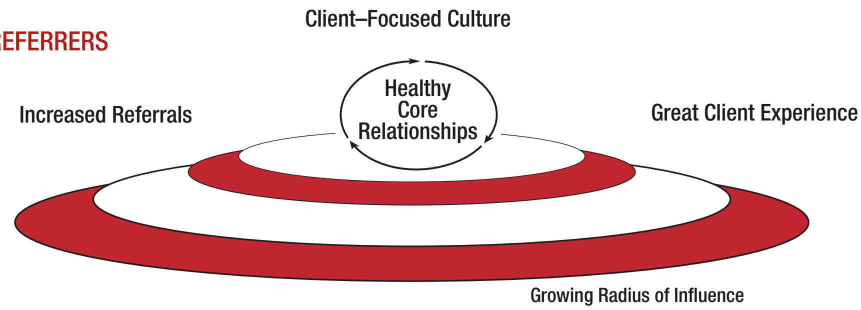
It's a culture where your partners are energized by your mission. They know what they're doing and why they're doing it. They not only look forward to coming to work every day but seek out ways to grow your firm's influence and impact. They serve as active leaders, fulfilling their professional missions to help those in need while creating better lives for themselves and their families.

It's a culture where your staff is engaged and aligned with your purpose and values. They are committed to offering new ideas and front-line support to provide your clients with the best service possible. They become enthusiastic evangelists of your mission and can easily share with family, friends, and colleagues why your firm is different and making a difference in the profession.

It's a culture where your clients feel connected. They understand the "big picture" of litigation and know where they are in the process. They enjoy regular communication with your firm and feel empowered when you ask for (and act on) their feedback. At every stage of the relationship, even after their cases are closed, they feel welcome at your firm and find it a place where their voices are heard, their causes considered and their friendships valued.

An office with a client-focused culture may sound like a great place to work — and it is — but it's more than that. It's your single greatest marketing advantage. In this kind of workplace each one of your internal relationships — your partners, your staff, and especially your clients — all serve as a significant source of new business. This creates more success, greater enthusiasm, and a

COMMUNITY OF REFERRERS



virtuous cycle that expands your reputation and turns your core relationships into a community of referrers.

Here's how it works. With your purposes, values, service and communication systems in place, your office becomes a dynamic hub of client-focused activity, creating an environment that delivers on its promises and potential. This kind of office creates a great client experience where everyone is excited about fulfilling a shared mission of service. Great client experience leads to increased referrals and increased evangelism from clients and staff, leading to even more referrals. These new clients create even more excitement, which makes for an even better experience, which leads to even more referrals, and so on...

All the while, your Radius of Influence grows.

So how do you get started building this community of referrers? If you've taken the action steps outlined above, you're already on your way. Keep working toward building healthy and balanced core relationships, and remember these five principles that will keep the cycle going and keep your community of referrers growing.

Educate

This is the first principle because it's the most important principle. In a survey, past clients say that what they want most from a law firm is education on issues important to them and their cases.

Communicate Consistently

Communicating consistently means connecting on a quarterly, monthly, weekly, or even daily basis with partners, staff and clients. However often you need to connect, make sure meaningful communications are a priority.

Put Someone in Charge

A facilitator is someone who encourages interaction with your community. He or she may also be in charge of finding, writing and sharing your educational materials. You may be the one who does this job to begin with, but make the effort to find someone who loves reaching out and let them connect.

Meet in Person

Face-to-face meetings are where real social capital is earned. When you give your clients the opportunity to meet one another, share their personal stories and talk about their experiences, you're building and reinforcing their bonds with your firm.

Participating is Marketing

Working to keep your community connected and strong may become your most effective form of marketing, because it's the most authentic and genuine and is based on the principles of education and sharing.

You will always have more clients (current and former) than you will ever have partners or staff, so your clients will always be your first and largest community of referrers. As you take steps to build your community, make sure you make your clients the focus of your efforts. This client-first attitude will serve not only to keep your office on mission, but will secure the loyalty of your most valuable evangelists.

With your Internal Relationships healthy, balanced and hard at work, now let's look at your External Relationships and learn how a few simple steps can supercharge your relationships and reputation and radically expand your Radius of Influence.

