

Ernie: Hi everyone, and welcome to another episode of Law Firm autopilot, in the last episode I finished the overview of the foundation part of the success blueprint for creating a great practice and as you recall there are three main parts to a successful blueprint. Number one foundation, number two, the profit engine or marketing and number three operations.

Today we're going to drill into area number three, the profit engine or marketing and this is how you get new clients in a steady manageable stream, preferably great clients.

Now as you may recall from episode number two we talked about there being three sub parts to the profit engine, sub part number one is trust building and that requires that we understand how trust is created and maintained in marketing to prospective clients.

Number two is referral marketing which is the easiest, best and least expensive form of marketing and then three, online marketing, which is the hardest kind of marketing to do but if you do it right you can automate it completely and you'll be assured of getting even more great clients, even from people that you've never heard of before or they've never heard of you before they clicked over to your website.

Today we're going to focus on only the first of those three sub parts, namely trust building, and in general I'm going to explain the psychology and strategy behind trust building. As a kind of a foundational point remember, we want to be sensible and realistic- marketing is the most important thing for your firm, it deserves the main focus and some serious investment.

Trust is the most important part of marketing so we're going to talk about that, and of course you need to be strategic because well done marketing is intricate, so you absolutely have to be very strategic. You can't just do monkey see monkey do, copy-other-lawyer kind of marketing because most people including most attorneys are the opposite of strategic and they don't really have a realistic sense of how marketing works.

Too many people build a strategy if you can call it that, that has nothing to do with trust whatsoever. They're just give me a bunch of quick leads and therefore they get paltry results. You need to get a steady flow of the kind of clients you want, this is crucial to your practice and the reason why you need to get them in a steady flow is because if you get too many at once and you can't meet the workload, you can make mistakes, you have a bad client experience, you might have ethics problems, so that's bad.

Then on the other hand, if you don't get enough in a steady flow then you live in constant fear of not meeting your monthly overhead and you have a general feeling of insecurity about your finances, you need to get these new clients in a steady flow. Now let's talk about the main impediment to getting new clients is, one, those folks out there they could hire you, they might want to hire you, they're not even aware of you or what you do.

Number one, part of the marketing strategy is you need to get the attention of those folks and this is easy to do if you want to do it in a lame cheesy hand-fisted way, just shout fire in a movie theater and you get people's attention run around the street.

It's not hard to get people's attention and most of the bad marketing out there is bad because it focuses only on shock value or something that gets people's attention but after that there's nothing. There is no trust building, there's no strategy it's just get people's attention hope they hire you and that's it. You need to do this in a very thoughtful way and if you're working from a solid overall strategy that's what you're going to do.

The next thing that you need to understand is when people become aware of you, they don't automatically trust you, they don't trust you at all, or maybe they trust another lawyer more than they trust you and a lot of people just don't trust lawyers in general.

Why is this? And lawyers don't stop to reflect on this they're just--they think oh, well, people will trust us because we have the attorney client privilege and because of that, they can tell us anything that's protected by law and therefore they'll trust us. Well that may make sense logically but trust doesn't work logically, trust is mostly based on feelings and emotions and things like that.

One of the reasons why people don't trust lawyers is we are perceived as being emotionless and excessively logical like Spock in Star Trek. We're also not good at communicating things in a simple down to earth way which would make us more approachable, more friendly.

Especially online, it's very difficult to build trust with people unless you're hitting all the right notes. But it's-- it's true that even people that know you somewhat to go your website aren't going to trust you as much. What you want to do is maximize the amount of trust building you do so that when you have it set up online it works well there, even for complete strangers, but if somebody who's not a complete stranger comes along and reinforces what they already tend to believe, you just can't afford to be lax about how you get people to trust you.

I'm assuming by the way, that you are a trustworthy person because if you're not trustworthy, then all this is just tactics and you're not really a genuine person eventually, people will figure this out and that's not going to work either.

I assume I know that you are trustworthy, what's the other thing that you need to know and this is-- people look at lawyers in a certain way and it's not just that we are obstructionist, the stuff that you hear at bar association meetings like "oh the new president's going to come in and he is going to tell us why it is that people don't like lawyers: 'Well, they love their lawyer, they don't like the other lawyer because they see the other lawyer as obstructionist.'"

Okay, that's true up to a certain point but that's simplistic, and that's not the reason why people don't trust you online. The reason they tend not to trust lawyers in general is we are perceived by most people as basically being mercenaries. If you

think about it, we're told like you can take either side of the case, it's not your job to only represent the client with the best case.

