PILMMA INSIDERS' JOURNAL

YOUR BLUEPRINT FOR CREATING A 7-FIGURE PRACTICE

Creating a Firm Culture of *Gratitude*

READ THE FULL ARTICLE ON PAGE 16

Inside the Issue:

NOVEMBER 2020 | NATIONAL MASTERMIND MONTH

Inside the Issue

NOVEMBER 2020: *NATIONAL MASTERMIND MONTH*

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PILMMA Vision

To Create **THE** Preeminent Trusted Resource to Help Lawyers Achieve Their Goals for Success.

PILMMA Mission

PILMMA will provide POWERFUL and INNOVATIVE training and tools that **help lawyers achieve their ideal practice.**

PILMMA Core Values

1. We are Authentic, Transparent & Honest with our clients and each other.
2. We will be Innovative, always asking "What if…"
3. We will provide excellent client service that Under-promises & Over-delivers.
4. We will take care of our members and each other.
5. We work as a team, for the betterment of our members.

Important Dates

EVENTS » KEN SPEAKING

PILMMA Law Firm Growth Summit
June 22nd-25th 2021
New Orleans, LA

MASTERMIND Meetings

PLATINUM 2**
Nov. 30, 2020
11 AM to 5 PM
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM

RHODIUM 1**
Dec. 3-4, 2020
11 AM to 5 PM
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM

RHODIUM 2**
Dec. 7-8, 2020
11 AM to 5 PM
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM

8 FIGURE***
Dec. 10-11, 2020
11 AM to 5 PM
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM

PLATINUM 3**
Dec. 14-15, 2020
11 AM to 5 PM
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM

MEMBERS' SCHEDULE for November

ET » Eastern Standard Time; All Times Are Estimated

WEBINAR
Mastermind Effect with Ken Hardison
Nov. 5, 2020, 1 PM ET

MARKETING ROUNDTABLE *
Marketing Plans with Cassidy Lewis
Nov. 11, 2020, 2 PM ET

WEBINAR *
Year End Tax Strategies
with Boris Musheyev
Nov. 12, 2020, 1 PM ET

SAC GROUP 1 *****
Strategic Attorney Coach Monthly Call
with Ken Hardison (via Zoom)
Nov. 12, 2020, 4 PM ET

SAC CHECK-IN CALL *****
Strategic Attorney Coach
with Ken Hardison (via Zoom)
Nov. 13, 2020, 4 PM ET

MANAGEMENT ROUNDTABLE *
with Micki Love
Nov. 18, 2020, 3 PM ET

SAC GROUP 2 *****
Strategic Attorney Coach Monthly Call
with Ken Hardison (via Zoom)
Nov. 19, 2020, 4 PM ET

TRAINING *
Monthly Intake Training
with Chris Mullins
Nov. 25, 2020, 3 PM ET

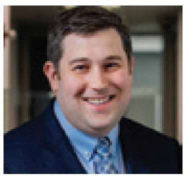
CALL *
New Member Coaching Call
with Ken Hardison
Nov. 25, 2020, 4:30 PM ET

HOLIDAY
PILMMA Office Closed
Nov. 26-27, 2020

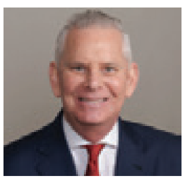
*All PILMMA Members
**Rhodium and Platinum Members Only
***Titanium/8 Figure Members Only
****Strategic Attorney Coach Members Only

Welcome!

David C. Ledyard
STRATEGIC ATTORNEY COACH
Baltimore, MD

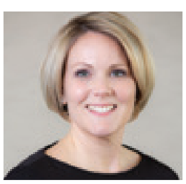


Moses DeWitt
ADDED
STRATEGIC ATTORNEY COACH
Orlando, FL



Steve Ellman
GOLD
Medford, NJ

David Benson
GOLD
Cleveland, OH

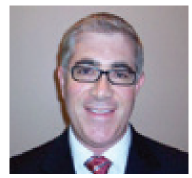


Carol Thompson
GOLD
Roanoke, VA

Charles James
GOLD
Montgomery, AL

Mark Cressman
GOLD
Winter Garden, FL

Elizabeth Lunn
STRATEGIC ATTORNEY COACH
Raleigh, NC



Steven Schwartz
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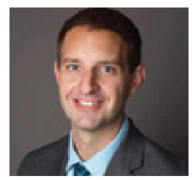
Boston, MA



Michael Harman
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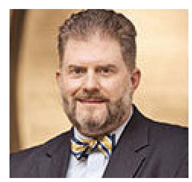

Brian Gillette
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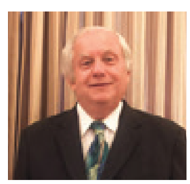

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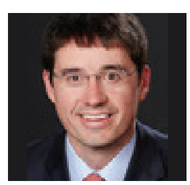

Matthew Hill
GOLD
Deland, FL

Paul Hogan
GOLD
Wichita, KS

NOVEMBER LETTER TO OUR MEMBERS

I hope this November Issue of the PILMMA INSIDER JOURNAL finds you and your firm well and staying safe!

As we head into the Year-End/Holiday Season, many of us will be happy to say "Good Bye and Good Riddance to the Year 2020!"

It has been a year of unprecedented challenges, but along with our losses have come some good things, too.

The time away from the office has given many of you the much-needed opportunity to work "ON" your business rather than "IN" it, and to do some much needed "clean-up and catch-up!"

Many of you have done incredible jobs going remote with your law firms, and navigating the difficult dynamics this off-site status creates. You've learned how to maximize ZOOM and audio and video conferencing to stay connected with your firms, to leverage more Social Media, to reach out to your communities during this time of need with masks, sanitizer, etc. You've had to figure out how to respond to Google's changing analytics and more. Many of you have risen to the occasion; you've made the best lemonade you could out of a truckload of lemons, and I am PROUD OF YOU! I hope you have felt the support and help we at PILMMA have tried to extend to all our PILMMA members during these trying times. (i.e., lots of extra ZOOM meetings, revamped GOLD MEMBER materials including 20+ videos and presentations, the new Chris Mullins Intake calls, Roundtables for Office Managers and Marketers, and increased consult calls, COVID WEBINARS, and more.)

Hopefully, you were able to catch PILMMA's fantastic Law Firm Growth Maximizer Virtual Event last month. We had an incredible turnout, and three afternoons spent helping lawyers learn IMPORTANT STRATEGIES for Law Firm Growth! IF you missed it, we should have recordings available in the coming weeks, so watch your emails for details!

Last month marked the end of the FALL OPEN ENROLLMENT for PILMMA's Strategic Coach Program; many of you came forward, ready to commit to a new year of intense marketing and management coaching- and I'm excited to be working with you all! If you missed the enrollment deadline, I'm sorry, but we can't open it back up until next year because it is a sequential program.

PIVOT or PERISH

It's National Mastermind Month, so I couldn't let this issue go to press without taking the opportunity to give a specific shout out to our PILMMA MASTERMIND Members. Many of whom have used MASTERMIND meetings to jump start and PIVOT their firms forward during this COVID challenge. I've always known how powerful Masterminds are for jump starting law firm growth and gaining fresh and needed insights, but I have seen it in spades during this pandemic. Members have shared their challenges as well as their victories, and the new ideas that have been needed to keep propelling their firms in a positive direction during this time. Members learning and growing and supporting one another, it's what Masterminds are all about. If you want to join a PILMMA Mastermind group, let me know ASAP, as our next meetings are scheduled for December 2020!

As you dive into the November issue, take note of my article on critical year-end planning on page 10. NOW is the time to create your firm's year-end plans. It's time to get your ducks in a row to take advantage of unique year-end opportunities that many law firm owners miss. If you missed my recent WEBINAR on year-end planning, make sure and listen from your PILMMA Member Resources on the website.

This is also the time to send out unique Thanksgiving Cards to your current and past clients and any other referral sources. Sierra, PILMMA's Own In-house Graphic Artist, has created some beautiful cards you can download. Look inside for my discussion on why this is an important and often missed Marketing Strategy on page 22!

