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Merenda's Marketing Tips: Three Low-Cost Ideas for Elder Law Attorneys

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One of the requests I hear from time to time goes something like this: "Never mind the philosophy, never mind the talk about 'branding' and 'centers of influence' and 'the buying experience' — just give me three down-and-dirty, low cost, anyone-can-do-it marketing tips for elder law attorneys."

Okay, here we go:

- Every Monday morning have your assistant put a stack of 50 fold-over note cards on your desk. Your task is to send out all 50 cards that week, ten per day.

You should send the cards out to anyone and everyone. To fellow professionals and referral sources, to your clients, to old clients who haven't heard from you in years, to prospective clients, to the person you saw in the elevator last week, to your minister or priest, to anyone you'd like to meet, to anyone you have recently met.

Go and buy a copy of your local newspaper (same with magazines). Usually in the Business section there is a page or so devoted to announcements — who has been appointed, who has been promoted, who received an award, who attended an event, etc. Send every one of them a note.

Your note might say: "Dear Joe, I've heard a lot about you. Let's have lunch," "Congratulations on your promotion!" or simply, "For some reason I was thinking of you today -- hope all is going well!"

Back in the 1960s there was a car salesman in Detroit who was something of legend in the world of automobile sales. One year he made \$200,000 selling cars, at a time when the chairman of General Motors was making a salary of \$125,000.

When interviewed about his outstanding success, very little about him seemed remarkable. One of his habits seemed strange, however. Every month he sent out 13,000 postcards. Each one said the same thing: "I like you" and bore his signature. Asked why he did this, he replied, "I just want folks to know I like 'em."

If you send out 50 cards a week as a matter of habit, you will send out 2,600 cards per year. That's 2,600 personal touches that will give someone an overwhelming positive impression of you. Many will mention it or show it to someone else. You do the math.

Weekly cost: about \$25 in cards and postage.

- Have a welcome sign in your lobby that welcomes each person by name. In the field of elder law, you are in the relationship business! And, your relationship with your clients and potential clients begins in earnest when they step in your door. (If there

is a confidentiality issue, place the sign in the conference room where you will meet with the client.)

A sign welcoming each visitor to your office demonstrates in a very personal way the importance you place on your relationship with that person, your attention to detail, and the courtesy each person can expect from your organization.

Smart Marketing welcomes each of its visitors with this simple sign that can be purchased at most office-supply stores for less than \$85. Hundreds of times every year we hear, "That sign makes me feel so special." We have had clients who have explained that they chose us over the competition because of the "special" treatment and attention they received from us.

For a few dollars and very little effort, you can demonstrate your commitment from the very first moment and for each and every visit thereafter.

Cost: \$85 plus some pennies for paper and ink.

Print a gift certificate. Make sure it's graphically impressive. Many of my clients use one that looks like a dollar bill. Make it in any denomination you want, say \$500. The gift certificate entitles the potential client to a one-hour planning session (or consultation, or evaluation).

Whenever the opportunity arises — in a seminar, at a networking event, or simply when you meet a prospect — hand out a gift certificate. However, there must be two things you can write in on the certificate: the person's name (the certificate is non-transferable), and an expiration date (usually in three weeks), because you are giving another workshop next month and all your available consultations will soon be filled up.

The gift certificate accomplishes a number of things. First, one of the biggest challenges of marketing elder law is that the service is invisible and intangible. The gift certificate gives form to something you do, something you offer.

Another big problem in marketing elder law services is procrastination on the part of the client. The gift certificate creates a perceived shortage (of your time) and a sense of urgency (they have to do it in the next three weeks). It capitalizes on those two great human motivators, fear — "I might lose out if I don't make the appointment" -- and greed — "I can get a \$500 consultation for no cost."

Finally the certificate helps you create an emotional bond that is far more important than any demonstration of expertise. People do not perceive the certificate as a sales effort. They perceive it as a gift.

Cost (200 gift certificates, four-color, commercially printed): \$68.

There you go. Down and dirty. Hands on. Have fun.

Author Mark Merenda founded Smart Marketing in 1994. Since that time he has built it into one of the country's premier marketing firms for financial professionals. ElderLawAnswers members and site visitors receive a 33 percent discount on personalized marketing consulting. For more, [click here](#). Mr. Merenda can be contacted by telephone at (239) 403-7755 or by email: mark@smartmarketingnow.com. The company's Web site is www.smartmarketingnow.com

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