



TARGETING THE BUYER OF LEGAL SERVICES:

How to Generate More Revenue and Gain Market Share

Defining why your clients do business with you is a foundational step to client retention and revenue growth. Your clients always have a choice, and it's likely that they work with you because of the ongoing value you provide. Replicating those profitable relationships requires you to define what that value is and how it is different than what someone else is offering.

Unfortunately, many law firms swim in the sea of sameness. Their pitches sound and look the same as their competitors. They all claim to be service-oriented, client-focused, the best at what they do. The only difference in their presentations is likely the colors on the PowerPoint.

The problem is that when everybody is saying the same message, it has no value to the customer or the marketplace. While true that your client may want a service-oriented law firm, there's nothing about that trait that drives a signed contract. The messaging lacks differentiation.



WHY DO YOU NEED TO DEFINE YOUR IDEAL CLIENT?

Many law firms have a general understanding of who they want their buyer to be, or the types of clients that are most likely to do business with them. But few firms truly differentiate, digging deep on uncovering buyer motivations, priorities, challenges and current trends they're facing.

If you truly understand who buys your legal services, you're better able to:

1. Articulate why they should do business with you
2. Actually demonstrate the value you provide

Having a solid grasp of the monetary value you bring to your client's business will justify your billable rate more than anything else.



WHY DO YOUR CLIENTS DO BUSINESS WITH YOU?

Often, when we ask firms this question, they come back with, “They’ve been sued,” or “They need help with a transaction or regulatory matter.”

These factors may be true, but they aren’t going to drive a high-dollar business relationship. A legal need is a one-trick pony. It’s inside-in and not focused on the broader company strategy. In order to drive repeatable revenue, you need to approach that question with a buyer-focused mindset, one that’s driven by business goals.

Clients are motivated by strategic concerns that affect their business. Legal concerns, like litigation threats or contract needs, are only important as to how they impact the business.

When you fail to attach the services you provide to top strategic business concerns, you’re more susceptible to pricing discounts and fee pushback.

If you don’t tap into what your clients care about from a business perspective, they feel empowered to push you on fees and billing. You’re treated as a commodity and your relationship is susceptible to competing low cost providers. Every negotiation will feel like a price war.

It's time to jump out of the sea of sameness.

Many firms try to be all things to all people. The problem is that when you’re everything to everybody, you’re often nothing to nobody. When you cast such a wide net, you’re unable to gain any momentum in any vertical or with any one type of buyer. When there’s fierce competition for business, you need the ability to differentiate and target your ideal buyer.

HOW TO TARGET YOUR BUYER

Targeting your buyer can seem like an overwhelming process, especially for marketing leaders who often find themselves in the middle of a partner tug-of-war.

A good first step is to consider these three categories:

1

Industry Verticals

What industry verticals do you currently target? Which of those verticals present the biggest opportunity moving forward?

2

Buyer Types

What role does your ideal buyer have in a given organization? Describe who those buyers are, what they're responsible for and the typical titles that they have (e.g., Chief Human Resources Officer; Chief Financial Officer).

3

Situational

What situation is the buyer in? Are they disposing or acquiring assets? Are they hiring on a regular basis? Firing on a regular basis? What are the situational attributes that would define an ideal client for your firm?

Clearly defining a buyer within these three categories allows you to better articulate and demonstrate the business value of your services. You're more likely to drive repeatable revenue and preserve market share because the impact you have on your customers is clear.

WE UNDERSTAND YOUR CHALLENGE

We know that building alignment in any firm around the ideal client is a challenge. There are often competing interests and perspectives on who that buyer is or who it should be. If you narrow your target, inevitably you will be alienating a particular practice or an individual lawyer. Given the partner structure, there's constant tension in building that consensus on a target market.

A lot of your colleagues will stop at the thought of trying to build agreement. They'll settle for everyone operating individually, without leveraging the power of the firm.

Why? Because it's easier that way.

Unfortunately, that means the problem is never fixed. They avoid it, and as a result, they will always swim in the sea of sameness.

Rather, those leaders that take on the challenge will build momentum with ideal clients that fully understand firm value and don't mind paying a premium for their services.

Disruption is hard in any organization, but without it, it's impossible to truly capitalize on potential.

In the legal marketplace, there will always be a competing firm ready to take advantage of new business opportunities. You need a mechanism that will improve margins, increase proliferation and drive new client partnerships.

Do you have the tenacity to help your organization prepare itself for the competitive future?

It's time to get specific. Define your target. Drive Repeatable Revenue.