External Relationships

Expanding Your Influence to Secure the Clients You Want

Your external relationships — the way you function with your **professional peers**, **the media**, and **your community** — are the drivers for your firm's greatest potential growth. With healthy internal relationships your referrals will grow. With healthy external relationships your referrals can grow exponentially, because potential relationships outside your firm are unlimited. This section is about systematically creating a series of relationship-building campaigns. These campaigns allow you to *Prioritize your Relationships, Determine your Message and Medium, Develop Metrics and Set Goals* for your communications, *Define Roles* on your team, *Execute your Strategy*, and then assess your results so you can effectively *Adjust and Repeat* what's working to expand your success.

THE ROI CAMPAIGN

Create a Relationship-Building Campaign

STEP 1 | Prioritize Relationships

To successfully build relationships you must first consider who you want to connect with and why. Relationships outside of your firm generally fall into one of the following three categories. Before you launch a relationship building campaign, it's important to know your firm's strengths and weaknesses within each.

Professional Referral Network

As a trial attorney, you rely on professional colleagues to provide important insights, expert advice, professional counsel and valuable referrals throughout your legal career. You must intentionally work to create connections, build alliances, develop new networks, and maintain old relationships to ensure your status as a preferred referral from year to year.

Media

Today, "the media" could mean a single blogger or a national news bureau, with the greatest public impact often coming from the least likely of sources. In this age of real-time reporting, it's essential to connect and manage these important media relationships by offering expert advice in your specialized practice areas and positioning yourself as a local, national or even global spokesperson for your profession.

Local Community

Clients, contacts, and potential referrals surround every attorney. The difficulty is in connecting with and maintaining these important relationships. Focus your efforts on identifying and reaching individuals and groups around you that share common interests, causes or passions. When you communicate an authentic mission, you'll enhance your reputation and build a referral networking community in your own area and around the world.

To begin your campaign, start with one target audience. Choose it based on your firm's current needs. One way to define your needs is to investigate where your current clients are coming from and decide if you want to make a good referral source even better or if you're looking for a new source altogether. Whatever your criteria, identify a clear target in one of the three relationship categories and make it the focus of your campaign.

STEP 2 | Determine Appropriate Message

Once you've identified your relationship target, it's time to determine your message. In order to be effective, your communications must be specific to the audience you want to address.

Lasting relationships are built on common interests, mutual passions and shared experience, so you must choose what you're talking about based on who you're talking to. Remember that every one of your relationship categories won't be a part of every one of your conversations, and your professional experience and expertise should be only a small part of your message, if it's mentioned at all. Instead, use your communications to provide a window into what's important to you or promote a cause you believe in. Specific, authentic conversation is the best way to increase your relationships and enhance your reputation.

Establish Your Expertise

Successful firms are committed to developing and maintaining their attorneys' legal proficiency in their professional fields. Communicating your education, experience, knowledge, skill and demonstrated success in the law is fundamental to your communication efforts. But remember, while essential, this is a small part of your message. As a parent, spouse, volunteer, citizen, sports fan, etc., your conversations should represent a broad range of interests and activities.

Explain Your Motivations

Communicating your motivations beyond financial gain and professional recognition is essential to increasing your relationships and building your reputation. Your communication strategy should also include your honest concerns for public safety and desire for a more just society.

Express Your Personality

Your attitudes, interests, behavioral patterns and role in society are all building blocks of your personality. You must find ways to effectively communicate, demonstrating your consistency, authenticity, transparency and personal integrity. Be willing to share your determination, focus, humor and compassion to find common ground and connect with others.

Promote Your Passions

What are your hobbies and interests? What are the causes you're working to advance? Are you concerned about a local issue or involved in a national debate? Whether it's a sports team, a personal hobby, a matter of public policy or a charitable organization you believe in, communicating your passion helps build relationship bridges with others who share your interests.

Communicate Your Concern for Others

A desire to help change the world and leave a legacy is a powerful connector between individuals. Your communications should reveal your efforts to bring about your community's greater good. Demonstrate your interest in giving others a voice and your commitment to putting people before profits, and you will grow your reputation as someone who's concerned for others.

STEP 3 | Select a Suitable Medium

You've chosen your audience and the message. Now it's time to choose the channel that will most effectively connect the two.