As we prepare to close out 2020 and gear up for 2021, I am thankful and grateful for each PILMMA member! It is a privilege to be able to come along beside you and help where I can, and I want each of you to know that I'm here for you. So don't hesitate to schedule a time to talk or to shoot me an email. We are always stronger together than alone. ◆

Dedicated to YOUR Success,

Capture More Clients by Casting a Wider Net

by Jessica Richardson & Heidi Aycock

Is It Time to Expand Your Practice Areas?

COVID was the curve ball that no one saw coming, and it issued us a challenge that led to growth for some practices while being the death blow to others. Smart attorneys quickly realized that to not only survive but thrive in this "new normal," they must widen the net and get creative.

So, how can you accomplish this without working longer days, hiring more staff, or tripling your marketing budget? One method you might have already considered is to expand the practice areas that you offer. The most seamless additions are those that are complementary to your current practice areas, and that potentially overlap in expertise or networking groups. For example, if you are a personal injury attorney who wants to branch out, you might consider social security disability or medical malpractice.

However, it doesn't even have to be a new practice area; it could just be how you market it. One of our personal injury clients took this advice and signed up for Ken Hardison's **National Academy of Motorcycle Injury Lawyers** (**NAMIL**) to increase his motorcycle accident caseload. This was a brilliant tactic for him to take. As a personal injury attorney, he already handled motorcycle accidents. Still, by branding himself as "THE" motorcycle accident attorney in his area, he expanded his overall practice and widened the net for new clients without actually changing much.

> "Deciding to add to your practice areas is a simple decision, but putting the wheels in motion can seem overwhelming. It doesn't have to be.

Deciding to add to your practice areas is a simple decision, but putting the wheels in motion can seem overwhelming. It doesn't have to be. Often we are asked if a huge marketing budget or a massive campaign is required for success. Not really. If you start by carefully planning a smart marketing strategy, you can leverage what you already have and make it work for you. Marketing that doesn't begin with a plan or a targeted audience leads to wasted money. We want to help you avoid that pitfall. So, first, ask yourself:

- *Who is your target audience?*
- *What niche are you filling?*
- *How are you different from your competitors?*

Once you have those answers clearly defined, you will have a better idea of how to focus your message to be most effective. Also, just because these are the steps that we advise, it doesn't mean that you have to do them all. Pick 2 or 3 from the list that you especially like doing (because we always excel at what we enjoy), and have someone else handle the rest.

6 Steps You Can Take to Expand/ Build Your Practice Areas

Your Website: Add this new practice area to your website. Creating a practice area page is a must. However, you will also need to have enough content on the page for Google to recognize it. The recommended amount is a minimum of 1500 - 3000 words. Do a Google search for your new practice and check out the local competition. Take note of how much content they have on their practice area pages, and how you can make yours better. It is also essential that this new

content be expertly linked throughout the website for Google to find it and index it.

Traditional Google Ads: Pay-per-click search and display ads are a great way to begin showing up on Google right away. Your added content on the website may take a few weeks or months to begin ranking organically, so using some of your marketing budget for Google ads can help.

Google Local Services Ads: Google's newest product for lawyers is a pay-per-lead service that likely covers your new practice area. If you have a small firm, the setup is relatively quick, and the leads and budget are easy to manage. We recommend this product if you are considering practice expansion.

Keep Adding Content: Add new content to the website every week. Your articles for your new practice can be FAQ-style and centered on your geographic area. Either way, this will continue to solidify your authority with Google and with potential clients when they see that you have a large amount of content on the new practice area.

Videos: Write and film 3-5 custom videos each month about your new practice area. Having different methods of delivery for your marketing message will appeal to a broader range of people. You will want to post these videos on your website, social media, and Youtube channel. This is another signal to Google that you are the authority on this topic, and it will improve your rankings on search.

Social Media: Leverage your social media accounts to spread awareness of your new practice areas and ask your fans to help spread the word. If your state ethics allow it, have some fun and offer a prize to those who share your posts. The goal is to quickly spread the word that you are offering new services and be top of mind with your fans and their friends. If you or someone on your staff is very skilled at engaging social media audiences, this can be an effective and inexpensive way to market your new practice areas.

Newsletter: If you have a print or digital newsletter that you send to your past and current clients, be sure to include a big spread about your new practice, why you've chosen to represent this new group of people. Adding a personal or motivational story can help endear people to you and help them remember your new practice area.

Business has always been a "grow or die" situation, and 2020 has undoubtedly amplified the truth in that message. The good news is that once you become accustomed to a growth mindset, your practice ***will grow.*** Sometimes it is as simple as looking at the same problem from a completely different perspective. ◆

If you are interested in expanding your practice areas, want to make your current ones more profitable, or want to brainstorm some new marketing ideas, Twofold is always happy to help. Feel free to call us (Jessica and Heidi) at 678-741-5340 or email us at admin@twofoldmarketing.com.

Twofold Marketing

Jessica Richardson & Heidi Aycock are the founders of Twofold Marketing, a unique marketing agency that offers blended marketing to their clients. Both were formerly marketing directors for practices that had tremendous success. Twofold was born from the need to bring the legal industry a full-service marketing agency that understands the inner workings of a law firm and can manage multiple avenues of marketing, i.e., SEO, PPC, websites, community marketing, and employee training, all under one roof.

End-of-Year PLANNING CHECKLIST

by Kenneth L. Hardison

November is an important month for law firm owners! This is the time when you should start planning how you will close out 2020 and gear up for a strong and successful 2021. During the months of November and December, you should be concentrating on end-of-year planning. This means winding up 2020 not only properly but also strategically thinking about what you need to do in order to hit the ground running in 2021.

With only two months remaining in the year, this is the time to Clean up, Catch up, and Complete projects that you've been meaning to tackle but never got around to addressing throughout the year. This is also the time to take a critical reflective look back at the goals you had set for 2020 and see where you have ended up in terms of cases, revenue, expenditures, etc. Like many other businesses across the country, this year has been particularly challenging for law firms. Lots of lawyers have seen a dip in their gross revenues, their net revenues, and their case intakes. As a result, you should spend some time and thought focusing on what measures you will take going forward to offset these setbacks. It's also time to think long-range for 2021 and start planning what you're going to do when the COVID-19 pandemic is over or better controlled.

Effective End of the Year planning can cover a number of areas- so I will not attempt to give you an exhaustive list- But I'd like to identify some of the key areas that I believe you will want to make sure you include as you put together your firm's End of the Year Plans.

FILES: Clean Out, Cut, or Cultivate

Old Files: Now is the time to archive or destroy your old files, in accordance with your state bar's regulations.

Ongoing Files: You should also evaluate each of your ongoing files and determine how long each file has been open. We refer to this as the "time on desk." Determine what you feel is a reasonable amount of time necessary to work a case, whether that is 9 months, 12 months or 18 months, etc. Identify all cases that are languishing unresolved beyond that time frame and group them per the attorney responsible for each case. Then set up a conference with each attorney and determine why each case is still open and what needs to be done to move each of these cases forward or if the case should be dropped. Time is money, and now more than ever, it is important to make sure your lawyers are moving your cases through the hopper effectively and efficiently.

FINANCES: Year-End Tax Planning

This is also one of my favorite times of the year to do

Kenneth L. Hardison

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important and advantageous year-end tax planning. Now is the time to meet with your CPA and go over things that you can do to lower your 2020 tax bill.

It's also a great time to look at your retirement accounts and see what you can put in and what you need to put in for your employees.

It's also a time to compare profitability to last year.

You should take a look at your firm's cash flow trends for 2020, as well as the profits and gross revenues. This is also the time to re-check your average fee on each type of case and calculate your return on investment (ROI) for each marketing tactic or strategy. Take a hard look at what is and is not working so you can make smart decisions for the coming year's allocations within your marketing budget.

HUMAN RESOURCES: Employee Evals/Update Manuals & Processes

This is the time to evaluate employee performance. Sit down with your key personnel and department heads, such as your office manager, head paralegal, and key attorneys. You and the managing staff should separately evaluate each employee's performance, assigning a grade of A, B, or C to each staff member. Then, conference together to compare and discuss these evaluations.

