

# Getting the Word Out

For most people, the word “marketing” means one thing: advertising. It means “getting the word out” about a company’s important news – whether it’s a big sale, the release of a new product, or enhancements of current ones – to attract customers. In the law firm context, it’s about bringing in new clients – and keeping your current ones – by spotlighting the firm’s services and the savvy professionals who deliver them.

Sounds easy, right? Of course, it isn’t. Successful marketing initiatives require long-term strategic planning, the cultivation of creative ideas, buy-in from all key stakeholders, and – surprise! – acceptance of the fact that “marketing” is not just “advertising.” Marketing is a much more comprehensive concept that comprises not only advertising, but also more esoteric elements such as client relationship management, business development, and branding. In fact, the American Marketing Association (AMA) recently redefined marketing as “the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large.”

Whew, that’s a mouthful. (Thanks, AMA, it’s all *really* clear now.) Marketing is obviously a complicated concept, so it’s a good thing you can let your firm’s marketing department handle all of that! Oh wait, that’s right ... many members of the Association of Legal Administrators (ALA) work in small to mid-sized law firms that don’t have full-fledged marketing departments, or even dedicated marketing professionals on staff. And that means – again, surprise! – *you*, the principal administrator, *are* the marketing department. Congratulations!

As a legal professional, you are responsible for (or at least involved with) many of the programs and processes that drive your law firm or legal department’s success, and that increasingly includes marketing. During the current economic downturn, it’s likely that more of your colleagues – maybe even your managing partners – are asking *you*, “What are we doing to make sure our business stays strong? What’s our plan?” The good news: Successful marketing strategies and tactics can be employed – even with limited budgets, which are increasingly common during these tough economic times – and these strategies and tactics may be easier to accomplish than you realize.

This Law Firm Marketing-themed issue of *Legal Management* features a variety of articles to educate you about contemporary issues related to law firm marketing. Need a step-by-step approach to creating a firm-wide strategic marketing action plan? We’ve got that. (See page 38.) Want four innovative ways to take your existing marketing approaches to the next level? We’ve got that, too. (See page 32). And our cover story by marketing guru Jay Jaffe (see page 24) reminds you that today’s economic uncertainties actually represent an opportunity for your organization to expand and enhance its marketing activities.

To conclude, I need to “get the word out,” and thus I have a short marketing message for you: In 2009, *Legal Management* is expanding to 10 issues! Look for the first issue of your professional journal’s more ambitious annual schedule to hit your mailbox in early February 2009. If you would like a “sneak peek” at what we have planned editorially for the journal’s 10 issues in the new year, checkout the Editorial Calendar on ALA’s Web site: [www.alanet.org/publications/PDF/LegalMgt-2009EdCal.pdf](http://www.alanet.org/publications/PDF/LegalMgt-2009EdCal.pdf).




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