Your job is to represent whoever hires you do the best job you can, if they're guilty you represent them and if they're guilty of murder you represent them, if they breach the contract you represent them and people know this and I don't know if you remember when you were in law school and they made you take both sides of the moot court problem. There was one side you liked and you felt like, "I can do that side really great but the other side I'm not so comfortable with," and you're told you have to learn to feel comfortable representing people who have facts that you don't like.

Well, the public knows this and what you call a person who will represent either side- whoever hires them first and pays them money- that's called a mercenary. Whether people at a conscious level spit that out if you ask them. No, they probably don't but they still think it because that's the psychology behind this and we'll talk about the psychology of trust building in further episodes when we get into this deeper but for now you just need to understand people are not going to reflexively trust you because you're a lawyer.

They have a lot of questions and you need to address those questions. You need to establish rapport and then build trust over time, so if you have a website, for example, then they need to see what you look like. You have to a picture up there, because if you don't have a picture up there you're just some faceless cagey person.

They need to hear how you explain things, your website should have you explaining some common questions and answering some frequently asked questions and if you have videos you can put those up there and they can see you and hear you explaining it. Video's optimal because they can see what you look like and hear what you're saying and understand whether you're good at explaining things or not, but that's going to help them understand how you talk, it's gonna establish rapport and it's going to build trust over time.

Because the more of these resources that you put online or you have available to give to people, the more they can go through those resources themselves as they're deciding whether to hire you or not, and they won't feel pressured and they can take their time and feel like they're making a good decision.

The better clients are going to be more discriminating, you need to have a trust building system for the most skeptical type of person and that will work well for everyone. Another aspect, another impediment besides, they're not aware of you and they don't trust you, is they're not sure they really like working with you.

You need to explain, how do you work, what happens when a case comes in, what do you do, what's the first thing that happens, who else in your office will tend to work with you and you should also be telling folks out there who your ideal client is like, we really like to work with clients who are like this.

The more focused you are in the kind of clients you want the more niche you are, the more you can speak to those type of clients particularized concerns and that's going

to make you--is going to establish better rapport and it's going to help people feel like they like working with you because you specialize in their problem and you have a keen understanding of the feelings that they have about those kind of problems.

All this is important to niche marketing, everything in your marketing system and your strategy needs to address these things that they're not aware of you, they don't trust you. Why don't they trust you and they're not even sure they like working with you, all of these things you need to address as part of your trust building strategy. Like I said, we're just do an overview here we're going to drill into these later but you do need to understand.

That it's very hard to get people's trust anywhere especially online but even when you meet people face to face and you meet them for the first time at a cocktail party or something. They're not just going to automatically think you're the greatest lawyer in the world, you have to be realistic about this and that's how it works. I've mentioned that there are a couple different kinds of marketing, only two that work well for attorneys in small firm businesses and the one that doesn't work well is just paying for leads.

So, you know, you pay people for leads and they send you leads or they set up some website and get you leads. With no trust building that kind of marketing is expensive, not very good and you have to constantly be tweaking it and you have to trust the people that are running it for you, which by the way, are usually almost always untrustworthy.

A couple people I know that will do SEO optimization, search engine optimization and get you clients where you pay for leads with Google and Facebook and stuff, there's a couple, about two or three I know in the legal world that are good at this, but they're extremely expensive and extremely selective about who they take.

In most cases, I can refer people to them, the next best thing I can do is tell you the kinds of marketing that you can do yourself inexpensively. The two kinds that work are referral marketing, which as I said is powerful, inexpensive and pretty simple and that's the one you should start with if you're if you're doing web marketing, you should do referral marketing or networking marketing and then also there's online marketing, which requires you to understand something called direct response marketing which we'll get into.

That wraps up this examination of the trust building sub part of the profit engine that leaves the two sub parts left to cover which is referral marketing and online marketing. Remember, if you're eager to make more progress and growing your practice you can go to the website lawfirmautopilot.com and sign up for a free membership and the free VIP program.

It's a great way to get access to some helpful resources, all of which are free, and we also have a free Facebook group, you can just search inside of Facebook for Law Firm Autopilot, you'll find that group and then just click the button that says request to join, we'll approve you right away. That's it. that's it for this episode of Law Firm Autopilot and in the next episode I will talk about referral marketing. I look forward to seeing you then, until then, I wish the best for you and your law practice.