

Law Matters Newsletter

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Earning Client Loyalty

Recent discussion on the Gazette's LinkedIn Group has highlighted the Ministry of Justice survey carried out in 2009 into the use of personal legal services (found [here](#)). The discussion centred on the 5% of the survey who found their lawyer by research, including the internet.

Also interesting was the mere 23% where they or a family member had used the firm before. This may reflect an infrequency of need for legal services and may overlap with the 29% recommended by friends or family. How can that number be increased?

1. Give a great service. As you know, clients expect the legal work to be right, but judge you on communication, responsiveness and so on. Get the service right, and clients will both be more likely to come back and to recommend your services to others.
2. Use satisfaction surveys, but follow up on comments and consider calling clients who highlight necessary improvements to clarify and reassure. Do not use them as a tick box exercise, but as an chance to improve your service.
3. Capture email addresses and send existing clients an annual newsletter containing items that clients will find valuable. Alternatively come up with a legal checklist eg to check if changed circumstances require a new will. By all means send useful information, such as changes in address or personnel, but make sure that the client will think it of value. Ensure though that clients can unsubscribe.
4. Put useful information on your website behind a client only login. That might be an explanation of legal processes or things to think about in particular circumstances. Make use of your broader knowledge of what happens in the world around legal work.
5. Be a repository for clients. Your garage probably reminds you if your car needs a service, and keeps details of what was done last time, so that you do not have to hunt out the paperwork yourself. That gives you an additional convenience at no cost, while at the same time increasing the likelihood that it is they who do the next service. Solicitors can also store client documents of course.
6. If you have a local loyalty card scheme, consider joining it. If the scheme is thriving, it will remind clients of your existence and (depending on its terms) give an additional benefit for using you. For example you can give clients a card allowing them discounts off restaurant meals for a year.

These ideas will not suit the circumstances or ethos of every firm, and given the nature of the survey they are aimed at those dealing with individuals rather than businesses. Use them to prompt other thoughts, including appropriate steps for business clients. Always remember the cardinal rule that what clients actually find valuable is not necessarily what you think they should value.

This note is written as a general guide only, and is not applicable to every firm or circumstance. It should not be relied upon as a substitute for specific business, medical or legal advice.

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