

Peter Holland's 13 Tips for Success for Solo and Small Firm Lawyers

Most lawyers who have a thriving law practice employ one or more of the following 13 time honored tips. Incorporating some or all of these tips will help new and experienced lawyers build and grow a successful law practice.

1. **Always send a Thank You note** to the person who made a referral, whether you take the case or not. Use the Thank You note to emphasize your area(s) of practice.
2. **Be aware** that every person you know is a potential client or source of a potential client.
3. **Take your referrals seriously**, and only make referrals to other quality lawyers - what goes around comes around. This way you can always tell prospective clients "Call me first. If I can't help you, I can probably refer you to a good lawyer who can."
4. **Narrow the focus** of your practice - try to become an expert in something, thereby becoming a "name brand."
5. **Always be able to answer the question:** "What kind of law do you practice?" (Compare "I will take just about anything to pay the bills" to "I focus primarily on [divorce/personal injury/DUI/name your area] and related matters, in addition to general civil litigation.")
6. **Send the client copies** of everything - it keeps them in the loop, reduces phone calls and emails, and lets them see how hard you are working on their case.
7. **Establish a policy** for returning phone calls and responding to emails, communicate that policy, and abide by it.
8. **Meet regularly** with clients in person.

9. **Seek court appointments.** This is a good way to meet judges and other attorneys, pay some of your overhead and gain valuable experience.
10. **Tell all your friends,** relatives and other lawyers what your practice areas are - if they don't know, they can't help you. If they *do* know, they will become your greatest promoters.
11. **ALWAYS PROJECT EFFORT.** Clients want and expect your best efforts. They know that they may not always win the case, but they want to know that you gave it your all. (Hat tip to Jay Foonberg).
12. **Do it right or don't do it** at all - clients will tell one person if you did it right, and ten people if you did it wrong. (Hat tip to Jay Foonberg).
13. **Co-counsel with other lawyers.** This is a good way to keep a client you would have otherwise had to refer, and a great way to learn from someone who is more experienced.