

9 WEAK LINKS THAT TORPEDO YOUR MARKETING PROGRAM

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WEAK LINK #1: Delivering a sales message. Overcome this weak link by delivering an educational message. Your message must educate your prospect about his problems and the solutions you can provide. If your message sounds like a sales pitch -- or if you sound or act like a salesperson -- your program is doomed to failure. (Do you know anyone who wants to listen to a sales pitch or talk with a salesperson?)

WEAK LINK #2: Lack of credibility. Overcome this weak link by firmly establishing that you can be trusted. None of us (voluntarily) does business with a person we don't trust. Go to great lengths to make sure your prospects, clients and referral sources trust you. You can increase trust by (1) offering information about your knowledge, skill and experience, (2) discussing case histories of other clients you have helped, (3) speaking in simple terms that everyone can understand, and (4) taking time to answer prospects' questions.

WEAK LINK #3: No apparent differences. Overcome this weak link by clearly pointing out the positive ways you differ from competitors. Prospects won't hire your services unless and until they have clear, identifiable reasons to choose you over other lawyers. If you convey nothing else to your prospects, make sure prospects know how you differ from every other lawyer on the planet.

WEAK LINK #4: Lack of interaction. Overcome this weak link by inviting interactions with your prospects and clients. You will never do business with a prospect until the two of you have interacted, whether over the phone, by e-mail or in person. Interaction doesn't happen by chance; it happens by design. Design your marketing program to generate ongoing educational interactions with prospects.

WEAK LINK #5: Failure to commit. Overcome this weak link by motivating your prospect to make a commitment, which is when he hires your services. Point out to prospects what they stand to lose by allowing their present situation to persist. Point out to prospects how they benefit when they hire you to help them solve a problem or achieve a goal. Describe a case history of someone you know who waited too long to solve his problem -- and the terrible consequences he faced as a result.

WEAK LINK #6: Unappealing offers. Overcome this weak link by packaging your services in ways that appeal to your prospects. For example, if you offer services only by the hour and your prospects want flat fees, you face an uphill battle. When you offer different levels of services and different billing options, you give prospects the opportunity to pick which they like best. This increases their satisfaction level because they took part in making the decision.

WEAK LINK #7: Missing your target audience. Overcome this weak link by designing and creating your message so it appeals specifically to the audience you want to reach. If your message does not appeal to your audience, you have a big problem. If your message does not reach the audience you want, you've wasted your time, money and effort.

WEAK LINK #8: Inconvenient delivery methods. Overcome this weak link by matching your marketing methods with the audiences you want to reach. Make sure you choose marketing methods that your prospects find attractive, comfortable and convenient. If a busy executive wants you to send information by mail -- and if you insist on talking with the executive on the phone -- you are not making it easy for the executive. Your unwillingness to deliver your marketing message in a way that is convenient for the executive may be the only reason he needs not to hire your services.

WEAK LINK #9: Lack of loyalty. Overcome this weak link by making sure your message and services build loyalty among your clients and referral sources. Your educational message -- delivered over time to clients, former clients and referral sources -- keeps your loyalty level high, which results in an ongoing flow of new prospects through the referral pipeline.

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Trey Ryder specializes in Education-Based Marketing for lawyers. He offers three free articles by e-mail: 7 Secrets of Dignified Marketing, Marketing Myths Most Lawyers Believe and Marketing Secrets of Superstar Lawyers. To receive these articles, send your name and e-mail address to trey@tretryder.com and ask for his free articles.

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