

# A MODERN APPROACH TO LAW FIRM MARKETING DEMANDS A CULTURE SHIFT

*CMOs must partner with lawyers to develop client-centric business development models that foster firm-wide trust and transparency*



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**A**s client demands grow and market competition increases, law firms are rethinking growth strategies to enhance the client experience. With a 360-degree view of the client, the chief marketing officer occupies a unique position to drive new initiatives and foster a company-wide collaborative culture.

Forward-looking firms have moved beyond antiquated notions of legal marketing as just a support function; modern CMOs develop strategic, client-focused marketing and business development programmes supported by a collaborative culture built on trust.

As the traditional keepers of client relationships, lawyers have been resistant to collaboration beyond immediate matters at hand.

Compensation structures, transparency issues and siloed communication have also stifled co-operation. As a result, information often remained disjointed across practice groups, preventing firms from providing optimal client service and creating unnecessary barriers to pursuing new business.

By embracing modern processes and technologies, a firm can move its culture toward collaboration and transparency, employing a unified business development strategy where cross-selling is the norm, rather than the exception.

Marketing's transition from reactive data gathering to proactive strategising results in proper goal alignment, role clarity and healthy conflict resolution, which are the proven key components of effective team dynamics. The vast amounts of client data captured through intake, conflicts, billing and other operational systems can help achieve this ideal state.

CMOs who use the latest AI-assisted software to highlight client data and third-party data – and utilise the resulting insights to build account-specific, client-based marketing plans – can increase their overall strategic contributions and boost firms' success in winning and retaining business.

As CMOs document engagement wins, the scale and momentum of client-centric marketing will grow across the firm, and a greater number of lawyers will adopt

and support the new unified business development strategy.

## **A client-first culture increases marketing and business development success**

To develop a client-first culture, CMOs must collaborate with lawyers to build actionable insights and present an integrated face to the client. Firms that have client-centric business development teams are better positioned to differentiate their value propositions and compete for business.

When diverse teams of lawyers from different practices, perspectives and approaches come together to strategise on how best to pursue business with a single client, the results will exceed a traditional siloed approach.

The role of key client account managers in the modern marketing model elevates marketers to the position of strategic team members who develop holistic marketing plans to identify and facilitate cross-selling endeavours. These key client teams – run by business professionals in partnership with lawyers – are better positioned to proactively identify revenue opportunities, improve client experience and expand client engagements over time.

Key client teams create opportunities for lawyers to actively advise clients on complex matters, while also accumulating greater sector- and industry-specific knowledge of macro issues. Simultaneously, marketers gain in-depth knowledge of a firm's accounts, bring valuable insights to lawyers and engage comfortably with clients. The linchpin to this model's success comes from establishing trust between lawyers, clients and the CMO's business professionals. Creating an account-planning discipline – made scalable with the use of technology – enables the necessary transparency required to overcome silos based on practice, geography and culture.

This significant increase in collaboration results in greater profitability for individual lawyers, practice/industry groups and the firm. But, the most important beneficiary of collaboration and proactivity is the client. The success of clients will lead to the success of the firm. By becoming the steward of the client experience, the CMO can ensure the firm maintains a 360-degree view of clients' needs and opportunities at all times. Firms that take this modern marketing approach will win more business from loyal, continuously growing clients.



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