

How to raise practice profile as liability specialists

By Linda Julian

Publish in professional journals

- Write substantive articles for legal professional journals - this develops your profile within the profession.
- After publication, circulate copies of these articles from legal professional journals to your product liability clients and prospective clients: this raises your profile as an expert (evidenced by the imprimatur of professional publication) among your clients and prospective clients.
- Circulate copies of this published material to barristers who may be useful referral sources or secondary referees for your skills.
- Circulate copies of this published material to other advisors, influencers, and recommenders to your selected market segment.
- Circulate the published article within your own firm.
- Mention the article in your next newsletter.

Publish in the industry press

- List the relevant publications.
- Research the editorial preferences:
 - length of articles, style (learned article/topical article/question and answer column/other)
 - preferred submission format (paper-based/electronic/word processing format)
 - is a photo required ?
 - publication deadlines
 - does this publication re-publish material previously published, or not ?

- Prepare your topical article - make sure there is a catchy title which will excite interest in the intended audience.
- Write your article focussing on the concerns of your target audience
- While you may choose to submit one article to several different publications, you should "customise" it each time to appeal to the key concerns of each different target audience.
- Circulate your article to editors wherever possible with a photo of the author or other interesting visual support such as photographs, chart, diagrams, or even cartoons.
- Check that you have copyright clearances on all of the material you are submitting - including visual support.
- When published, copy the article and send it to your clients, prospective clients, key contacts in the industry (even those who may have seen it their own publication - you don't know, they may have missed it !), barristers, industry experts, and others.
- Circulate the published article within your own firm.
- Mention the article in your next newsletter.

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Speaking engagements

- List the likely venues or speaking opportunities.
- Offer your services as an expert speaker or commentator to key conference organisers, professional bodies, industry and trade associations.
- Always ensure you have appropriate presentation aids and handout materials for speaking engagements.
- Make the conference paper you present the basis of your next article.
- Offer your services to Young Lawyers as an expert presenter to CLE programmes.

Become a key source of valuable information

- Collect press clippings, conference papers, industry publications, and other items of relevance to your subject area.
- Catalogue your collection.
- Make your resource library known and available to your key industry contacts, clients, and prospective clients.
- Make your colleagues within your firm and others in the profession aware of your library and offer appropriate access.

Industry commentator

- Offer newsflashes providing your commentary or assessment on recent developments in the field - focus on circulating these quickly after news of an event or a phenomenon comes to light.
- Ensure that you don't just re-tell the news, but rather analyse the implications and suggest appropriate responses or avenues for investigation.

Consider a newsletter

- Only start a newsletter if you have the commitment and resources to continue it.
- Don't make it overambitious.
- Check whether there is already a surfeit of newsletters in the field.
- Only start a newsletter if yours can be substantially more topical, informative, timely, relevant, or generally better than the others - "me too" newsletters can actually do damage. If you can't do it considerably better than your competitors, try something else!

Run seminars

- Offer free or paid registrations to substantive presentations on key issues.
- Attendees will value "informal workshop style" rather than old "formal" seminars which have a lecture format.
- Ensure you have appropriate handout materials.
- Always evaluate attendees reactions or responses to a seminar: provide an evaluation sheet which encourages attendees for request further information or other follow-up.
- Make each seminar theme the subject of a further article.
- Use your seminars as a forum to introduce other industry experts to registrants - this way you can leverage off their industry profiles, as well.

Identify likely clients

- Initiate selling campaign.

Assemble a handbook

- Collect all of your published articles and other materials into a simple handbook.
- Include useful tips and techniques.
- Use your handbook as an "giveaway" to clients and prospective clients.
- Make your handbook available through other key influencers and recommenders in your target market.

Write a book

- This is probably the ultimate profile raising exercise - it takes a huge time commitment, but little can match its effect if well promoted.

Prepare checklists and "how tos"

- Clients and prospective clients will always value simple checklists to help them organise themselves, reduce risk and stress, and identify when your expertise may be required.
- Use "how tos" to show your clients how anxious you are to help them save money and make rational use of your services or expertise.

About the author

Linda Julian is acknowledged as a leading authority on strategic practice development and how to win business for law firms. Since 1979, she has consulted with lawyers and other professionals throughout Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific, and

Asia on a wide range of business acquisition, client retention, and strategic management issues.

Her book *The Passionate Professional: creating value, success, and prosperity* has sold in 13 countries and has received wide acclaim. Linda lectures in strategic management and marketing professional services at post-graduate level. She leads the small and highly specialised Julian Midwinter & Associates consulting practice.

