

# 61 IDEAS FOR MARKETING YOUR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

BY DON PHIN, ESQ.



**S**o, you want to build long-term relationships with successful clients, who bring you a profitable and enjoyable workload. Challenge is, the competition is tough! Many of your competitors have:

- Large staffs...you do not.
- Full time marketing directors...you do not.
- Dozens of products that they license and sell...you do not.
- A nationwide presence...you do not.
- Extensive client resources...you do not.
- Political connections in the community...you do not.



...if that's the case, how do you intend to *grow your business* facing this kind of competition?

In **Guerrilla Marketing Attack for Attorneys**, authors Jay Levinson and Ray Lynch identify the challenge facing all professional practices:

“All around you enemies are vying for the same bounty. They're out to get your clients and your prospects...your enemies mean business - YOUR business, YOUR potential clients. Many of them can run more ads...they can afford more brochures, more public relation services, more materials to mail to more people than you'll ever reach. They can outspend you in every marketing area that money can buy. But they can't outspend you in marketing arenas that money CAN'T buy. And they can't always outthink you. If you put up the time, energy and imagination, you can gain the same marketing leverage that many of your enemies did by putting up megabucks. This competitive marketing is a new field of battle for lawyers, especially for those in smaller firms. Just remember that if you don't fight for the future of your firm, you are destined to be an innocent victim of someone's attack.”

Welcome to the Special Report, **61 Ideas for Marketing Your Professional Practice**.

**Read on and you will learn techniques and strategies that can grow your practice...**

## **An Extensive Review Of Marketing Success Reveals Ten Principles That Apply To The Marketing Of Every Professional Practice:**


1. Be committed to marketing as a *long-term process* and be persistent. It takes numerous contacts (often more than 7) with a prospect before they will do business with you.
2. *Budget 10%* of revenues into your marketing program. You are your best investment.
3. Focus on *educating*, not selling. Make it “safe” for them to know you.
4. Make sure *someone is in charge* of your marketing program. If not you, maybe your assistant.
5. Create a firm image or *brand*. Use it everywhere and always. Dare to be different!
6. Focus on *leveraging* your efforts. Do something once and get multiple benefits.
7. Focus your marketing message on *client benefits*, not firm features.
8. Test to see what works. Then test, test, test, again and again.
9. Learn from *best practices* developed by others.
10. *Exceed* your client’s expectations. Under-promise and over-deliver.

Your goal should be to get more work with “A List” clients. These clients are: high profile, generate a consistent work flow, invest in professionals, have a good reputation, refer similar clients and are fun to work with.

According to the latest U.S. Bureau of the Census statistics, the following is a breakdown of the U.S. Businesses by Size of Firm. Which market segment will you focus on?

<b>Size of Firm</b>	<b>Number of Firms</b>	<b>% of Firms</b>
1-19 Employees	4,808,000	89.55%
20-99	469,000	8.73%
100-499	77,000	1.40%
>500 Employees	15,000	.30%
<b>Total Firms</b>	5,369,000	100.00%

In this report, we share at least 61 different ways to market your professional practice. How many are you using? Can you think of any others? Let me know at [don@donphin.com](mailto:don@donphin.com).



**1 \$250 Coupon** - Businesses of every background have used this marketing tool for decades. A coupon worth \$250 of your time or towards your product seems much more valuable than a “free” consultation. Use it as a donation to a silent auction, as a door prize, etc. Never underestimate the power of perception when it comes to a good marketing tool.

**2 Advertorials** - This is an informational ad. It can be run sequentially, adding new information every time it is published. Try to get placement in the upper right corner of the right-hand page. Monthly business and association publications are perfect for this.

**3 Association Membership** - If you have an interest in a particular industry then you should consider joining their association. For example, many employment lawyers and consultants are also members of the American Society for Training and Development or the Society for Human Resource Management. Those are the obvious. However, don’t overlook industry type associations. One insurance executive I know became a member of a lumber association based on a suggestion of one of his clients and now derives more than 50% of his business from association members!

**4 Audit Services** - These can be used as both a profit center and a marketing piece. I normally charge \$3500 for a full day HR audit which includes an extensive report. For the right prospect, I will give a partial or complete audit for less or even free. You can audit what you are expert at.

**5 Bar, Insurance, CPA, Banking and HR Functions** - One of the best sources of referrals continues to be other professionals and consultants. Talk to local attorneys and consultants about personnel issues affecting their office regardless of their area of expertise.

**6 Birthday Cards** - Get everyone’s birthday and send out a birthday card every chance you get. Don’t forget your employees and maybe even their family members. Southwest Airlines sends me a card every year. Not surprisingly, they are the only airline making any money!

**7 Branding** - Your firm name needs to be *short and memorable*. No more four name firms. One or two names at the most. Then add a byline identifying your unique services or constituency. For example, “Jones Howard - Representing Cleveland Employers” or “Jones Howard – Insurance for High Tech and Health Care Employers.” Make sure to display your brand prominently and often.