C Employees: Set up individual meetings with any C employees, identifying your areas of concern and giving them an opportunity to improve their performance by the end of the year. I suggest giving them approximately 30 days to shape up or ship out. Although many lawyers struggle with letting low-performance employees go, it is a necessary evil. You should always hire slowly but fire quickly. Low-performance employees weaken and drag down your entire firm.

B Employees: Set up individual meetings with each B employee, identifying your areas of concern, and giving them an opportunity to improve their performance so that they can become A players- team leaders, with opportunity for advancement, bonuses, etc.

A Employees: Set up individual meetings with your A employees to acknowledge their stellar performance. We all appreciate knowing that our efforts are acknowledged and appreciated. These are also the employees that should be helping you with your firm processes and procedures. Have them take a look at the existing processes to make sure they are up to date. Encourage these A-players to give you their thoughts, ideas, and suggestions for ways to improve the firm's productivity, efficiency, and client service. You may be surprised at the great ideas they come up with.

Employee Manuals: Take time to review and update your employee manual so that you can provide a current copy to all of your employees at the start of the new year. If circumstances or requirements have changed, make sure your manual reflects these changes. If you don't have a social media policy in place, now is the time to address this as well.

In light of Covid- 19's impact on law firm operations, you may need to update your firm manual to include your firm's policies regarding remote work, sick days, hybrid working hours, Covid protection measures, and such. Once the new year starts, ask each employee to read the current manual, and then sign a statement acknowledging they have read the manual, understand the contents, and agree to follow these guidelines.

Planning a First of the Year Kick-Off Breakfast: Now is the time to begin planning a firm-wide first-of-the-year kick-off breakfast for 2021. This is an excellent opportunity to rally your troops and get everyone on the same page and excited about the new year's opportunities for the firm. Although I have discussed the importance of this kind of firm-wide gathering in prior magazine articles, I will discuss this firm-wide meeting in more detail in next month's issue.

> "The trouble with not having a goal is that you can spend your life running up and down the field and never score.
>
> – BILL COPELAND

GOALS & PLANNING FOR NEXT YEAR:

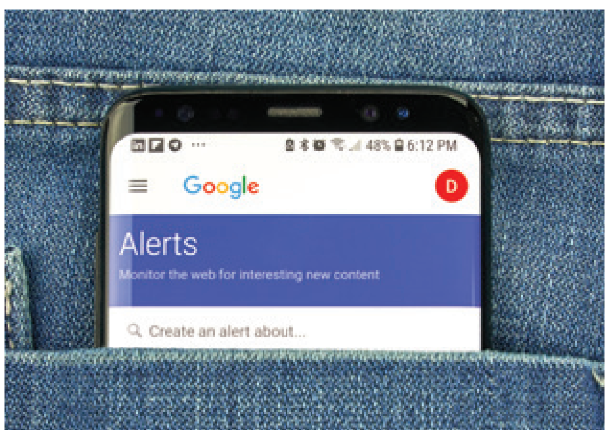
Review, Reflect, Reevaluate, & Respond: You should take the time NOW to closely examine and review this past year's law firm goals and objectives. Identify which goals you have met and which ones you have failed to meet. Try to identify the bottlenecks and obstacles that prevented the achievement of this year's goals. Then bring that knowledge to bare to help you in setting up your firm's goals and steps for Implementation in 2021.

Now is the time to take a critical look at your firm's current marketing plan and budget and to put together a plan and budget for 2021. How much do you want to grow? continued on page 34

Building Referral Relationships
WITH GOOGLE ALERTS

by Kenneth L. Hardison

We all know that referrals are the best type of cases to get- They usually result in larger fees, and the clients are typically easier to satisfy. I recently came across a tool that can really help you in building relationships with potential referral sources. It's called Google Alerts—and it will help you reach out to other lawyers, doctors, preachers, therapists, accountants, or any other type of professional or nonprofessional that could be a referral source for you.



Here's how Google Alerts works: If you go to the Google Alerts site, you can type in someone's name, and then every time that person's change comes up online or in the news, Google Alerts sends you a notice, including the person's name and what they are being recognized for. You can set Google Alerts to notify you daily, weekly, or monthly. This alert is a golden opportunity for you to build and solidify business referral relationships. With this notification in hand, you can reach out to these individuals with a card, letter, or handwritten note congratulating them on their recent achievement or recognition.

Who doesn't appreciate receiving a handwritten note these days?

The key to making this Marketing Tactic work is to systematize the process. Start by opening up a Google Alert account (or have someone else in the firm set it up for you) and enter the names of all the people you currently want to create or solidify a referral relationship with. Every time you meet a new potential referral source, someone who will come in contact with the people you want to represent, then add them into your Google Alerts account. Within just a few months, you will start getting alerts on many of your potential referral sources. Decide how you want to reach out to them- whether by email, card, or handwritten note, and if you are crunched for time, then delegate this process to your assistant.

You will be pleasantly surprised at how well this simple marketing tactic will help you in building these important referral relationships.

Not only is Google Alerts simple to set up and use, but it's also absolutely free. If, for some reason, you don't want to use Google Alerts, there are a number of other programs out there that can do the same thing, such as Awario, Sprout Social, Agora Pulse, Social Mention, Talk Walker, Brand Watch, and Key Hole.

Getting Referrals is about building and sustaining positive relationships. Google Alerts is a simple and easy way to help you develop important and lucrative referral connections. ◆

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HOW TO GET UNSTUCK *When Trying to Figure Out New Things to Talk About on Video*

by Gerry Oginski, Esq.

I got a text message the other day from a former video client of mine. He'd done a few video shoots with me over the years and was preparing to shoot 100 videos. He was stuck. He had a mental block. He only was able to come up with 75 topics.

No matter what he did, he just couldn't think of anything else to talk about in his upcoming video shoot. That's not unusual.

For many years, I used to keep a notebook with ideas.

Every time I'd think of an idea for a video, I'd write it down.

When I'd go on vacation, I'd have a mental dump on the airplane and write for a solid hour.

By the time I'd land, I'd have enough video content to last for an entire year.

Within the past few years, I realized I stopped using my notebook and stopped referring to it when I'd go out on the weekends and shoot my videos.

It was just the other day, while sitting in my kitchen after shooting a few videos, my daughter came in for a snack and asked me how I still have video topics to talk about.

I just smiled.

She knew I had over 3,200 videos.

She didn't understand how I kept coming up with topics that were interesting to talk about.

Let me share with you the answer I gave her and the answer I gave my former video client…

The first thing you must do is create a timeline of your ideal client or consumer.

You need to write it out.

It will take you five minutes. This is the foundation upon which you will build your video library.

From the time your ideal client realizes they need an attorney to how they decide which attorney to hire to understanding how their lawsuit gets started and what documents they need to sign, you must write out each and every detail of every step in the process, **from the client's perspective.**

FROM THE CLIENT'S PERSPECTIVE

This is about **them. Not you.** Make sure you repeat that often as you think about video topics. This is about **them. Not you.**

As an example, here's how my timeline would start:

1. Patient injured in a hospital.
2. Doctors are not answering question how this happened.
3. Patient needs answers.
4. Sitting at home at night, in pain.
5. Watching late night TV, lawyer commercial comes on triggering idea that they might be able to sue.
6. Idea of suing their doctor begins to simmer.
7. Will doctor lose his license if I sue?
8. Will I destroy his reputation in community if I sue him?
9. What will doctor think of me if I sue him?

> This is about them. Not you. Make sure you repeat that often as you think about video topics.

10. Even if I want to sue, how do I choose which attorney to hire?

11. How do I distinguish one lawyer over another?

12. Can I really trust a TV ad attorney?

13. Isn't there someone I know who can refer me to a great attorney who can help me?

14. I don't understand what these lawyer credentials mean!

From there, I'd just keep going. Every single step. There are hundreds of them. Actually, thousands of them.

Depends on how detailed you want to get. I'd suggest getting as detailed as you can.

Why? Simple.

This will give you exact video topics to talk about that are important for **your client.** Not once will you need to mention where you went to law school. Not once will you need to tell your viewer how many years you've been in practice and what motivated you to become an attorney. None of that nonsense.

