

Five Unexpected Ways to Deliver Client Value

If you are doing great legal work for your clients, take a bow. That's an achievement to celebrate. At the same time, in a competitive legal landscape, it may no longer be enough. Many clients consider excellent work a floor. The absolute minimum expectation. The way firms can set themselves apart and grow is by consistently adding value to their clients' businesses. At this point, it's a well-understood concept. The Law Firm Value Committee has even compiled "[51 Practical Ways for Law Firms to Add Value](#)," which offers a good resource on the subject.

Here are five less expected ways firms can add value for their corporate clients.

Facilitate connections: One surefire way to endear yourself to a client is to make a valuable introduction for them. Whether the client is looking for a landscaper, a tailor or an accountant, the fact is, it can be difficult to find people who meet their specific needs. If you can make such a connection, your client will remember you every time they are having another good experience with their trusted landscaper, or what have you. Of course, making a successful referral—especially to a critical professional like an accountant (or even a lawyer in an area beyond your firm's expertise)—does more than just heighten your client's respect for your judgment. It also strengthens your own network.

Levenfeld Pearlstein, a midsize firm in Chicago, has made something of an art out of this practice. The firm conducts an annual "[One Degree](#)" event, so named for the firm's role as the one degree of separation between its clients and other people in its network that might help them.

Provide customized legal updates: Many firms already produce client alerts on various topics, and all of them should be tracking legal developments in issue areas that matter most to their clients. It's not a huge leap from putting in that work to providing customized legal updates for important clients. These can take various forms. At the less burdensome end of the spectrum, a firm might collect relevant links or flag particularly relevant articles and format them into regular reports. At the other end, a firm could produce original thought leadership about its client's industry, directed specifically to them, on a periodic basis. Either way, when done well, the client should be thankful for the information.

Help them look good: Admittedly, this is something of a catch all category. But phrasing it this way should help firms keep their eyes on the prize. Every method for adding client value should be aimed at making their lives easier or making them look good. Public relations opportunities are a great vehicle for doing just that. If you have an article you are writing for a trade magazine, offer to co-author it with your client. (You do all the work, of course, but they'll love seeing their name on it.) If you're speaking on a panel, ask if you can bring a client with you.

Of course, there are many other ways to make your clients look good. Sending a strong associate on a secondment with an important client is a win-win-win for the firm, the junior lawyer and the client. And if the client is important enough, and your firm has knowledge that the in-house team doesn't, conducting a training session can be very valuable to them.

Visit them at the office: It's hard to beat a visit to your client's workplace as a way to deepen your connection and, frequently, walk out with a load of new work. Lawyers can also use site visits to gather background information helpful

in adding value. While at your client's workplace, keep an eye out for any problems your firm can handle—especially those your client isn't even aware they have. Diagnosing such issues, and resolving them, will provide an unexpected relief for your client.

Ask them: If all else fails, you can always ask. Okay, truth be told, lawyers should always be asking their clients what their pain points are, and how they might help. But hey, life gets busy. You might be surprised to learn how rare it is for a client to get asked what their lawyer can do for them. That's why we're including this as an unexpected value add—one that could be music to your clients' ears, and good news for your bottom line.

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