

# Winning Strategy

How to attract and land new corporate clients.

BY **JOE KELLY**

Winning new corporate clients can be a challenging proposition for any firm in today's legal profession. The 2016 Law Firms in Transition survey conducted by Altman Weil found that many firms suffer from an "inefficient delivery of legal services." Law firms of all sizes—especially solo and small firms—struggle to make themselves attractive hires. One hurdle is the inability of a firm to differentiate its services and expertise from its competition. Here are five ways that solo and small law firms can amplify their operations and improve their competitive advantage.

## 1. Bolster Security

Corporations are increasingly focusing their time and resources on security—and they expect outside counsel to do the same. It's important for small firms to demonstrate that they have cybersecurity protocols that will meet corporate requirements and industry regulations, which include installing systems with enhanced security for emails, data in transit, and information that resides behind the firm's firewalls. At a minimum, firms should have intrusion detection systems, two-factor authentication, and encrypted emails.

## 2. Create Better Budgets

Accurate budgeting demonstrates that firms can successfully allocate resources and work efficiently. It's not enough to offer vague predictions for legal spending. Law firms should communicate with legal departments to find out which matters have been the most unpredictable in terms of cost and then target those areas for improvement. They can also leverage their billing software to create metrics that give

insight into past and current matters.

## 3. Improve Efficiency

The more efficient law firms are, the more they can stay within budgets. Using smart software, adopting processes, and assigning the right people to the right tasks are the first steps. For example, do attorneys have difficulty locating files? Is it taking too long to accurately bill clients? A firm should examine its areas of specialties, goals, and staffing levels to evaluate the greatest opportunities for gaining efficiencies.

## 4. Comply With All Outside Counsel Guidelines

Many legal departments have created standards and processes for their outside counsel, and they expect their law firms to follow them. Such guidelines can cover anything from how to bill and who is approved to bill to business codes and conflicts. Don't ignore the guidelines. It will result in lost clients both current and future. Ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the guidelines and personnel are briefed on how to handle those cases accordingly.

## 5. Respond Quickly

In today's 24/7/365 culture of connectedness, in-house counsel expect to be able to reach their outside attorneys immediately. That means law firms must have the technology and infrastructure in place to be able to respond quickly and access client files no matter where they are. Moving the firm's data to a secure cloud-based system is one way to enable 24/7-access. The cloud can improve responsiveness and reduce IT infrastructure and technology support costs. And some

legal cloud providers offer greater security features than a firm could implement independently.

Now more than ever, solo and small firm attorneys must combine their talent for practicing law with their business acumen to attract corporate clients. By demonstrating their savvy, security, responsiveness, and proven compliance with outside counsel guidelines, lawyers can significantly increase their chances of winning corporate business. **TBJ**

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