Then you can cherry pick those topics that you think your viewer would find interesting.

"But what happens when you've exhausted all the topics in your timeline?" my daughter asked. I smiled again.

"I never run out of topics," I said.

"How?" she again inquired.

"Let me show you," I responded.

"First, go to your timeline and find me the exact points when there is controversy. In every potential lawsuit there's always controversy. In every case that's actually started, there's controversy. Viewers LOVE controversy. There's often lots of drama associated with each controversy. Why do you think so many reality shows are so popular? It's because of all the drama and controversy," I told her.

"Scour your timeline and find each point where you know there's controversy. Find the drama in each event. Those are the ones you're going to talk about. Those will generate the most interest," I said.

As an example, in my timeline I jumped to trial. In the middle of trial while trying to introduce a police report into evidence, the defense attorney jumps up and yells out "OBJECTION JUDGE, HE CAN'T DO THAT!" My ideal client will want to know why and how I can overcome this objection. I will infuse courtroom drama into something as simple as my opponent screaming "OBJECTION!"

Controversy and drama will always win the day with attracting your ideal client.

Where exactly is the controversy?

In my case, it starts with the doctor not telling the patient what happened. The patient wants to know what happened. The doctor is hiding something. That makes the patient mad. Then, the patient wants copies of her medical records to see what was done. The hospital refuses to give her a copy of her medical record. That makes her upset and helpless. Then, she becomes frustrated because she can't find someone to help her.

She can't find a reputable attorney. She's only encountered paralegals at each law firm she called and no attorney will get on the phone with her. That makes her angry, upset and feel as if her time and case isn't worthwhile for any attorney.

How about the controversy surrounding a conversation between the claims examiner and you regarding your client's injuries. You think the case is worth X dollars. The adjuster thinks the case is worth only a fraction of that.

There is controversy and drama in each of these.

You must look for every point in your timeline where real controversy exists.

"Ok, but what happens when you run out of controversies and drama?" my former video client asked. I smiled again.

"Remember when you created your timeline from your ideal client's perspective?" I asked.

"Yes," he said slowly.

"Each topic was created from the viewpoint of your ideal client. Now, I want you to change the perspective," I said.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"Simple. Let me show you..." I told him.

"Let's say there's a car accident where your client claims the

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Gerry Oginski, Esq.

Gerry Oginski is a New York medical malpractice and personal injury attorney. He is the author of "Secrets of Lawyer Video Marketing in the Age of Youtube." If you have questions, call him at 516·487·8207.

Foster a Culture of Gratitude.

by Tiana Hinnant Hardison

With Thanksgiving approaching, many of us are thinking about how we will celebrate this year. Some are planning turkey dinners with family and friends, while many others won't be able to physically celebrate with loved ones and will be forced to skip this treasured tradition this year or resort to a meal shared virtually.

Many of you are used to hosting a firm-wide thanksgiving meal, but this year will be "different." Significant numbers of law firms have not been able to return to brick and mortar operations with their full staff. Some are operating with employees working remotely or on staggered shifts to minimize Covid risks. And even if you have an entire team working in one office, there are covid precautions like mask-wearing, social distancing, and safety restrictions that prohibit gathering everyone together for a special Thanksgiving meal or other festivities.

But Thanksgiving is still the time when we focus on what and whom we are grateful for. We reflect and count our blessings. This spirit of gratitude and the act of expressing appreciation for those we care about is needed this year more than ever, in our offices as well as in our families.

In fact, businesses all over the country are recognizing the benefits of fostering a culture of gratitude and appreciation, not just at Thanksgiving but throughout the year. Many companies are finding that taking measures to create a company culture of gratitude yields significant returns on a variety of levels- such as increased employee productivity, job satisfaction, and retention- and improved work product!

We've long known the benefits of affirmation and appreciation. Who doesn't like hearing that they've done a good job or that the work they are doing matters? The more we feel appreciated, acknowledged, and affirmed, the happier we are, and the harder most of us work to do a good job. It's human nature. It starts when we can barely walk, proceeds through our school age years and continues throughout our adult life. In our personal lives, we readily recognize how our mood and motivation improve when our spouse shows they appreciate the work we've done at home or for our family. We see how well our children respond when they are praised for doing an excellent job at their chores or studies.

Just as in our personal relationships, affirmation works wonders in the business setting, too. When our staffs feel appreciated and affirmed, they are much more apt to go that extra mile to do their best work. When we show that we value their insights and welcome their ideas, they are more likely to feel vested in what we are trying to accomplish. Feeling affirmed not only boosts our confidence and self-worth but causes most of us to push even harder. Your staff and associate attorneys are no different.

Being grateful for your staff and showing it in meaningful ways, both big and small, can transform your firm. **Taking action to create a firm culture of gratitude and affirmation can be a powerful catalyst that takes your firm to an entirely new level.** Productivity can increase.

Tiana Hinnant Hardison, Esq.

Tiana Hinnant Hardison has practiced law for 29 years, with an emphasis in personal injury and disability law and now balances her time and energies between practicing law and working with PILMMA. You may contact Tiana at tianamhinnant@gmail.com.

Stressful environments dissipate, and morale improves. And when your employees are happy, guess what? Your clients will be happier too. It's a domino effect. We cannot expect our employees to show kindness, respect, empathy, and appreciation to our clients if they aren't getting it from us. As Ken puts it, "If you want your employees to be good to your clients, you need to be good to your employees, first. If you want your clients happy, you need to make your employees happy first."

Many law firm owners show their employees appreciation through financial rewards or incentives, such as the Christmas bonus. I'm certainly not suggesting that you stop providing these financial rewards or incentives to your employees. They are tangible and concrete expressions that show you value your staff and want them to share in your firm's success. But what I am suggesting is that by taking some simple steps, you can create a Gratitude culture in your law firm that reaps benefits to you, your staff, and your clients all year long. These benefits may be more powerful and sustaining than financial incentives.

In fact, The London School of Economics conducted extensive research and concluded that financial incentives might actually reduce an employee's natural inclination to complete a task and derive pleasure from doing so. Glassdoor conducted a study that found that 80% of the employees polled would work harder if they felt their employer appreciated their efforts, and 70% said their self-image and attitude would be improved if their employer thanked them more regularly! (Vozza, The Science of Gratitude and Why it's Important In Your Workplace, 11/14/16, Fast Company)

Psychology professor and gratitude researcher Robert Emmons considers gratitude vital to the workplace because it acts as a disinfectant against "exploitation, complaint, entitlement, gossip, and negativity that often exist in the workplace. "Id. The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania put this theory to test by dividing people into two groups and asking them to make fundraising calls to solicit alumni donations. One group was given a pep talk of encouragement before making the calls, and the other group wasn't. And guess what? The group that received the pep talk make a whopping 50% more calls than the group that didn't. Id.

William Covey, in his classic *7 Habits of Successful People*, explains the importance of affirmation and appreciation this way: "Next to physical survival, the greatest need of a human being is psychological survival- to be understood, to be validated, and to be appreciated."

"

Being grateful for your staff and showing it in meaningful ways, both big and small, can transform your firm.

So how do you, as a law firm owner, create a culture of gratitude? Here are some simple suggestions:

Creating Culture starts at the Top. Make it a practice in your weekly and monthly firm meetings to acknowledge your team's positive efforts. During Covid, these meetings are probably virtual, but you can still provide valuable affirmation and acknowledgment. Make it a part of how you start your weekly or monthly meetings. Be specific.

Thank the individual members; be on the lookout for exemplary performance and call it out publicly.

- Take the time to send a handwritten thank-you note or a personal email to employees when they do something well. Encourage your staff to do the same.

- Let your firm in on what you are trying to do. Let them know that you want your law firm to be a place where we cheer each other on, and acknowledge each other's efforts. Let them know that you want to create this kind of Gratitude Culture, and that you need their help to do so.

- Make sure you recognize employees on their birthdays and service anniversaries and post it on social media with a photo that highlights that employee's contribution to the firm.