**8 Brochure** - You should have a well thought out firm brochure, which emphasizes client benefits, as well as your firms’ skills and client focus. Display your brochure online and hand it out freely.

**9 Business Cards** - Most cards are *dull and boring!* Get a graphics designer to produce a unique card for you that accentuates your UVP (Unique Value Proposition). Use the back of the card to describe the firm mission, services, and client benefits. Using a photo connects the card with you. Always have plenty of spare cards with you.

**10 Classified Ads** - The best type of classified ad is one that gives away a free Special Report. Use ads to capture leads, not to sell.

**11 Client Bill of Rights** - You are encouraged to create and use a **Client Bill of Rights**, which spells out your commitment to your clients. Commitment to its guidelines is guaranteed to produce client confidence and loyalty. Add it to your service proposals.

**12 Client Party** - Don't forget to *celebrate* with your clients. It's amazing how the most successful firms just so happen to have the best client parties!

**13 Client Service** - There is simply no substitute for excellent client service. You want to create "raving fans" that generate endless referrals. This means you and your entire staff must think in these terms. Define what a great client experience and then sleep, eat, breathe, publish and reward it.

**14 Client Surveys** - The best way to know how your clients think and feel about your firm is to ask them. We recommend that you have every member of your firm (including your staff) survey clients over the telephone. You may also consider running a survey of potential clients. We always recommend that when you ask for survey information that you reward the client/potential client with either the results of that survey or something else of value. Consider using a great program like [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com).

**15 Clothing** - Consistent with branding, we can equip our professionals, staff and clients with hats, shirts and other items of clothing bearing the firm name and byline. Go to [www.landsend.com](http://www.landsend.com) and you will find a wide selection of quality affinity clothing.

**16 Coaching** - So what if you never thought of being a coach before. This is a powerful way to impact and benefit many at once. Reasonably priced group calls are always profitable. Supplement it with in person one-on-ones or in person group meetings. Consider being a chair for [www.vistage.com](http://www.vistage.com).


**17 Community Pro-Bono** - Work with a few of the more visible organizations in your community. Make sure you have contact with the Board of Directors of these organizations. Then make sure to publicize your contributions. I love donating services or products to local charities in exchange for their press release on it. For additional ideas take a look at the [Community Involvement Checklist](#).

**18 Competitor Analysis** - Who are your competitors? How many professionals offer similar services? What is the size of the potential client base? What percentage of that client base do you/they own? How much do they charge for fees? Who are their clients? Part of positioning your firm is knowing your competition. Find out what types of surveys and lists have been compiled by your insurance groups, bar association, SHRM Chapter, or business publisher.

**19 Compliance Training** - Times are ever more litigious, so there remains a large need for this service. You can provide compliance training either directly or through employer's associations, the Chamber of Commerce, Human Resource groups, etc. You can also use programs like [GoToWebinar](#).

**20 Contests** - Offer a free mini-audit, workshop, webinar or other service for the winner of a contest. Challenge entrants with a compliance quiz or some type of survey where you gain valuable information while marketing your practice.





**21 Cross Promotions** - This is where you agree to send out a letter to your clients endorsing a business (i.e. your CPA) and they in turn do the same for you. Be very careful not to over-do this one and stay within ethical guidelines.

**22 Data Base Management Program** - This will help you to manage your client relationships. I use Mail Chimp. Many people use Salesforce, Infusionsoft, Office Auto Pilot and other off-the-shelf and online products. A good database management program will allow you to maintain thousands of contacts indexed dozens of different ways and allow you round the clock access to those clients via e-mail, telephone, mail or fax. You can also program it to stay in touch with your clients and prospects.

**23 Direct Mail** - I could go on forever about the benefits of direct mail advertising. Whether it's the announcing of a new partner or associate, the giving of a seminar, the expansion to a new line of services, there is no substitute for direct mail. Use post cards as teasers, reminders and thank you's. Get friendly with a list broker and mailing house in your city. Whenever you send out a promotional piece do your best to hand-address the envelopes and use commemorative first class stamps. You can also add "teaser copy" on the outside of the envelope. i.e. "Enclosed is valuable information for that can affect your bottom line..." Get a student with good handwriting to do the addressing or hire a professional letter shop. Personalize any letter where possible. Always add a P.S. where possible and a call to action.

**24 E-Alerts** - Build a mailing list of clients/potential clients and send them a memo on an item-of-note on critical information such as a new law or technology platform.

**25 Electronic Bulletin Boards (Blogs)** - You can join or create one of these boards and become a regular contributor. Unless you have a national footprint, it is recommended you focus on local business needs. Don't spend time blogging just to feel important- that's a waste of your time. Do it to drive business to your door. Use Wordpress to easily build one. Take a look at ours [www.hrsherpas.com](http://www.hrsherpas.com).

