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Who are you, what do you want and how do you make it happen?

Building your brand, networking and keeping up

By Robert T. Simon

Be who you want others to remember you as. If you want to be the soft-tissue slip-and-fall lawyer for cases at uninsured supermarkets, go for it! If not, pick something good! I have been preaching specialization and being in a niche for almost a decade. It can be a practice area, a region, a specific type of injury, or all of the above. The best part is *you get to decide*. You want to live by the beach and be the negligent security gal for all the drunk tourists getting beat to a pulp? Or in Silicon Valley suing tech companies in their own back yard? The point is, the choice is really yours.

But here is the biggest thing with building your brand: When people think of you, they should think of your brand. They should know what you do. And know how to get a hold of you. Far too often I get a DM from someone looking for advice on growing grassroots referrals. I go to their profile. Private. I accept the friend request and their profile does not list what they do, or where they practice. I then have to Google to find out where in the world this person is, and what type of law they practice. Do not make this mistake. All this needs to be front and center in your social media profile, on your business cards, and on any swag in the future.

Also use an email domain or a social handle that is super easy to remember. We re-branded everything from @thesimonawlawgroup emails to @justiceteam emails. Very easy to remember. People know generally what we do with just the email. If you have to spell out your email over and over again, phonetically, not good. Not good.

Digital networking

This is a term I use for using social networks to expand your network and footprint. "Sliding into DMs" is very easy. Search for mentors, referral partners, etc., by just surfing social media. People would be shocked how often people respond and want to help. I personally open all of mine and it leads to me helping folks, or doing their podcast, or free advice, whatever. And if they do not respond? So what? Shoot your shot! Many people I consider dear friends I have never personally met. We DM all the time. Talk about cases. Life. And when we see each other at conferences, it is big hugs and laughs. No easier time than now to build your community, all digitally.

Listservs. They still hold massive value. But in order to use them, you have to be active. Help people. Do it selflessly. You get referrals in return. Go join ones outside your practice area. Be the only trucking lawyer in an employment listserv. Go get on another states' trial bar listervs and be the go-to for questions in your state. These all lead to trust, then referrals.

Conference networking

Like anything I have listed above, do these with intent. Why are you going? Who are you looking to talk to? For what purpose? I used to, and still do now, create look books of folks going and who I want to meet. Figure out commonalities. I am at conferences to make relationships with people I think would be good to be in our circles at my firm, and me personally. If you do not go to conferences with a plan, you are throwing your money away. You can certainly have fun at them, but make it strategic fun.

Intermediary referral sources

I talk a lot on this topic and how to get buckets of referrals from one person or group. Think about your law-school mates. They all should be getting texts or emails from you saying you pay referrals and you specialize in whatever you like. If you are a personal-injury lawyer, you should be friends with doctors, hospital administrators, chiropractors and insurance agents. They see injured folks that need help all the time. If you are doing workers' comp, you should be best friends with the local union.

Referring cases

Finding the best lawyer for your case is hard. And tracking the status of that case can be more difficult. Full disclosure, Attorney Share, is a product I founded. It is a product to open the rolodex of trusted and vetted lawyers, make them easy to find, and easy to get your cases to them. All deals and statuses tracked in one place. It will not matter the case-management system, if any, you are on, or the one that the attorney who picks up your case is on. But I do stress the importance of using a case-management system. As you grow your referral network, a lot more will be automated. You will get clients and leads, and you can push them into your case-management system, which will auto-push into Attorney Share. You need your digital warehouse.

Whether it is Clio, Casepeer, MyCase, Filevine, Smokeball, Litify, Gladiate, Smart Advocate or Lawmatics, pick the one that works best for you and what you do. My hope is being on a case-management system that syncs with Attorney Share will solve a lot of pain points for lawyers. Whether you are looking for cases in your niche and do not want to, nor have the money to, compete in market spend, or you want to generate leads outside your practice area or jurisdiction to generate more revenue, it is a protection for all. I have been on both sides of the coin personally.

Currently, I generate almost all our firm's business by the use of personal relationships and social media. Calendar-year 2024 will be the first time we ever start marketing directly to the consumer. Mostly because we now have the back end and the product to place and track everything.

Robert T. Simon is co-founder of the Simon Law Group *and acts as the primary trial attorney. He is a proud member of ABOTA, CAALA, CAOC, CASD and OCTLA, is a past president and active board member of Los Angeles Trial Lawyers' Charities.*


Simon

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