

Promoting Chambers

How to take the risk out of chambers marketing



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*Providing essential
marketing services for
chambers*



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How to take the risk out of chambers marketing

Spending money on marketing for many Chambers is often seen as a massive punt, a huge risk, a pure gamble. *But it needn't be that way.*

You need to mind your **Ps** and **Qs** – well, your **Ps** anyway.

THE 4 PS OF CHAMBERS MARKETING

When looking at doing any marketing for chambers, it's all about the **4 Ps**:

- **Product**
- **Price**
- **Place**
- **Promotion**

For the vast majority, the most infamous of the marketing 4 Ps is promotion because it's often viewed as the only function of chambers' marketing.

For many chambers 'events' are crucial. True, getting in front of clients is a great way to get your message across. You just need to make sure that they audience is right and the message is clearly received and understood. Otherwise an awful lot of hard work (usually by the senior clerk) is wasted.

But what of true promotion?

Within the promotion mix of chambers there are five primary methods; direct marketing, advertising, sales promotions, personal selling and public relations.

A true promotion strategy should encompass all five to some degree of other depending on the desired outcomes. Promotion needn't be costly but it does need to be well planned and executed. It must also be used in conjunction the other 3Ps otherwise it is less effective.

Direct marketing

Mostly used for lead generation purposes (for example, the generation of new clients or obtaining additional work from existing clients), direct marketing delivers a clear message to a targeted audience.

By sending personalised letters to a discrete target group the rate of positive responses is increased over that of stand-alone, generic advertising.

Direct marketing enables chambers to consistently target clients with messages reinforcing any other promotional elements and supporting chambers' brand.

Direct marketing isn't just limited to post-based mailshots. Newsletter and email shots are also highly effective when combined in an integrated campaign. Both of these communication formats have the ability of reaching high numbers of people for a fraction of the cost of a hard-copy mailer.



With the correct email and newsletter system you are also able to track delivery including undeliverables for database cleansing, readership levels, opt out rates, file downloads and click throughs to URLs for specific campaign landing pages.

Whether chambers opt for hard copy or email mailings, the success of the campaigns will be dictated by the quality of the database and the messaging used. All too often messaging is diluted when there are too many things to say or too many people are involved in producing them.

So make sure that when you start to plan your mail piece you begin by writing the ONE KEY message at the top of the page with all subsequent paragraphs relating back to that one key message or you will dilute the mailing and reduce the response rate.

All outgoing materials need to have a "call to action", i.e. a reason for someone to respond and a mechanism for them to respond e.g. web page, email address, fax-back, telephone number. It sounds simple, but is often overlooked.

To be truly of benefit, direct marketing should consist of hard copy, email and newsletter mailings and should be part of an overall integrated promotions campaign. It should incorporate elements of advertising and it should lead naturally into personal selling.

Promoting Chambers

Advertising

Potentially, advertising reaches a larger audience than direct marketing and builds brand awareness or communicates sales messages for a relatively smaller cost per person. This is of course assuming that the chosen publication or website promises a large target audience. Prior to committing to advertising, request the media pack to find out about readership information such as audience demographics.

If the goal of your marketing activity is to broadcast a message across a spectrum of recipients then advertising is the most cost effective promotion method. Advertising typically includes entries in magazines, newspapers and website banners.

However, the very nature of advertising means that there is less control over who receives the messages. It is also very difficult to measure the outcome. If adverts are used in conjunction with specific website landing pages, or with dedicated telephone numbers, then the results are easier to monitor.

The key is to firstly create your landing page and establish your phone lines, then place advertisements in popular, niche publications with highly targeted audiences. Similar to the direct mail pieces, adverts also need a response mechanism and a call to action to encourage response.

Sales promotions

Defined as incentives to encourage buyer behaviour, sales promotions are a short-term strategy and should be used very selectively as long-term it can weaken your brand perception. For example, chambers can use promotions during quieter periods when they typically tend to receive fewer instructions to try and boost their intake of work.

When using sales promotions, chambers need to be careful not to damage the brand image by giving the impression that lower costs means a lower quality standard of work.

The most relevant methods of sales promotions for chambers would be a temporary reduction in price for a selected period of time or an introductory price for new clients operating in a specific niche market which chambers wants to expand into.

Personal selling

Personal selling is something that clerks have been doing for years and are very, very good at. They are skilled at informing, persuading, and customising the offer for each prospective client.

The result is the development of strong relationships between chambers and their clients which can then be built upon further by the delivery of good quality service.