Because different methods are more effective for different audiences, you can't rely on only one channel to deliver every message. An email to partners, a quick call to a client, an interview on national television, or a detailed post to an online social network are all examples of different ways to communicate your ideas, values, concerns and commitments. The message you bring and the audience who hears it are dramatically impacted by the method you use to share.

Online Channels

Your firm's website, legal and niche blogs, social networks and online communities are all technological tools to reach a broad variety of audiences using the internet. No single channel should be a "catch-all" for your entire communication campaign, but each can be an effective way to create a particular conversation or deliver a specific message. Identify the best channel for each kind of conversation you want to be a part of. Establish separate channels to communicate your professional experience, share your concerns and convictions, or carry out conversations on personal interests.

Offline Channels

Branded marketing and promotional materials, direct mail, media appearances, live events, educational experiences and membership organizations are just a few of the offline ways you can reach out to the world. As with online tools, each of these offline channels should be considered and chosen to deliver a specific message to a particular audience. Your printed material and logo may help establish a brand presence in your community, but a live event may be the only way to connect with a certain group or audience. Focus on individualizing your efforts and finding the best channel for each targeted message.

STEP 4 | Develop Metrics & Set Goals

With the basic structure (people, message and medium) of your campaign in place, you must now establish a baseline and determine your objectives. What is the current status of this relationship? How much of this audience are you already reaching? What do they already know about you? How will you measure success? Maybe you've chosen the "media" relationship category and want to focus on reporters in your local area. How many do you already know? How would you rate those relationships? How many are you hoping to reach?

Effective relationship marketing means knowing where you are and where you're headed. You must set clear goals of what success will look like and develop metrics and measurements that allow you to track your progress. A certain destination and accurate feedback help you focus your resources, reach your objectives and make sure you're receiving the value you expect from your efforts.

Focus on Clear Goals and Priorities

The foundation of effective marketing is to know where you're headed. Your destination determines your course of action, how you prioritize your efforts and the amount of resources you are willing to devote to a given activity or endeavor. Since relationships are your greatest goal, you must focus your marketing efforts on increasing both the quantity (number) and quality (value) of your ongoing interactions with others. Never lose sight of these basic targets.

Create Short, Mid and Long Term Milestones

To reach distant goals it's important to take small, consistent steps and establish milestones along the way. Track regular accomplishments like the number of hours you volunteer, the size of the audience you reach, or meeting an important goal like becoming a board member of a charitable cause you admire. Interim goals help you maintain focus and momentum as you strengthen your legal practice.

STEP 5 | Define Roles & Execute

The most compelling goals and strategies mean little unless you actually begin the work and ultimately accomplish what you've set out to do. You've chosen your market, message and medium. You've developed metrics and established clear goals. Now it's time to divide the assignments and get to work.

Know Who's in Charge

Successfully marketing your firm involves a coordinated effort across multiple lines of communication. A sustainable strategy often means you must divide your overall plan into smaller initiatives and delegate assignments to others, including partners, staff or contractors. Make sure every task has a leader who's accountable for its success – even if that means you have to oversee much of the initial work yourself.

Budget Your Time

Growing relationships to grow your practice can be a full-time, part-time or no-time endeavor. A full-time effort leaves you no time to practice law. No effort on your part will produce few, if any, results. Find a successful balance by setting aside a fixed amount of time for your marketing initiatives. Spend at least two hours each week building relationships and enhancing your professional reputation. After two months, evaluate your efforts and modify your plan.

Budget Your Money

Lasting relationships and a positive reputation are things that money can't buy. They do, however, require some financial investment. The cost of connection can be measured in things like staff salaries, contractor fees, marketing budgets and membership dues. Many costs can be lowered, and at times even eliminated, if you're focused and plan ahead. Set aside an amount you are willing to spend over a fixed period of time. Keep track of your expenses and maintain a clear understanding of what you're getting for your investment. Each time you reach a predetermined milestone, re-evaluate your plan to add to what's working and eliminate what's not.

STEP 6 | Adjust & Repeat

How do you turn a single marketing campaign into the ongoing momentum you need to build a more successful practice? You have to do more of the things that are working, fix the things that could be working better and eliminate the things that will never work and only waste your time. In short, you have to keep at it.