**26 Endorsed Marketing** - Get your local bank to sponsor a seminar for their clients. Get your office supply company to send out a letter introducing your firm and include a \$250 coupon. Third party endorsements are always a powerful marketing tool.

**27 Fee Survey** - Find out who's charging what for what. Have a 3<sup>rd</sup> party do it and offer any participants the results of the survey.

**28 Flyers** - You should have flyers available for workshops, services, etc. that can be placed on marketing tables at human resource group events, business association meetings, Chamber meetings, etc. Take a look at my flyers for [Coaching](#), [Investigations](#), [The Inspired Workforce](#) and [Victims, Villains and Heroes](#). Use bright colors and paper where possible.

**29 Free Reports** - The two most powerful words in all of marketing are "free" and "how to." You don't need to capture a client right away, just capture their information and then begin developing a relationship with them. One of the best ways to do this is by offering a free report any time you speak, any time you send out a newsletter or e-alert, on your web site, etc. (You get the idea by now that I like free reports!)

**30 FYI's** - Anytime you see an article of interest to a client or prospect, send it to them with a FYI Post-It Note attached letting them know you were thinking about them.

**31 Guarantee** - I make it a point to guarantee my services. Very simply, a client does not have to pay any portion of a current bill they feel is unfair. The cost of "risk reversal" has always been worth the added business and trust.

**32 Holiday Cards** - Yes, you will send these out too - but yours will be different. No foil stamped pre-signed cards. You or your staff should hand sign and address your cards for that personal touch. Some marketers prefer Thanksgiving or New Year's cards so they stand alone.

**33 Industry Specialty** - You can focus on a particular industry and get known as their insurance, HR or legal expert. Perhaps you can be known as the "go to" person in the restaurant industry or manufacturing or health care, etc. Show up or speak at their meetings, conferences and conventions. (Look for online association directory links).

**34 Marketing Calendar** - You should have a 12 - 18 month calendar easily accessible by you and your staff at all times. Blank out the dates for speaking in advance and then try to fill them up through your pro-active efforts. For example, you may decide to speak to a group every other Tuesday or Wednesday at lunch. Mark those off in your calendar now and then fill them up as you go. Use Outlook or a similar online program.

**35 Marketing Plan** - I learned this the hard way: *If it's not in writing then it really isn't a plan.* What is your firm's plan? What is your growth strategy? Where have your existing clients come from? Who are your most profitable and unprofitable clients? Your marketing plan should interrelate with your business plan.


**36 Mastermind Groups** - A mastermind group consists of 12 to 15 people with a shared interest, coming together to open their souls in a confidential setting. One such example is [www.vistage.com](http://www.vistage.com). The group will help keep you accountable to your goals.

**37 Mid-Year Update** - I already know what you are thinking. Everybody is gone and we do our annual update in January. Remember this: *if everyone else goes left then you want to go right!* Chances are there are plenty of firms already giving annual hr, legal or insurance updates in your area. How many of them are giving mid-year updates? That's the point. Think different. Be different.

**38 Networking** - If you're going to spend your time at professional or community-based events, then use it wisely. When done properly, networking is also a very powerful form of competitor intelligence. Two hours at a Chamber gathering can be the source of incredible marketing insight. *Talk about them, seldom about you.* Always ask for their card and if they would like to receive your newsletter.

**39 Newsletter** - Whether you publish it in print or as an "e-zine," a once every week/month newsletter is an essential marketing piece.





**40 Photos** - You must spend a few bucks to have a series of professional photos done. Then make sure to use them on your website, social media efforts and other marketing material.

**41 Press Releases** - Anytime anything of note happens with your firm consider issuing a press release to your local and client related publications ([www.PRWeb.com](http://www.PRWeb.com)).

**42 Promotional Giveaways** - Many firms will use pens, key holders, magnets and other giveaways for conferences, seminars, etc. Laminated checklists and charts work well.

**43 Public Relations** - Public relations programs are a vital part to any marketing system. Hire a PR professional in your town for a few hours time and share with them some of your efforts. See what they would recommend as an approach and find out how much they would charge to do things for you. Pay for their time. It will keep the relationship strong and check expectations.

**44 Public Speaking** - This is the most effective way of getting leads. Breakfast, lunch and dinner talks as well as being placed on a panel, are all ways to get you excellent exposure. Make sure to always offer something to your audience in exchange for their input and information. Take a look at my [Powerful Presentation Techniques](#) on speaking at [www.dolphin.com](http://www.dolphin.com).

**45 Publish Articles** - Find out if the editor of local or industry professional and business publications has a specific issue they would like to see you write an article on. Then use the reprints of these articles as handouts for marketing purposes. I am always looking for good legal content for **EPLiC**, which is sent to top risk managers and insurance professionals nationwide.

