



Attracting and Retaining Clients Today

Law firms must adopt various strategies to attract and retain clients in today's competitive market. Some of these strategies are historical, and some reflect the changes in how client services are delivered today.

Here are some of the strategies all-size firms should be pursuing (in no particular order):

- 1. Embracing Online Presence:** Law firms must focus on establishing a robust online presence. This presence includes creating user-friendly websites, regularly publishing informative content, and leveraging social media platforms. Optimization of the firm's websites for search engines and utilization of targeted digital advertising will increase the firm's visibility and reach to potential clients.
- 2. Providing Valuable Content:** These firms must embrace content marketing by creating informative blog posts, whitepapers, and videos addressing common legal issues. By offering practical insights and solutions, they position themselves as a trusted source of information attractive to potential clients.
- 3. Utilizing Technology:** These law firms must leverage technology to enhance efficiency and provide better client experiences. Leveraging technology can include adopting case management systems, client portals, and online appointment scheduling tools. Additionally, they should consider exploring options like virtual consultations and electronic document signing to streamline processes.



Stephen Mabey, CPA, CA
Principal & Managing Director

4. **Fostering Personalized Client Experiences:** Providing personalized experiences is crucial for client retention. Law firms must understand clients' needs and tailor their services accordingly. Today they must offer personalized legal advice, maintain regular communication, and deliver proactive updates to build solid and lasting relationships.
5. **Emphasizing Niche Expertise:** Specialized knowledge and expertise in specific legal areas are becoming increasingly valuable. Law firms must become experts in niche practice areas instead of trying to be all things to all. By highlighting their specialized skills, they attract clients who require focused legal assistance.
6. **Engaging in Community Involvement:** Many mid-size law firms are actively involved in their local communities through sponsorships, pro bono work, and participation in community events. These activities contribute to the community's well-being and raise awareness about the firm's brand and values.
7. **Offering Alternative Fee Structures:** To differentiate themselves, mid-size law firms should explore alternative fee arrangements beyond traditional hourly billing (yes, billing should be a key platform in any marketing strategy). They may provide flat fees, subscription-based services, or hybrid models that align with clients' preferences and provide cost certainty.
8. **Proactive Outreach:** Law firms must be active in their reaching out to their existing and potential clients through newsletters, webinars, seminars, and networking events. Such initiatives help firms stay top-of-mind and showcase their expertise.

Personal communication is the most critical strategy in this digital age, as it can help establish a stronger and more meaningful connection with clients. It adds a human touch to interactions, fostering trust and loyalty. Additionally, personal communication allows for a better understanding of the client's unique needs and preferences. Through direct conversations or personalized messages, businesses can gather valuable feedback and insights (which electronic surveys are decreasingly effective at), enabling them to meet clients' expectations better.

Furthermore, personalized communication can help resolve issues or address concerns more efficiently. Firms can quickly identify problems, provide solutions, and demonstrate their commitment to customer satisfaction by engaging in direct conversations. Personalized communication can contribute to higher client retention rates and positive word-of-mouth referrals.

The rise of online reviews has given clients more power to influence a firm's reputation. Personal communication offers a proactive approach to managing client relationships, enabling firms to address potential issues before they escalate publicly.

Personal communication with clients is crucial in building long-term relationships, enhancing client loyalty, and staying competitive.

Law firms will be better positioned to attract and retain clients in this increasingly competitive legal landscape by offering value, expertise, and personalized service.

The fundamental goal of any law firm's client strategy must be to create loyal clients, not just satisfied clients. The difference is that

“they don't just come back, they don't simply recommend you, they insist that their friends do business with you.”

Who is Stephen Mabey?

Stephen Mabey is a CPA, CA, and Applied Strategies, Inc.'s Managing Director. His credentials include the following:

- Fellow of the College of Law Practice Management (one of 19 Canadians);
- Author of *Leading and Managing a Sustainable Law Firm: Tactics and Strategies for a Rapidly Changing Profession*, and *Key Performance Indicators An Introductory Guide* (Amazon);
- Over 25 years in a senior management role with Stewart McKelvey, a 220-lawyer, six-office Atlantic Canadian law firm;
- Over 14 years providing advice and counsel to small to mid-size law firms on a broad range of issues;
- A panelist and facilitator of the Managing Partner Information Exchange ("MPIE") at the annual Managing Partner Forum Leadership Conference held in Atlanta, Georgia, each May;
- Runs a group mailing list that circulates articles, directly and indirectly, impacting law firms.

Stephen has advised law firms on a wide range of law firm issues, including - strategic action planning, leadership, understudy (succession) planning, business development, capitalization of partnerships, partnership agreements, lawyer & staff engagement, marketing, key performance indicators, competitive intelligence, finance, mergers, practice transitioning, compensation arrangements, organizational structures, and partnership arrangements.

Stephen can be reached by email - at smabey@appliedstrategies.ca or by phone at 902.499.3895.

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