Many sets have recruited business development managers to perform this role alongside the clerks. The BDMs are responsible for fostering further relations, cross selling other services and generally managing the accounts. There are many standard practices for key account management which can be employed.



On the whole personal selling is more effective than the other marketing mix methods because it's a two-way permission-based conversation with a client or prospect with a strong interest in your services, but it is not as commercially efficient.

Seminars also fall into the category of personal selling as they provide a platform on which to sell chambers' services. However, they should only be held when you have clear, stated and measurable objectives. They should not be organised just because they've always been done or to boost the ego of certain chambers' members.

Seminars cost money and they take a great deal of time to organise. The work that results from these is also not likely to be immediate (although I have had instances where instructions were received the same day) – so you need to factor this into the measurable objectives and the tracking of the overall campaign to understand the return made from your investment and help to plan for future events based on your successes (and failures!).

If seminars form part of an integrated campaign you will gain a higher traction rate than if you continued to run seminars on a more random basis.

It is worth noting that webinars are fast replacing seminars as a cost-effective and convenient method of disseminating information to the ever busy lawyer. Chambers should be considering ways to run these virtual seminars as part of their service offerings for clients (again, as part of a proper integrated campaign of course).

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Struggling to make yourself heard?



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Public relations

Publicity is similar to advertising in that it broadcasts to a wide audience yet is more broad-ranging and less personal.

However, it differs in that it is generally viewed as unbiased since it is usually written by independent journalists and it is not paid for by chambers. Independent case studies, market research, law reports and social media activities would fall into this category.

The downside is that publicity can be difficult to manage effectively.

In social media circles, it's difficult to control negative opinions – *Solicitors from Hell* is a prime example of that. However, it's not all doom and gloom. Publicity can be managed by spending time to foster relationships with journalists and by providing them with the information they need to do their job. Chambers needs to be mindful of what they send to journalists.

Press releases and article suggestions need to be concise and of interest to the readership. Self-serving pieces will not only never make it to print, they will harm chambers' relationship with that journalist.

PROPER PLANNING AND PREPARATION PREVENTS POOR PERFORMANCE

So – how do you de-risk your marketing spend and effort?

I said earlier that you should mind your **Ps** and, at the risk of being trite, this is where the **Ps** come into play again – this time, 6 of them. The most important are planning and preparation.

Chambers can do worse than to take a leaf out of the army training manual. Is it pure coincidence that marketing and military efforts are both called 'campaigns'?

Planning

For a start, chambers need to determine which promotion method to use.

Chambers promotional mix needs to form part of an integrated campaign plan. Stop doing random seminars and mailers and instead start doing focused measurable activities.

Preparation

Consider what resources, budget and staff you have available to complete all the necessary steps in the campaign, then build in each of the elements above paying particular attention to the characteristics of the market you are targeting.

If you want to be noticed...



...you need to make a splash!

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Ready to make waves? Come on in, the water's lovely!

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There's not much point advertising with STEPS if you don't do tax or estate planning, for example.

Each of the marketing mix elements needs to be appropriate to the market and carry very clear messaging and calls to action.

The campaign plans and messages also need to be communicated internally through chambers. Every member should know exactly what's going on and have the correct messaging to hand ready for the inbound calls and emails which should result from your campaign. It is everyone's responsibility to market chambers, not just the clerks' room.

So, the Ps have it – and, if you do plan properly, you will prevent a poor marketing performance where the investment you make is as likely to pay you back as a roll of the dice at a Vegas casino.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Catherine Bailey

Catherine Bailey, former Head of Marketing for IRIS Legal Solutions – the foremost supplier of software solutions for the Bar and law firms.

With over 10 years of experience in the UK legal sector, in particular the Bar and widely known for her proactive stance on ProcureCo and alternate business structures, Catherine has the depth of knowledge of the Bar coupled with 20 years of strategic and operational marketing experience which truly sets her and Bar Marketing apart from other marketing consultancies.

Bar Marketing offers a range of effective chambers marketing services to meet your needs.

Whether you are looking for a long-term partnership to manage your chambers marketing, require additional resources on a project by project basis to run chambers marketing initiatives or boost your existing capabilities, we can help.

With over twenty years of experience in strategic and operational marketing, ten of which in the UK legal sector, you can rest assured that the marketing needs of chambers and firms are fully understood and appreciated.

It is this deep knowledge and understanding which ensures chambers receive just the right mix of marketing they need to help them secure more business and grow.

For further information, call Catherine Bailey on **0771 434 5072** or visit **barmarketing.co.uk**

