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## How Attorneys Can Spread the Word That They Are Open for Business

BY ROSS GOREN

One of the toughest tasks for a young lawyer is trying to increase your exposure and build your network and your book of business. Anyone can collect business cards and connect on LinkedIn, but networking is more than that. Networking is about connecting with people and creating actual relationships. Just like Rome—meaningful networks are not built in a day. Thankfully, you already have a network to build off of, which is composed of family, friends, peers from law school, former co-workers and even acquaintances. Now it is time to grow and strengthen your network. For lawyers, networks grow by increasing your exposure. But as a young lawyer, how do you go about that?

There are many talented attorneys in our country. In fact, the number of “active attorneys” in the United States has increased by 15% over the past 10 years, according to the American Bar Association’s National Lawyer Population Survey. That means there are about 1.3 million lawyers. So how do you stand out in that field? One key is remembering that this is a relationship busi-

ness. But you can’t build that relationship without getting your name out to potential clients. Whether or not you have a marketing department (which can provide a lot of help and support) where you work, you still need to be your own best marketer and networker.

### WORD-OF-MOUTH MARKETING

As lawyers, we provide a service to our clients. Clients will talk and share their experiences. They will share both positive and negative experiences. Great results and exceptional work can and will lead to word-of-mouth referrals, which is why word-of-mouth marketing is crucial to building a network. This type of marketing is exactly what it sounds like—information from one person to another based on recommendations. For an attorney providing a service, it is one of the premier ways to increase your exposure and build your contacts because it comes with a sense of trust. Clients want to know that they are in good hands and that their interests are as important to you as they are to them. If you were looking for a doctor to perform surgery, you would ask people you know and trust who have had a similar



Ross Goren of Weber Gallagher Simpson Stapleton Fires & Newby.

surgery. That would mean much more to you than an advertisement or a post on social media. We also live in an era where people are very aware of how they are being treated. You may be a top-notch bankruptcy attorney, but if you are rude and abrasive, not everyone will put up with that today. Be polite and respectful, work hard, provide the best services and be proactive and responsive to your clients and their needs. No one wants a reputation of being a good attorney, but impossible to reach by email or phone. Care about your clients’ businesses and future plans. And never be condescending. Client interviewers and those who do client surveys will often say that professionals who treat them with respect are highly

valued. Results matter, but the way a client or potential client is treated matters, too.

## ENHANCE YOUR DIGITAL PRESENCE

Social networking can help you reach new groups of people with ease and also let potential clients reach you. With social media platforms like LinkedIn, Twitter and the like, you can increase your digital presence easily and reach hundreds, even thousands, of potential clients in the process. Increase digital presence by posting about topics that you are interested in and are relevant in your area of law. People like to know that you are thinking about their business because you want success for them. If you see an article of interest to a client or potential client, post it or send it with a personal email. Use hashtags to increase the reach of your posts. Yes, I really suggested utilizing hashtags. Write an article, host a webinar or even do a podcast. If you are asked to give a presentation, try to make that happen and then post it online. Join relevant online groups and communities and post in them. These are all simple ways that you can expand your network of people and connect with an enhanced field of possible clients.

## SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

Publishing your work and participating in speaking engagements will not only help boost your credibility but also connect you with potential clients. There are attorneys who have found their best clients by that client approaching the attorney after he speaks on a panel. Publishing and

speaking allows you to leverage your expertise for networking. Therefore, when publishing or speaking, the focus should be on starting a conversation and generating buzz, not speaking at individuals. Focus on personal touches, such as replying to comments, inviting any readers to contact you directly and dedicating time after a speaking engagement to further connect with the audience whether in person, by email or phone. Place your business cards and place them in the back of the room so members of the audience can pick them up. Publish wherever and whenever you can whether it is digital or print—blog posts, articles in trade journals, your firm’s website and newsletters. Offer to speak to business groups or at conferences, participate in a webinar or host a workshop. Get your name out there and establish yourself as the knowledgeable attorney in your field. Lecture at classes or teach a class. That also looks impressive on your website bio page.

## PROFESSIONAL/VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATIONS

Engage with an organization that interests you—whether it is a professional organization or a volunteer organization that supports a cause that is meaningful to you. These types of organizations are an easy way to meet people in an industry that appeals to you and potentially your practice area. I strongly suggest joining one that focuses on an area that interests you because if you are connected to the mission of that organization it will be that much easier to create a meaningful bond with other mem-

bers. You will also be more inclined to attend the meetings and become more involved with the leadership. Being involved in an organization also can lead to writing and speaking opportunities.

Developing a meaningful network is a life-long process, but the first steps are generally the hardest.

## REMEMBER YOUR WEBSITE BIO

Most practices have websites and the most trafficked and looked at items on those sites are attorney bios. Keep yours fresh and updated. If someone looks at a bio and your last speaking engagement was during the turn of the century, you need to think about how that looks to your readers. Make sure your bio has new material that may include a winning case (with client permission), a blog post or article, speaking engagements and even what you do that gives back to the community. You might be surprised what it is that makes a potential client stop and give you a call.

*Ross Goren is an associate at Weber Gallagher Simpson Stapleton Fires & Newby where he concentrates his practice on defending employers and insurance companies in workers’ compensation matters. Goren counsels various businesses and insurance companies on managing workers’ compensation risk, as well as representing them in the course of workers’ compensation litigation. He may be reached at [rgoren@wglaw.com](mailto:rgoren@wglaw.com).*