

10 Marketing Tips From A Young Partner Perspective

Law360, New York --

I am 31 years old and honored to be the youngest partner ever at my law firm. I started practicing law at the age of 23 and am now in my eighth year as a trial attorney. I have been practicing law for more than 2,500 days, which means that for the last 60,000 hours of my life there has not been a single hour that has gone by in which I have not thought about ... marketing.

Marketing success is not determined by cramming for an exam, it is not a single book that can be read, or a passionate lecture that can be transformative; marketing is a full-time job. No one ever told you in law school that once you received the highly coveted associate job in a big firm, that to really succeed at that job and climb the ranks quickly you need to take on a second job — marketing.



Richard Segal

I was fortunate enough to have senior named partners in my firm stress that the lifeblood of achieving success as an attorney is mastering the law and mastering the market. As someone fairly young and still continuing to build his book of business, I hope that this advice will resonate for those looking to go to market today. Here are 10 tips I have learned along the way. Use this to build your roadmap and stick to it. Like any roadmap, if you hit a dead-end or a bump in the road, regroup, analyze and rebuild.

1) Keep what works for you. — Don't try to emulate someone else's marketing path or success. Recognize their path, heed their advice, and incorporate what works naturally for you.

2) Do what comes naturally. — Organic foods are currently selling well because humans are wired to like "natural" products. It is no different in marketing. If you don't naturally like giving speeches, then write articles. Start off with what comes naturally for you, but then don't be afraid to push yourself outside of the norm, thereby eventually turning your weaknesses into a pursuit that feels more natural. When it feels natural you will enjoy it more and you will subconsciously do it more often.

3) Find a place where your story will be well received. — Figure out what story you are going to tell. By way of example, I do almost all of my marketing exclusively in Miami Beach, Florida. I joined the Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce early in my career and quite frankly did not really know how to "work the room." My grandparents moved to Miami Beach in 1948. My grandfather was a real estate agent and investor — he either sold you your house or invested with you. My father was born in Miami Beach's well-

known [Mount Sinai Medical Center](#). I was born in Mount Sinai. And my newborn son was just born in Mount Sinai. Starting to see my story? While I didn't know at first how to work the room, if I could do nothing more than just tell people about my roots in Miami Beach, I was connecting. Eventually, the misses turned into home-runs, and I was appointed by the chairman of the Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce to sit on the executive board, hand-selected to sit on the membership board of Mount Sinai, and recently appointed by the mayor to sit on an advisory board. The point is that your story is what will bring you to success. A good story in the wrong place is just as good as sitting at your desk all day.

4) Trial and error. — Your story and networking in general has to be trial with a lot of error. Start off with a wide reach and try many networking groups and activities. Take your internal temperature after each event. If you walk away in a pleasant mood, it is much more likely that when you were mingling that night you were engaging and likeable. If you walk away feeling drained it is likely that the networking you did that night was not as fruitful. When we are at ease and happy, we are naturally much more charismatic. People do business with people they find enjoyable.

5) Light up the room. — This is easier said than done, but the quicker you can make it feel natural, the quicker you will be climbing the marketing ranks. Walk into the room and be bold (not bombastic). Light up the room, don't just be one light among many. It is your time to shine.

6) Catch, don't pitch. — It is important to shine but not sell. The average person has little appetite for you to make your sales pitch. Pretend you are a therapist. Ask insightful, guiding questions and always listen. Garner as much knowledge about the person in front of you as you can — catch. Then, once you have recognized a common ground or a need that you can assist with, explain how you could help — disguised pitch.

7) Professional media, not social media. — Obtaining a client or referral source in the legal realm requires others to respect and trust you — a tweet or poke will not build that. Make sure you are on [LinkedIn](#) — a must. Clients look at LinkedIn to review your credentials other than those listed on your firm website. Don't forget the power of direct emails and text messages. Saying happy birthday or congrats on a big win in direct emails or texts can go a long way and keep you relevant in the mind of the receiver. If you are inclined to utilize other social media, use it sparingly and smartly — share relevant articles about your profession.

8) Always praise others, let others speak your praise. — When you are in a networking situation where you know other colleagues in the room, always speak highly of them and praise their accomplishments. It is an endearing quality, and immediately makes the person you are speaking to let their wall down and not see you as the pitcher. Remember, if you praise others they will find out and likely praise you in return.

9) Give, don't seek. — Equally important is to ask people how you can help them or give them a referral. You don't have to just give referrals, give your time also. When you join an organization, lend your time and eventually obtain a leadership position. Those around you will be impressed that you devote your time for the benefit of an organization and will see you in an authoritative and professional role. Every fruitful marketing relationship starts off by giving. The return will inevitably come.

10) Master the law. — Remember, marketing is your second job. If you do not master your first job — the law — then you have no skills to market. Another form of marketing is mastering what you do. Obtaining successful outcomes for clients will not only be extremely rewarding and fulfilling, but will also prove to be a great source of recurring business for you.

If your firm offers marketing dollars, use every penny (and ask for more). Spend your money wisely and cast a wide net to start, as you are not ready to use just one rod to catch the big fish. Said differently, don't spend your whole budget on one table at an event or one really expensive marketing dinner. Join many different groups and take many people out to business lunches or coffee. Then, inevitably find the place where your story is being received well and where you are happiest. If your firm does not provide marketing dollars, invest in yourself. You are your own business within your firm. Eventually it will not be scary to invest in yourself, it will be second nature and provide lucrative returns.

Rainmaking Is within your reach — go get it!

—By Richard I. Segal, [Kluger Kaplan Silverman Katzen & Levine PL](#)

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