

BUSINESS & CAREERS

Build marketing strategy groundwork early in career



THE COACH

**GARY
MITCHELL**

I am often asked when giving presentations on lawyer marketing, what should associates be doing to build for the future and lay the ground work for a successful career? There are many things junior associates can start to do to speed up the partner track and build your own book of business.

Target market research

Early on I advise lawyers to start researching their target market. So first identify who it is you want to serve and then begin to learn everything you can about them, their business, what events they attend and why, and what they read and why? From there you will know how to reach your target market(s) and can begin to plan out your marketing efforts. In other words, which associations should you belong to? Which events should you focus your networking efforts on, and which publications should you target to write for. If you are not focused and strategic with these efforts then you are wasting your time.

External profile raising

Armed with the information you know about your target market, join associations that they belong to. Try to take on leadership roles within those associations and approach the leadership of these associations to speak at some of their events and begin to raise your profile. Also approach the publications that they read and see about submitting an article. Once you establish a relationship with the editor, see about contributing on a regular basis. If you think you are too junior, or lack the expertise to be published or speak at events, approach a more senior member of your team to co-author or co-present. It's never too early to start building your reputation as someone with valuable knowledge.

Internal relationship building

There is a lot you can do internally as well. The first thing is to raise your profile among the partnership. Visit your partners on a regular basis and find out files they are working on. They are busy with their own practice so they are not likely to be thinking about yours. Get some face time. One of my past clients said that when he was an associate he made sure to do this every day and it got to the point where his partners would throw him a file just to get rid of him — whatever works right? So set aside a little time every day to walk through your office and when you see a door open, go in and find out what they are working on. Don't just ask for work, appear interested and curious about what

they are doing. This will likely lead to more work coming from internal sources.

Get to know current clients better

Your current clients could be a great source of additional work, and if you are not in regular communication with them, you may miss an opportunity. Call them up and ask to meet at their place of business, find out everything you can about what is going on, what their plans are for the future, their challenges, etc. Learning this information can often lead to more and greater opportunities to serve your clients.

I told a junior associate who was doing a regular check-in call with his client (a good habit to get into), when he learned about a very large and immediate need. So when he finished the call he went to see his managing partner. Armed with this new information, the managing partner went to see the client. Twenty minutes later he was standing in the boardroom of the client. And when that managing partner left the client boardroom, he had a very large cheque as a retainer for this new very large file. That highlights the importance and role you as a junior can play at your firm.

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Facebook

I have written about this before, but one very valuable approach in using Facebook is to search for all of your law school buddies and befriend them. As you go through your careers most are very likely to move around and you never know when they might land in-house or at a non-competing or even better, referral firm.

LinkedIn

As you go through your career, you should always be looking to expand your network on LinkedIn. Every time you get a new

client, add them. When you meet other colleagues at professional events invite them to join your network. Once you have done a great job for a client, ask them to recommend you there. There is one lawyer I know of in Texas with over 500 people in his network and 50 recommendations about his work. This goes so much farther in impressing potential clients than your law firm website because third party endorsements are some of the most powerful marketing materials you can leverage.

If you follow this advice starting at third year call, once you get on the partner track you will be able to look at your practice with pride, knowing that you have built a solid foundation for your marketing and business development efforts. In addition, you won't have the pressure to suddenly become a rainmaker to make partner. ■

Gary Mitchell is the chief client development coach at GEM Communications Inc. He works with lawyers helping them build their businesses.



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JUDICIAL VACANCY ONTARIO COURT OF JUSTICE BARRIE / SIMCOE-MUSKOKA AREA

The Judicial Appointments Advisory Committee advises the Attorney General of Ontario on the appointment of Judges to the Ontario Court of Justice, and invites applications for a judicial position in the Barrie / Simcoe-Muskoka area.

This appointment, while primarily a criminal law position, may also involve presiding over family law matters and could also involve travel within or beyond the regional boundaries as assigned by the Regional Senior Justice and/or the Chief Justice.

The minimum requirement to apply to be a Judge in the Ontario Court of Justice is **ten years completed** membership as a barrister and solicitor at the Bar of one of the Provinces or Territories of Canada.

All candidates must apply either by submitting 14 copies of the **current** (Jan 2011) completed Judicial Candidate Information Form in the first instance or by a short letter (14 copies) if the current form has been submitted within the **previous 12 months**. **Should you wish to change any information in your application, you must send in 14 copies of a fully revised Judicial Candidate Information Form.**

If you wish to apply and need a current Judicial Candidate Information Form, or if you would like further information, please contact:

Judicial Appointments Advisory Committee
Tel: (416) 326-4060. Fax: (416) 212-7316
Website: www.ontariocourts.on.ca/jaac/en/

All applications, either sent by courier, mail or hand delivery, **must** be sent to:

Judicial Appointments Advisory Committee
c/o Ministry of Government Services Mail Delivery
77 Wellesley Street West, Room M2B-88
Macdonald Block, Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N3

Applications must be on the current prescribed form and must be **TYPEWRITTEN** or **COMPUTER GENERATED** and **RECEIVED BY 4:30 p.m. on Friday, April 15, 2011**. **CANDIDATES ARE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE 14 COPIES OF THEIR APPLICATION FORM OR LETTER**. A Fax copy will be accepted only if 14 copies of the application or letter are sent concurrently by overnight courier. Applications received after this date **WILL NOT** be considered.

The Judiciary of the Ontario Court of Justice should reasonably reflect the diversity of the population it serves. Applications from members of equality-seeking groups are encouraged.