**46 Radio and TV Talk Shows** - Local channels and stations are always looking for good content. Be prepared to comment on an industry trend, legal trend or community-based issue. You can never have too many reporters or talk show hosts as your friends.

**47 Referral Program** - How do you actively solicit and reward referrals from clients, other attorneys, human resource consultants and other business professionals? A well-run referral program can more than double the size of your practice.

**48 Registration on Web Portals** - There are numerous human resource, association and legal portals, which will allow you to freely register your practice and services you offer.

**49 Social Media** - communicate with clients and prospects through social media sites such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. Here's my [LinkedIn](#) page.

**50 Sub-Specialties** - Let's say you spot a legal trend or growing practice area (i.e. hiring in high tech). Get educated, write a paper and then speak to as many groups as possible.

**51 Target Marketing** - Your goals should be to generate more "A List" clients. You need to be very clear as to your target market because you will get what you focus on. For example, you may focus on a particular industry or sub-specialty. What client category do you want to own? Where can you find them? What message will you send them? Who is your Dream 100?



**52 Testimonials** - Client testimonials can be a powerful marketing tool. If you are an attorney, you must remain within your State Bar Guidelines. Use them throughout your web site and in your marketing material. There is simply no substitute for third party endorsements.

**53 Thank You Notes** - Get a whole box of these and send out as many as you can, as often as you can. I have a variety of cards because I have a variety of partners and clients. Hand write the note and envelope. Have your clerk or secretary pre-stamp a dozen or so at a time and keep them nearby.

**54 Three Foot Rule** - Anyone within 3 feet of you is a prospect. It can be on an elevator, train, coffee stand, etc. This is where your “elevator speech” comes in. Ask for their card and give them yours. Then make sure to drop them a note.

**55 Trade Shows** - Set up a trade show booth at a local industry event. You can always share a booth to reduce the cost. Many Chambers of Commerce sponsor such a day. Have your firm brochures available, online access to your firm web site and offer “ask the expert” advise where possible.

**56 Webinars** - Webinars are a great low cost way to communicate at any distance. I’ve always used [www.gotomeeting.com](http://www.gotomeeting.com) to manage mine.

**57 Web Site Development** - The cost of website development has dropped dramatically. No excuse for not having a well thought out website. Just do it.

**58 Write a Book** - It doesn’t even have to be a big book. It can be a booklet. An incredible amount of status comes along with being an author. You can even make your book a collection of articles, reports and other insights you’ve gathered over the years. Self-publishing has become such a breeze nowadays that you can get a book published for less than a few hundred bucks. Take a look at [www.blurb.com](http://www.blurb.com).

**59 Write A Column** - Work with your local business paper, human resource group, trade association journal and the like to provide them with a monthly column. That monthly column can consist of excerpts from your newsletter, e-alerts or special reports. Always try to slice and dice the content you generate as many different ways as possible.

**60 Yellow Pages Advertising** - Nobody advertises in the Yellow Pages more than professionals. Find out which of your competitors have been using yellow page ads and for how long. Unless you are incredibly talented, have your ad copy done by a professional- and make it different!

**61 Video** - YouTube videos are an excellent way to market your services. Make sure to give valuable information, not just a sales pitch. Click here to see my [YouTube](#) channel.



## **CONCLUSION**

You will improve the profitability and joy associated with your marketing efforts by testing over time. Focus on rolling out only a handful of these many strategies at once. When you have mastered the first few you can go on to a handful more. There is no excuse for not marketing your practice. When you get real busy (which you will) be prepared to delegate your workload to associates, virtual assistants and interns.

## **ABOUT DON PHIN, ESQ.**

Long story short... Don grew up in the Bronx, and was fortunate enough to attend the Bronx HS of Science. At 19 he jumped at the opportunity to work on a tuna boat out of San Diego. He liked the sea, sunshine, volleyball, surfing and California girls, so he stayed. Don now lives and works in beautiful Coronado, California and is happily married with three sons and four grandkids.

Don has been a California employment practices attorney since 1983. He litigated employment and business cases for 17 years and quit once he figured out that nobody wins a lawsuit.

Since leaving litigation, he has written numerous books and presented more than 500 times to executives nation-wide.

Don was the founder and President of HR That Works, used by 3,500 companies and acquired by ThinkHR in January of 2014. He worked there for two years as a V.P., and he's on his own once again.

Now in his "wisdom sharing years," Don loves coaching executives and investigates challenging workplace problems. He continues to inspire with his speaking and training.

All the best,



Don Phin, Esq.  
(619) 852-4580 cell  
[www.donphin.com](http://www.donphin.com)  
[don@donphin.com](mailto:don@donphin.com)  
[www.linkedin.com/in/donphin](http://www.linkedin.com/in/donphin)