

# Five Tips to Help Solo Practitioners Retain Clients

---

Retaining clients and customers represents a challenge for companies in all corners of the business world. On the other hand, attracting new prospects to add to a company's portfolio or replace lost business usually consumes a more significant investment of time and money than retaining current ones.

For solo practitioners, client retention often takes on even greater importance. If you're relying on a handful of clients to sustain your practice, losing just one can take a big bite out of your profit margins—or even move your firm into the red.

Here are five tips designed to help solo practitioners keep clients in the fold.

## 1. ASK YOUR CLIENTS WHAT YOU CAN DO TO SERVE THEM BETTER

This may seem obvious, but it's so important that it bears mentioning right up front: Talk to your clients about whether or not you are meeting their needs.

Many businesses have implemented online surveys and comment systems to solicit feedback from clients. That's one option for solo practitioners, but candid, face-to-face conversations with your clients about their satisfaction and ways to improve your service value are even better.

Make sure they understand that they can be candid with you. Don't take offense to criticism or concerns they express. Ask what you can do better. This kind of open and honest dialogue is the most effective way of gauging your performance. It also demonstrates to your clients that you value their business and are willing to work with them to ensure you maintain a productive relationship going forward.

## 2. HIGHLIGHT YOUR EXPERTISE

Take advantage of subtle (and not-so-subtle) opportunities to remind clients what you bring to the table as a lawyer. As the old saying goes, "It ain't bragging if it's true."

It's important for lawyers to strategically toot their own horns because otherwise, they're unlikely to be heard. As laymen, clients don't have much information to work from in assessing their lawyers' performance. Clients don't have the time or knowledge, for instance, to evaluate summary judgment briefs of five different litigators and choose the best one. The legal industry has filled that informational void, in part, through the cornucopia of industry awards and honors offered up by professional groups and publications. Some are more credible than others, and a marketing professional can help you sort through them, but nominating your firm for such awards, and winning them, can be a great way to earn an objective credential speaking to the quality of your firm's work. Such credentials, in turn, can be effective in assuring clients that they are working with the best.

Awards are not the only way to win bragging rights, either. Lawyers who get to know journalists and can educate them on legal issues often become credible sources quoted in the journalists' articles. Such articles become more proof of the lawyer's expertise. For lawyers who focus on issues that don't receive much media attention, they can always do their own writing on the topic—on a blog, in a trade magazine or an email blast to clients and prospects—to remind those clients that the lawyer is actively thinking about their issues.

### 3. BUILD A ROBUST NETWORK OF LEGAL PEERS FOR REFERRALS

There's only one of you, but there are countless legal issues out there. You might not have all the answers to your clients' questions, especially as you get further afield from your area of specialization. However, you can create value by easily pointing them in the right direction. It will save them time—and may keep them from reaching out to bigger firms that can offer a broader range of services. Best of all, you can find similarly situated practitioners willing to reciprocate by sending business your way.

### 4. ADD PERSONAL TOUCHES

Make time for in-person meetings with clients. Go see them, don't make them come to you. Develop best practices for effective follow-up on meetings, hearings and filings. Check in with clients on important dates and milestones—birthdays, weddings, graduations. Send them handwritten notes or gifts for the holidays.

You can and should go the extra service mile in ways that larger competitors often cannot. That little extra effort demonstrates your dedication.

### 5. WEED OUT BAD CLIENTS

This article is supposed to be about how to keep your clients. So, what good does it do to cut some of them loose?

In reality, solo practitioners have limited time and resources. Determining how to best allocate both of them is paramount to success. Sinking too much effort into difficult or unreasonable clients can lead you down a path toward squandering opportunities to build out your business by developing more fruitful relationships.

Finding diplomatic ways to sever ties with troublesome clients can be tricky. To keep good clients, though, you sometimes have to free yourself of the bad ones.

This white paper is presented by LexisNexis on behalf of the author. The opinions may not represent the opinions of LexisNexis. This document is for educational purposes only.

---

#### **About LexisNexis® Legal & Professional**

LexisNexis Legal & Professional is a leading global provider of content and technology solutions that enable professionals in legal, corporate, tax, government, academic and non-profit organizations to make informed decisions and achieve better business outcomes. As a digital pioneer, the company was the first to bring legal and business information online with its Lexis® and Nexis® services. Today, LexisNexis Legal & Professional harnesses leading-edge technology and world-class content to help professionals work in faster, easier and more effective ways. Through close collaboration with its customers, the company ensures organizations can leverage its solutions to reduce risk, improve productivity, increase profitability and grow their business. LexisNexis Legal & Professional, which serves customers in more than 175 countries with 10,000 employees worldwide, is part of RELX Group, a world-leading provider of information and analytics for professional and business customers across industries.