



LACBA

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BRINGING THE CLIENT IN THE DOOR

Sponsored by:

The President's Advisory Committee on
Women in the Legal Profession

and

The Small Firms and Sole Practitioners
Section

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What do clients look for when deciding to select outside counsel?

- › Is it rates?
- › Is it relationship?
- › Is it knowledge of the industry?
- › Is it a bet-the-company case?
- › Is there a geographic need? Global need?



What keeps clients awake at night?

- Being in the dark
 - Something being held back by outside counsel
 - Counsel not fully paying attention to what's going on
- Counsel not reporting regularly so client knows what's going on
 - Pros and Cons of case
 - What do experts say?
 - Can client assist in locating an expert?
 - Wants to make independent evaluation
 - Want to work as team and be collaborative



What should counsel do?

- Ensure transparency and accuracy in communications with client
- Understand and embrace the philosophy of the client
- Know the client's goal
- Avoid surprises re case posture, budgets, change in direction of case or evaluation
- Create a cushion of time to allow client to report internally and get necessary approvals



How do you develop your personal brand?

- How do you become the go-to person so that the clients call when they have a need?
- Become “The Trusted Advisor”
 - There are times when you have to say we can’t do this, but I will give you 2-3 solid referrals



What should you do internally to develop your brand?

- Be good at what you're doing
- Develop a specialty (e.g., trial attorney)
 - Watch trials, go to trial skills courses
 - Write articles; blog posts; look for speaking engagements
- Find allies to help you



What should management do to help you?

- Look for opportunities for less experienced lawyers (depos, law and motion, trial)
 - Firms with blended rates
 - Goal – train next generation of trial attorneys
 - Experienced attorney – write time off
 - Give less experienced attorneys opportunity do part of trial or transaction to learn
- Address resistance by more experienced attorneys
- Address client resistance



What do less experienced lawyers need to do to get the experience they need?

- Ask
- Ally
- Action Plan
 - Make a compelling business argument that this makes sense to the partner
 - Translates to non-litigation as well
- Adaptable



How do less experienced lawyers build client relationships?

- Some clients hire attorneys not firms
- Client contact
 - Conferences
- Development of client relationship
 - Being there for client is critical
 - Understand the business concerns and needs of the company outside of the litigation or deal at hand



How does being a woman impact bringing the client in the door?

- It has evolved as more women have been promoted at the clients
 - Used to be male activities (golf, bars, clubs), but no longer
- Clients look for talent; not necessarily gender
- Clients have diversity and inclusion guidelines
- Firms should build office to reflect their communities – so looks like Greater Los Angeles area
- Companies merge and change as a result
- Trial teams may be dictated by client due to nature of the litigation
- You want jury to respond to your arguments – consider diversity in that context



QUESTIONS?

