



MPF FEATURED ARTICLE

MARKETING AN INTERNATIONAL LAW FIRM NETWORK

by

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Marketing an International Law Firm Network

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As I've previously mentioned, I'm a big fan of international law firm networks. I've seen first-hand the value they offer to their members, including generating both in-bound and out-bound referrals. But it doesn't happen automatically; it takes *work* to maximize the number of valuable intra-network referrals.

I was recently speaking to the [Legus International](#) Fall meeting on this topic.

There are actually *four* different ways to (a) create more referral opportunities and (b) increase the chance that you'll receive them once available.

These are:

1. **Marketing *yourself* within the network**
2. **Marketing *your firm* within the network**

Using LEGUS to Increase Firm Revenue
Citadel Room

Facilitated By:
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Session Description

There are many reasons to be a member of an international network. Perhaps it helps you protect valuable clients from poaching by larger firms by having access to skilled lawyers worldwide. Or knowing that your clients will receive outstanding service across the LEGUS network, or receiving inbound referrals from other member firms. This program will provide tangible tips regarding how to help your firm squeeze more value and revenue out of its LEGUS membership—both helping sell LEGUS to your firm, and marketing your firm within the LEGUS membership.

3. **Marketing the network within your firm**

4. **Marketing the network to your clients**

I'll take them one at a time, in two posts.

1. Marketing yourself within the network.

This encompasses basic Networking 101 and relationship-development skills, to build your personal visibility with the network so that more of the network's active members (i.e. the ones who attend the conferences) know you, think you're great, and can be trusted with their valuable referrals.

They include holding leadership positions, speaking at the conferences, exchanging business cards and contact information, and following up consistently throughout the year. Also, spending time meeting new members and reinforcing newer relationships rather than simply hanging out with your old friends. Keeping the conversations meaningful but still brief enough that you can speak to more people in the limited time available during the conferences. Most active rainmakers are relatively good at these behaviors.

The biggest mistake good networkers make in this area is in failing to connect themselves to a specific geography.

Within a network, we don't want your fellow members to simply think, "Rutger is a nice guy and a good lawyer who can be trusted." Instead, we want them to ALSO think, "... **and he's from The Netherlands.**"

Without that critical geographic connection, there are many fewer referral opportunities. We must regularly connect ourselves to our geographic location, so that when members see the word "Holland," they think

- "tulips, windmills, Rutger."



It seemed a little silly, but at a recent international conference where I was speaking, the popular Norwegian member donned a plastic Viking hat during his introduction. Everyone laughed along. But he'd strategically and permanently implanted his country into everyone's minds. Nice job.

2. Marketing *your firm* within the network

Similar to the first category, your firm must become associated with a particular city, state, or country (depending upon the configuration of your network). No international network has 100% coverage, so we must inform and remind everyone that the network in fact HAS a firm in X country.



One good example of this was from **MSI Global**, a terrific law and accounting firm network, where the Chinese member firm brought stuffed toys that reflected that particular year's Chinese Zodiac animal. In 2012, The Year of the Dragon, **LehmanBrown** CPAs partner Dickson Leung brought these fun orange logo'd dragons. Every year he brought a new version, and MSI members were clearly looking forward to them when they returned from lunch and found them on their chairs.

Dickson was an MSI favorite, and many members joked that they had the entire 12-year LehmanBrown collection of stuffed animals. Many people brought the dragons home for their kids, while others claimed that they kept them in their offices. The point is, every single MSI attendee knew that they had a Chinese member firm.

Similarly, I spoke to **Meritas** the year they acquired a firm from Angola, and they brought these small African masks with their contact information on them, which was a very nice start.

There are many ways to connect yourself to a specific geography. At the bottom is an advertisement we designed for an Iceland law firm named **Lex**, designed to reinforce



the law firm's name and location for targets outside of the jurisdiction.



That's all for Part One.

Next, in Part Two:

3. Marketing the network within *your firm*

4. Marketing the network to *your clients*

Topics: Business Development International Professional Networking

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