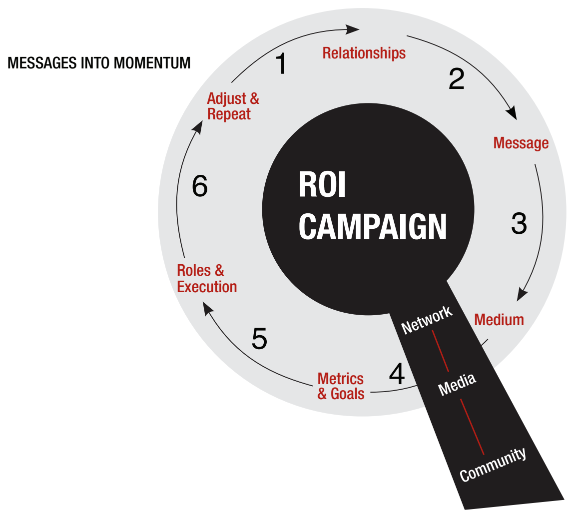
Be selective. Prioritize and focus. Begin with one relationship category, one message you want to deliver, and one method to deliver that communication. When you see consistent success in this one area, choose another audience, another message and another method of delivery and begin again.

Remember to maintain your relationships! Each campaign will cost you time, effort and money. Don't let all of that go to waste by ignoring relationships that you've worked hard to establish. As you consider next steps and future campaigns, always be sure to include plans to nurture the relationships you've already made.

Turning Messages into Momentum

Think about the relationships you care about or consider the most valuable in your own life. Consider the reputation you've established with your family, friends and professional peers. These things aren't accomplished easily or in a short period of time. Relationships and reputation are built on extended efforts and are a product of continuous investment and attention.

Creating relationships and enhancing your reputation to impact your bottom line are long-term commitments. There is no single initiative that will lead you to overnight success.



There is no "magic moment" that will signal you've finally arrived at your destination. Relationship success comes from a series of incremental steps and small accomplishments.

Each communication, each campaign, each initiative and activity are all steps toward success. Some of these efforts will lead to short-term gains. Others may lead to temporary set-backs. Don't get distracted by detractors or frustrated by failed attempts. Learn from your mistakes and apply them to your next efforts. The important thing is to keep working and moving forward.

The majority of your clients will come from referrals, and the majority of your referrals will come from your relationships and reputation. Most firms will not invest the time, money, or energy necessary to increase their referrals by growing their relationships and enhancing their reputations. Instead, most firms will waste what few resources they have competing with a handful of big-spenders as they chase the limited number of clients who can be swayed by traditional advertising.

Relationship building takes intentional action and determined effort. Some tasks can be outsourced or delegated, but you will not achieve substantial success unless you're willing to do much of the work yourself. But if you're one of the few willing to invest your time and effort into relationships, there is no limit to the healthy growth of your firm. Remember, in a world where decisions are dominated by the advice of others, your Radius of Influence is your ultimate competitive advantage.

Need More?

This document is not intended to be a complete resource. Instead, we see it as the beginning of a career-long conversation about how you can expand your relationships and enhance your reputation to increase referrals and create a more successful practice. If you're interested in learning more about how you can put the Radius of Influence approach to work and customize our solutions and strategies for your firm, here are two simple ways you can take the next step:

DO IT YOURSELF | radiusofinfluence.com

The Radius of Influence website provides resources and a forum to help you along your path as you implement this approach. Here, you'll find attorneys, marketers and technologists who all share a passionate belief that relationships and reputation are the ways to success.

To read informative posts, watch instructional videos, learn about upcoming webinars and live conferences and be a part of the conversation as we discover how to expand our Radius of Influence, together, please visit radiusofinfluence.com.

PROFESSIONAL SOLUTIONS | injuryboard.org

The Injury Board is a national network of plaintiffs trial attorneys committed to a more constructive way of marketing their skills and advocating for the public. Members work with a team of experienced management and marketing professionals to develop a customized strategy to fully integrate these concepts into their firms.

Membership includes personalized consultation and assessments, strategic planning, access to online technology and offline products and tools, as well as educational environments and networking opportunities all designed to put the Radius of Influence approach to work for you and your firm and help you gain an advantage on your competition. For more information or to apply for membership, please visit injuryboard.org.

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