- Host impromptu surprise celebrations at work- such as bringing in pizza or cookies with a giant thank you note to your staff. Leave it in the break room or kitchen for them to enjoy individually since Covid concerns make large group gatherings difficult.

- Create a physical bulletin board or a virtual one that recognizes acts of kindness and exceptional client service and encourage employees to post whenever they see another employee "caught" in an act of kindness. Encourage employees to post thank you notes to each other on the board.

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Video is King on Social, *Right?*

by Luke W. Russell & Eva Grouling Snider

"Scum of the earth… get off my feed, you scammers!"

"Video is king on social." "Video is the wave of the future." "If you're not making videos, you've got to get on that, now."

These refrains are all over the social media marketing landscape. And for good reasons (which we'll get into in a bit)!

However, for lawyers, things are a bit more complicated. In this article, we'll dive into the role that video should play in legal social media.

The first thing to know about all the calls for more video content is that they are not specific to the legal industry. In fact, much of what you'll hear in digital marketing circles is designed for eCommerce businesses. When you're selling services —especially services that your prospects don't want to need — the game changes.

There is a statistical basis for the calls for more video content. Take a look at Facebook, for example:

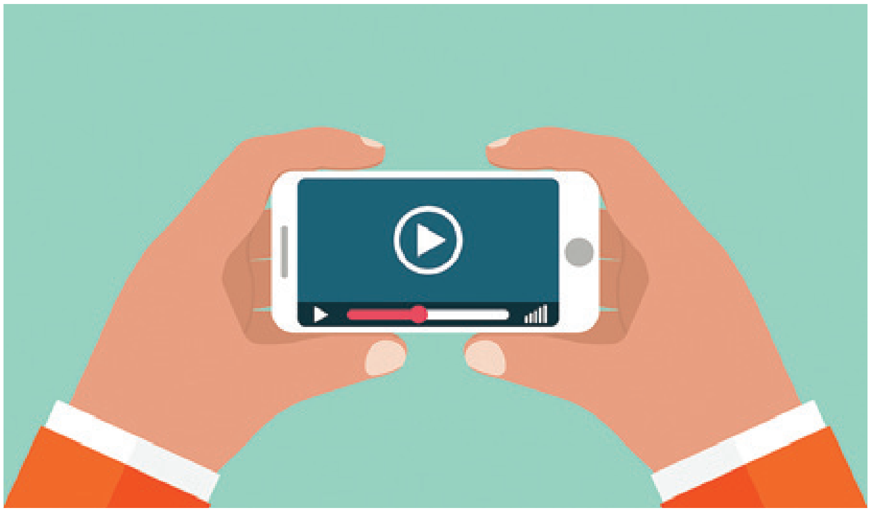
- Every day, over 4 billion video views occur on Facebook, with more than 100 million hours watched
- The engagement rate on videos is significantly higher (6%) than any other post type
- Studies show that people look at videos for 5x longer on average than other types of posts

Pair those stats with Mark Zuckerberg saying in 2016 that by 2021 (just a few months away now!), Facebook could be mostly video content. It's not surprising that there are so many calls to get on board the video train.

In addition to those stats not being industry-specific, there's something else to note: they are all engagement focused, not conversion focused. Increased engagement only matters to the extent that it can lead to a better cost per lead or better cost per case.

When getting a sale costs a few bucks, a higher engagement rate can make all the difference. For the legal industry, though, one lead often costs hundreds of dollars. This means that a higher engagement rate — if it's not paired with a strong conversion rate — means relatively little. In fact, we have seen some campaigns generate tons of engagement but relatively few people willing to sign up for a free consultation.

So, given that video is not as important for lawyers as the pundits make out, how should you use it?



> “If your goal is to build your firm’s brand recognition in your local market, then video is likely to be a cornerstone of your social strategy.

The short answer: video should be an important part of your social media toolkit.

For example, if you’re running an ad campaign on Facebook, you should include videos. Run several image ads and test them up against several video ads. Which generates better engagement? And critically, which gets you more conversions?

The results may surprise you. We’ve run hundreds of Facebook ad campaigns, and almost all of them used both images and videos. In some, images absolutely crush videos on performance. In others, the vast majority of leads and cases come from one or two videos. Sometimes one video will perform abysmally, while a different but similar video kills it.

This is also why we recommend trying different styles of video. Make some that are short, and make others that are longer and educational. Make some videos with you/the lawyer on camera, and make others with stock footage. You can even make short videos that are basically text on an animated background with either stock music or no sound (pro tip: 85% of Facebook videos are played on mute).

What if you hate making videos? There is good news and bad news. The good news is that you don’t need to be on camera. With services like Promo.com (which our agency uses often), you can create beautiful marketing videos without ever having to record your own footage.

The bad news is that you cannot just run out your commercials on social. Social media audiences, especially on Facebook and Instagram, are often vehemently opposed to traditional “TV” style ads. Lawyers who adjust their video strategy to appeal to the more natural and “informal” tone of social media often see success. Lawyers who run the same ad they run in their local TV market are much more likely to experience poor results.

If your goal is to build your firm’s brand recognition in your local market, then video is likely to be a cornerstone of your social strategy. For most firms, though, video is not the ultimate powerhouse that many digital marketing gurus portray it as. It’s simply a powerful tool in your social media toolbox. ♦

Luke W. Russell,

Luke Russell, founder of Russell Media paid traffic focuses on online campaigns. The Russell Media team is a strong proponent of shouldering risk with clients and offers various options that include performance pay. Connect with Luke via email at luke@russellmedia.us

Eva Grouling Snider

Eva Grouling Snider is the Marketing Director at Russell Media. She is an East coast girl transplanted to the Midwest. Eva grew up in South Carolina, but has lived all up and down the East coast, from Georgia to Maine. She moved to Muncie in 2011 to join Ball State University, where she taught professional writing, design, and marketing courses.

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A Mastermind group is a peer-to-peer mentoring group whose purpose is to help each individual member solve his or her problems with input and advice from the other group members. A Mastermind group is really like having your own private board of directors. American entrepreneur Jim Rohn stated it this way: "You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with." Success truly breeds success. It is the wise man or woman who recognizes that they do not know it all, and are willing to learn from others.

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3. You begin to THINK bigger.

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5. You gain new perspectives on things that you may have thought about previously but never really got serious about.

6. You receive honest feedback and advice and invaluable brainstorming from similarly situated individuals.

7. You are better able to eliminate blind spots and are able to create shortcuts to success because you are learning from other's mistakes, and not wasting time and money in unnecessary trial & error.

8. You are able to leverage your experience as well as the skills of all the other members in you Mastermind. Imagine having 10x the individual brain power, laser focused on finding solutions to your firm's challenges!

9. You become inspired to tackle projects and goals that you once thought were unattainable.

10. You have clarity in areas that were previously blurry by virtue of the insights and perspective of fresh unbiased minds.

11. You establish new habits for success and experience faster implementation because of the friendly accountability.

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Why You Should Send Out Thanksgiving Cards & Magnetic Swag

by Kenneth L. Hardison

Over the years, I have made it my custom to send out Thanksgiving cards to everyone on my mailing list, along with a magnetic calendar. I started doing this with my law firm back in 1998! Why? Because it helps you stand out from your competition and increase top of mind awareness with your present and former clients and your business referral network.

Let's face it, most of us get tons of Christmas cards from friends and business associates but rarely receive thanksgiving cards. So, if you send out a Christmas card to your clients or professional referral network, you are likely to get lost in the clutter. By sending out Thanksgiving cards instead, you have a much greater chance of standing out- and differentiating yourself from your competitors. It is a simple but powerful way to increase your top of mind awareness with your clients, former clients, and business associates.****

I also suggest sending a magnetic calendar to your mailing, or some other relevant magnet. You could opt for local emergency numbers, metric conversion, favorite football, other high school teams' playing schedule, etc. It just depends on what your ideal client would appreciate the most. These magnetic reminders aren't expensive- but are apt to "stick "around for 12 months, rather than being read and tossed out in a short time. They are inexpensive to produce- but will give you a lot of bang for your buck.

Just remember, when you are striving to build a strong referral base, you want to stand out from your competitions, and you want to retain top of mind awareness. ◆

****As a PILMMA member, you can go into your PILMMA Resources and download ready, made Thanksgiving cards for FREE, that you can send to your printer and mail out in the next few weeks! So really, there's no excuse not to give this simple marketing tactic a try!

Kenneth L. Hardison

Ken Hardison is the founder & CEO of PILMMA. He has fought for people's rights as a trusted lawyer for over 35 years. His ethics, integrity, and passion for his clients helped to build one of North Carolina's most successful firms.

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The World's Most *Comprehensive* VIDEO MANUAL

by Nick Veser

Did anyone else find themselves looking for a new bike this past summer? If you did, you realized that there was a national bike shortage. The pandemic created tremendous demand, and a lack of supply. It just so happened that this year was the year that my son had decided to become a mountain biker. So, we looked everywhere. He learned patience as the days turned into weeks, and finally months. Eventually we found the last bike in a box at a shop. I asked the salesmen how long it would take to build it, and "2 weeks, if you're lucky" was the response. I looked down at my son, and knew we were taking the bike home.

Now, I can be pretty handy when I need to be, but I also believe that people who are paid to do a job (building bikes or shooting video) will always do a better job than the DIYers. I asked the salesmen if there was an instruction book if I felt I needed it, and he told me that I would find everything I needed online and gave me the URL to the instruction manual.

We got home, and I took the bike out of the box. I had never put a mountain bike together before, but I figured it would be easy. I pulled up the URL, and the link was broken. I searched the box and found no paper manual. Can anyone guess where I went next?

YOUTUBE – The world's most comprehensive video manual. You can learn how to do just about anything on YouTube. I wouldn't suggest replacing your car engine or doing a comprehensive video marketing campaign by following instructions on YouTube. But if you want to learn how to put a mountain bike together or change a tire, YouTube is the place to do it.

This made me think about how many of you are using this resource to educate your prospective clients. There are so many ways to use YouTube that you may have never considered. Here are just a few:

"How To" Videos – What intellectual property to you possess by virtue of the area of law you practice? Sharing it won't make people want to represent themselves in a personal injury case. In fact, in some cases it may make the phone ring. Let me give you two examples.

1. Do a video explaining Under-insured Motorist Insurance. You can make it a simple video, merely telling people what to look for when rate shopping. But remember, you are the "expert,", and they want to hear it from you.

2. Do a video explaining how to negotiate with insurance companies following an accident. This is a far more complex video but will educate them on why they would never want to attempt such negotiations their own. Give them a way out, and a call to action to get in touch with you.

FAQs – What are the most common questions you or

Nick Veser

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your staff are asked daily? Put some serious thought into these. These can be topics such as:

1. What you should do if you are involved in an accident.
2. The most recent mass tort you are working on, and some quick details in reference to it.

People have questions about what you do. You have answers. Use the world's most comprehensive video manual to anticipate their questions.

Practice Area Descriptions – What is a good example of a slip and fall accident? What constitutes a viable case for a playground accident? *Every practice area, and every type of accident deserves its own video.*

One thing that seems rather consistent when I evaluate lawyers' video assets is that they are under-utilizing their content. They've produced a branding video, and they have it on their website. But they haven't taken a great line from a client and used it on social media for the rest of their potential clients to see. They did some FAQs that they put nicely under the FAQ section of their website, but they haven't put it on YouTube as a resource for everyone.

> "Think of video as a tool to educate the world about what you do.

Think of video as a tool to educate the world about what you do. Create broad videos that give people useful information, and then start to narrow the scope. Put it on YouTube for the world to see with a helpful title like "Can I get money if I was hurt in an accident?" Then use it everywhere else you can. Put it on Facebook. Run ads by using geo-targeting. Put it on your website. Send it out to potential clients in an email. One thing I can absolutely predict is that you are not using your video resources as much as you should be.

I ended up learning how to put the bike together. The video was comprehensive and educational. So, I went back when it came time to replace the pedals… and to clean the chain. That page has a new follower, and a new fan today. ◆

Just Be *Present.*

(from Jeff's soon-to-be-published book *Just One Step: Walking Backwards to the Present on the Camino Trail)*

by Jeff Nischwitz

Presence is often talked about and even more often misunderstand, but here's what you need to know about presence – ***presence is the answer to everything***. Presence is the answer to fear, to pain, to doubt, to shame, to relationship, to uncertainty, to change, to connection, to joy!

When I was called to walk the Camino de Santiago in Spain, little did I know the Camino would change everything for me. More importantly, that it would allow me to learn and grow enough to share this journey with you – and hopefully, give you these keys for your own journey. As I said at the beginning, you don't have to travel to Spain and walk the Camino, but you do have to choose – choose to be awake, choose to risk, choose to be vulnerable, choose to love, choose to care, choose to shift, choose to walk your road, choose your journey.

One of the most surprising clarities that I've discovered on these journeys – the Camino journey, my life journey and this book journey – is that ***presence is a journey, but it's not a journey forward. It's a journey back to the present.*** In the beginning – your beginning and my beginning at our births – we came into the world fully in the present.

When we're born, we don't think about what happened yesterday or what might happen tomorrow, and we don't think about what the people we're with are thinking about us. When a baby wets or soils its diaper, it doesn't get embarrassed and worry what others will think. It just did what it needed and wanted to do in the moment. All of this is to say that presence isn't something you search for and move towards, but rather something that you journey back to in order to live your life with a mindset and experience like that of a child.

Now that we've established that our path to the present is a journey back, let's further explore the gifts of presence that the Camino offered me and now offers you. As I shared earlier, there were so many amazing synchronicities on my journey, and some of them directly related to presence. In the year leading up to my Camino journey, I'd experienced a great deal of what I call aloneness. I didn't feel lonely, but I felt alone despite having many, many people in my life. I often called this experience "feeling alone in the crowd." As I explored this phenomenon, I realized that it was part of my journey of growth and life. How about you? When and where do you experience a feeling of aloneness?

One of my several leadership mentors (Phil Beverly) and I had many conversations about this reality – aloneness – and the fact that this experience was likely a necessary part of my life and leadership journey. They often say that leadership can feel lonely, and I was having that precise experience in every part of my life. This included the truth that as we grow there's a significant risk that we'll lose people and relationships in our life. It's not something we consciously do, but rather a natural outcome of any journey of awakening and consciousness. If you want to grow, you must be willing to risk these types of losses in your life.

The Camino was indeed a journey of aloneness and presence. Without knowing it or intending it, I created a journey of solitude on the Camino – not knowing that this unconscious choice would be at the heart of my Camino journey and its lessons.

While there are many ways to experience the Camino, its core for me is about presence. It's easier there than in my everyday life to find and live in the present. The essence of the Camino is presence, and I know that most of my journey was walked, lived and experienced in the present. While the painful issues in my feet were certainly challenges to staying in the present, living in presence was one key element of my ability to continue and fully experience the Camino despite these issues. In the end, the Camino wasn't a lonely journey, but *it was an a lonely journey* – a journey in and ultimately into the present because upon returning, I discovered a transformational level of presence in my life.

Prior to leaving for Spain, I would have described my personal level of presence and groundedness this way – I felt like my feet were firmly grounded on the earth. Solid. Balanced. Here. Upon my return, however, there'd been an incredible deepening in all of these. It's the feeling of being unstoppable, and each one of you can experience life this same way – unstoppable – when you find your way back to the present and choose to live your life here and now.

In next month's article we'll dive deeper into presence and what it means to be present and live in the present as we explore the gift of presence (to ourselves and others). •

Jeff Nischwitz

*Jeff Nischwitz is the Founder of The Nischwitz Group (www.nischwitzgroup.com), a speaking, consulting and coaching company that helps lawyers and law firms accelerate their results. Jeff works with law firms and their leaders in four core areas: ensuring your firm's future with succession planning and future leader development; building business development cultures and accelerating revenue growth; engaging, empowering and entrusting your team; and navigating the practice of law with less stress and more peace. Jeff is an author and recently came out with his fourth book, **Just One Step: Walking Backwards to the Present on the Camino Trail**. Connect with Jeff at 216·956·6587 or jeff@nischwitzgroup.com*

Mindset Matters

by Chris Mullins, THE PHONE SALES DOCTOR

Remember: The point of marketing is to get the phone to ring. That's all. Marketing cannot impact what happens after that phone is picked up. The fortunate part is that it doesn't have to be this way. The best part is that I can help you correct the problem.

As an attorney or managing partner, the reality is that you can't do it all! And that's not your fault, so you shouldn't even try. Your core competency is interpreting the law. Clients look to you to handle their cases efficiently and effectively with the best possible outcome from them. That's what you do;' that's what you do well; and that should be your focus. Perhaps you're an excellent negotiator and have settled countless cases in favor of your clients. Great. That still doesn't mean that you're the best negotiator when answering the phone… or when training and coaching others how to do it and do it correctly! So, step one: Change your mindset if you think you're the best person to answer the phone (you're not) or the best person to suggest how it should be done (you're not).

The person who should be answering the phone is a person who focuses on people the same way you focus on the law. That person may go by the title of intake specialist, client care coordinator, paralegal, first impressions director, receptionist, or call center. Regardless of how you title this person and regardless of how your firm runs (i.e. a receptionist hands off prospect inquiries to an "intake specialist"), when I use the term intake specialist, I'm referring to the person who is responsible to field a prospect's call, determine if the case is a good fit, and take it to the next step to schedule an appointment or get the retainer signed, effectively closing the sale.

This person is the one who is going to create that all-important and critical first impression. This person is the one who can impact your revenue and bottom line. This person is the one who is as important to your firm's success as you are.

You need to fix your mindset if, up until this point, you have not truly considered and embraced the importance of the intake specialist. Depending on the size of your firm, perhaps your receptionist wears the intake specialist hat as well. If that's the case and if you think of this person only as "the one who answers the phone," you are making a ***huge*** mistake. There is so much more to the process than picking up the phone and politely even cheerily saying, "Good morning. How may I direct your call?"

If that has been ***your*** mindset, I'm going to also suggest that you have an even bigger and more complicated problem to address. If you think of your intake specialist simply as the person who answer the phone, your intake specialist probably only thinks of themselves as "the person answering the phone" as well. You must fix your mindset, and they must fix theirs! However, it starts with you. As the attorney, owner, or managing partner, you are the one setting the tone. For the most part, only when you convey the importance of the position will your intake

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Chris Mullins
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Office: 603-249-5878.

MASTERMINDS: Pivoting During Covid for POWERFUL RESULTS

by Kenneth L. Hardison

Few people really want to go through life alone- Having no one to talk with that really understands your situation or the challenges you are facing is both isolating and frustrating. This is especially true with lawyers- even well-meaning friends and family can't understand the unique challenges law firm owners face. And far too many lawyers try to go it alone. While our society values self-reliance, there is something to be said for finding your tribe- a group of people who truly understand what you are going through because they are going through similar circumstances. It's a safe place to vent, and it's a powerful place for sharing and learning from one another. Fortunately, it's the very environment we've created with PILMMA Masterminds during Covid-19.

I'll admit that when Covid first hit the country, I wondered how it would impact our Mastermind program. PILMMA Masterminds typically get together in beautiful places like Anguilla or Jackson Hole or in pulsating cities like Vegas or Chicago. The pandemic brought those kinds of travel experiences to a grinding halt, didn't they?

When it became evident that travel was out of the question, I began reaching out to our masterminds and setting up ZOOM conference meetings. What I found surprised me. Although we couldn't hold meetings in brick and mortar spaces, the intense dialogue didn't miss one beat! If anything, the exchange of ideas, the support, the camaraderie, and strategies shared GREW! Our Masterminds wanted to talk with each other- they wanted to vent- to brainstorm- to discuss the challenges of going remote with their firms- to share the strategies they were implementing to make the transition successful. They wanted to discuss the implications of the virus on their business and the potential threat to their livelihoods. Together these groups became invaluable support for the members involved! And as the pandemic continues, most Mastermind members want to continue their ZOOM meetings; They want to remain plugged into an intimate group who understands their challenges and shares the strategies for law firm success, despite this pandemic.

Many of the world's most successful business leaders and CEOs rely on Mastermind Groups to propel them forward, especially when facing challenging times. Author Napoleon Hill originally coined the Mastermind concept in his 1925 book, The Law of Success. As Hill defines them, Masterminds are: "two or more people coming together in harmony to solve problems." But Mastermind groups are not just some arcane concept from a by-gone era. They remain cutting-edge tools that motivated lawyers leverage so they can experience dramatic growth and increased profits.

Participating in a Mastermind group is like having your private board of directors, with every member bringing fresh ideas, insights, and strategies to the table and sharing them freely. The synergy of compounded intellect within a quality Mastermind group is unparalleled. Each member raises the bar for the other members. Entrepreneur Jim Rohn states it this way: "You are the average of the five peoples you spend the most time with." Success truly breeds success.

After spending over 20 years participating in and facilitating over 250 Mastermind meetings, I can honestly say that there is no substitute for Masterminds in helping motivated lawyers experience exponential growth. Back when I was still practicing law, my firm grew an astounding 1600%, from 1998-2003, once I joined a Mastermind group! And over the years, as I've facilitated Mastermind groups with lawyers all across the country, I've continued to see lawyers experience dramatic growth, time and time again.

In traditional Mastermind meetings, each member takes turns presenting the marketing and management strategies that they have been working on recently or since the last meeting. They share what has proven successful, including specific strategies, techniques, helpful vendors, etc. Just as importantly, they also share challenges or obstacles they face and gain insight, suggestions, and ideas from their fellow members. Invariably, there will be round table discussions on a variety of relevant subject matters, such as how to pay associates, how to scale a law firm, how to systematize one's firm, etc. Sometimes leading industry leaders or thought leaders speak to the group, and they will teach a crucial concept or strategy, and members are allowed and encouraged to pick their brains in this small setting.

During any crisis, successful lawyers must be prepared to PIVOT- to change course quickly and strategically so that they continue to steer their ships forward.

Masterminds have allowed lawyers to PIVOT their marketing and operations during Covid-19 better. In weekly virtual meetings, I've seen my Mastermind members provide invaluable support to one another. Together, they've tackled issues such as 1) Going Remote, 2) Managing Remote Employees, 3) Marketing tactics and Negotiating Media Buys to obtain more bang for their advertising bucks during Covid-19, 4) Creating PSA's and more pronounced Social Media Presence since potential clients are spending more time than ever online, 5) Exploring and Diversifying into New Practice areas, such as Business Interruptions Claims, Debtor-Creditor Law and Bankruptcy (all places that law firms should be looking at during COVID), 6) Community Involvement Ideas like Giving Away Face Coverings and Bottles of Sanitizer, and 7) PPP SBA Loans and 8) Strategies and Checklists for Reopening Procedures during Covid-19.

One of the keys to a successful Mastermind is having an experienced facilitator who sets the agenda and keeps the meetings moving. They should engage those who are less vocal and respectfully by firmly quieting down the members who are too vocal or monopolize the group. It also helps if the facilitator is an expert in the field that he or she is facilitating. In some respects, the Mastermind facilitator is like an orchestra leader who helps the various instruments come together effectively to produce the Mastermind's music.

It's also essential that the Mastermind facilitator place members in the specific group that will be most beneficial both for the individual member's growth as well as the mutual edification of the group at large. For example, I strive to create the right "fit" within each Mastermind group I facilitate. Novices do not need to be in the same group as those whose firms are larger or more adept at navigating digital marketing complexities. Their pressure points and challenges differ too drastically. While there is much to learn in each group, optimal placement ensures that the members are "equally yoked." Otherwise, members feel dissatisfied, and the exchange of ideas doesn't work as well.

Why do Masterminds work so well in driving lawyers to greater success? If you think about it, you know that different people have different strengths and life experiences. Each member of a Mastermind brings their unique perspective to the table, and the result is a sum that is greater than its parts. One member's fresh insights or ideas will spark another member's ideas. Masterminds are also gathering places for like-minded individuals. There is undeniable power in spending intentional time with other successful, like-minded, and motivated law firm owners for support, clarity, motivation, and to jumpstart one's law firm marketing and management with fresh ideas and insights.

Successful Law Firm owners also leverage Masterminds as a means of speeding implementation. By drawing on the brainpower of the collective group- you can identify winning strategies and week out time and money wasters. You are better able to eliminate blind spots and create short cuts because you learn from one another's mistakes and take advantage of lucrative opportunities others in the group have discovered. It's like having 10-12 times the

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individual brainpower; laser-focused on finding solutions for law firm challenges.

In the current unpredictability environment, some lawyers are pulling back, laying off employees, and making cuts in marketing expenses. But successful lawyers seeking to PIVOT forward during this crisis are doubling down on their marketing. You must strive to maintain a proactive vision for your firm rather than a reactionary one. Look for strategies that will propel your firm forward both now and when this pandemic subsides. Don't fall into a conservative short-term decision-making mode from the point of fear or worry that will ultimately short circuit your future opportunities for growth and continued success.

I'm not advocating that you ignore the realities we are all facing as business owners, including keeping an eye on the financial bottom line. But, I am suggesting that whatever decision you make, whether to become smaller and leaner or to go aftermarket domination with increased advertising and aggressive buys in TV, Radio, PPC, Facebook Ads, and so forth; the key is to ask yourself why you are making specific decisions at this time. Successful firm owners are always seeking to move their business forward, even when facing difficulties or uncertainty.

Instead of paralysis, PIVOT! Make an intentional mindset shift. Look for new ways to improve productivity and efficiency. Explore new potential practice areas, such as bankruptcy, debtor-credit law, business interruption claims, etc. Focus renewed energy on management to increase accountability, motivation, and productivity. Take advantage of current market conditions to more aggressively dominate your market through continued advertising. Spend time making sure you have a systematized means of nurturing, and following up on fence-sitting leads with email drip campaigns, books, written reports to share with them systematically. Use the top of mind marketing tactics to convert leads to clients. These are the very concepts and strategies being discussed right now by Mastermind members.

While it's easier to be successful when the economy is roaring and there is no disruption, great law firms and business owners know how to survive and move forward in times of crisis like that facing lawyers today. Masterminds are a conduit for helping lawyers PIVOT during adversity and experience continued growth and professional advancement.

Looking back on my own legal career, I can say that there's no way I would be where I am today if it had not been for the various Masterminds I've been in since the late '90s.

At present, PILMMA has five ongoing Mastermind groups meeting by Zoom on a regular basis. Our next series of meetings will be happening in December. So NOW is the time to contact me if you think you are ready for this unique experience. There is no substitute for the power of a Mastermind, and I encourage you to think about joining a PILMMA Mastermind, especially now, as lawyers must rise to meet the unique challenges presented by Covid-19. ◆

NATIONAL MASTERMIND MONTH

Working with Consultwebs we saw a marked increase in cases we were getting from the web. I like to get at least 6-times my return, but with Consultwebs we were doing between 12 and 15 dollars to every dollar spent. The Consultwebs group are really good, honest people that are responsive and attentive — that's what I like to deal with. If someone was thinking about hiring Consultwebs I would tell them, 'do it now, do not put it off because you're costing yourself money.'"

KEN HARDISON

Founder of PILMMA

> "A goal without a plan is just a wish.
>
> – ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPERY

How many cases do you need to make that growth happen? If you increase your inventory to that many cases, will you need additional staff, supplies, and equipment? What will those additions cost?

Given the continued presence of Covid-19 across our country, a number of your employees may need to continue to work remotely.

Taking this issue into account now will help you in planning your budget, and your office space needs for the next 12 months.

Budget: This is also a great time to look at your overall budget for next year. I suggest creating a monthly budget with software such as Quick Books so that you can create and run monthly reports that will alert you with a red tag if the firm goes 5 percent or more over the monthly budget. Creating and reviewing your budget monthly will allow you to take corrective measures quickly rather than being sandblasted down the road when it is more difficult to climb out of the hole.

While this is by no means an exhaustive list of year-end planning points, it is definitely some of the top areas that merit your attention and action over the next 6-8 weeks. By taking time NOW to Create a strong Year-End Strategy, you will be able to hit the ground running in 2021, and you will be much more likely to achieve greater success in the coming year. ♦

other driver went through a red light. There's plenty of controversy there. First, from your client's perspective, he had the green light and was properly going through the intersection. Change the perspective now. Look at it from the other driver's view. In that case, your client was the one who went through the red light. Change the view again... this time from a witness standing on the street corner. Change the view again...this time from the video camera above the intersection. Change the view again...this time it's from the jurors who are listening to two different versions of what happened in this intersection. Change the view again...to the judge who must oversee this trial and decide what comes into evidence and what doesn't."

"From just one topic, simply by changing the perspective of the person looking at it, you've now created many multiple video topics. You have exponentially increased your ability to talk about the same topic with so many variations all because you changed the viewer's perspective," I said.

As I finished explaining, I could hear him thinking out loud how could implement this to create even more videos than he thought possible. When I shared this with my daughter, she smiled, seeing how simple this strategy was.

If you want to see how this plays out in a book, I highly recommend "As the Crow Flies" by Jeffrey Archer. It's a fantastic book that starts out in the 1900's and progresses through time. There are five main characters in the book. In each section of the book, the same story is told from the perspective of that particular character, which is often very different from the viewpoint of the other characters. Lots of drama and controversy which makes you want to keep reading. That's exactly what you want to accomplish with your videos.

One final point...

You don't need to tell your viewers everything you know about a particular topic. Instead, you need to give them plenty of information to learn from you, to establish yourself as the go-to expert and to generate trust. Once they realize you have all this great information, who do you think they're likely to call? The attorney who talks about why he decided to become an attorney or you, the lawyer who just helped them understand exactly how their case works.

Now go out there and write your timeline.

Till next time, see you on video! ♦

- Set up an employee suggestion box, literally or virtually, and encourage employees to submit their ideas for making the firm run better- and then acknowledging those ideas and suggestions and implementing them whenever possible.
- Send out firm-wide emails of thanks and appreciation throughout the year as employees help you meet targeted quarterly goals.
- Send out individual emails or handwritten notes to staff when you notice they've handled a situation well or stepped up to cover responsibilities when another employee is out sick or tied up in another project. Recognize when team members have exemplified the team spirit you want to see in your workplace.

We all need to create as much positivity as we can during this Covid-19 Pandemic. Your employees are facing difficult challenges and are feeling stress just as you are. Creating a culture of gratitude is a wise law firm practice in general but all the more important during these difficult times.

As we enter into the Thanksgiving season and start planning your firm's initiatives for 2021, why not institute your own Gratitude culture experiment? Take the time and make the concerted effort to express gratitude, appreciation, and affirmation to your employees and encourage them to do the same with one another. Such measures can be transformational – improving attitudes, productivity, performance, morale, retention, and your bottom line. ◆

specialists adopt that same mindset. Sure, there are exceptions to that, and there may be some very self-assured people in the role of intake specialist who clearly understand their worth to the firm, but its my experience that this is very much the exception and far from being the rule.

You may be convinced that you're practicing law, not selling something; however, in every single profession and industry, there is an element of "selling" that must occur in order for an organization from law firm to medical office to brick-and-mortar retail store to be successful and continue to operate profitably. In your case, a "sale" occurs when a prospect in need of legal counsel or representation schedules an appointment or signs a retainer, for example. Yes, you are selling; you are running a business; and you are an entrepreneur.

There are a lot of people who shy away from and even avoid the idea of selling. The task is often linked to the image of the used car salesman – pushy, focused only on closing the deal, perhaps teetering on unethical. Change your mindset about selling if that's the first image that pops into your head. Your intake specialist likely has a similar sense of the role of "selling". If that's the case, they certainly have to change their mindset and about the critical role they play in your firm and understand what "selling" really is in terms of your firm. The intake specialist has a job that is as important as that of any attorney in any firm. You set the tone for the importance of the job of intake. Be certain your intake specialist understands how important they are to the process. ◆

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