How Business Lawyers Can Land More Clients

Written by Mary Juetten

Right now, there are nearly 30,000 tech startups active in Silicon Valley, according to AngelList. Most have a unique idea that their business has been built on, so protecting their intellectual property should be paramount.

However, seeking legal help for business or intellectual property (IP) matters is often low on the list of priorities for the founders of these companies. Many entrepreneurs focus on revenue and product development, and they ignore administrative tasks such as seeking attorney advice on key business matters. More often than not, an attorney is called after mistakes have been made, not as a preventative measure. At this point, it may be too late for the problem to be fixed.

For business lawyers, showing potential clients the value of prevention can help protect their livelihoods—and can help your firm win more business in the long run. If you can get clients to engage your services early, rather than waiting for intellectual property issues to threaten their business, they'll be better protected and more likely to retain your services in the future. Making that change requires a shift in mindset, but it is entirely possible with a bit of effort.

Start with some basic education. Many new entrepreneurs have a fear of consulting an attorney, as they perceive seeking out a lawyer to be expensive or overkill for their needs. Most founders are cash-strapped, so they will skip steps, thinking that IP can be dealt with later.

You need to convince your potential clients that a penny of prevention is worth a pound of the cure. One way to do this is to put helpful information on your firm's website to educate potential clients. Keep it simple—frame the information in non-legal terms, keep it short, and use quizzes and videos to keep it engaging.

Beyond that, using technology can help you save time on client intake and attract more clients. Below, we've got a few tips to help you do just that, and what business lawyers in particular should be aware of

1. Make it easy for your clients to find you online

If a tree falls in the forest, does it make a sound? To ensure your clients can find you online, create a well-designed law firm website that clearly explains how your law firm helps its business clients. Any founder worth his or her salt will want to do some research and due

diligence before investing company dollars in legal services, and making this process easy can help put you in their good books early on.

Also, ensure you're set up properly on social media sites. You should consider having a Facebook page, LinkedIn company profile, and/or a Twitter account. Whichever channels you choose, they should be up to date and should link back to your law firm's website.

2. Help potential clients connect with you through your website

Once potential clients find you, they may want to request your services. Don't make them work for it, and don't waste your time reaching out to people individually—set up an online contact form that captures basic information, including the type of services needed and where they heard about you. You can either use website plugins or Google forms to send an email to the appropriate person to follow-up on the inquiry.

Then, ensure that clients can book a time to talk, either over the phone or in-person, through your website. There are many software solutions that integrate with both your website and personal calendar to eliminate any back and forth

This approach will save you time, but it's also helpful for your clients: They've got a business to run, so being able to contact a lawyer and set up a meeting with a few clicks may be preferable to phoning your office to schedule a time to talk.

3. Use technology to streamline the consultation process

If you often ask potential clients the same questions, consider using tools to automate this process—it will save your firm time and ultimately, money. Products like Traklight can help spot legal issues and educate clients on their needs with a Turbo Tax-like questionnaire that asks general questions to identify business risk and then moves to more in-depth questions to uncover potential IP work. All questions are entrepreneur friendly. The platform educates clients on their needs while also providing answers to lawyers—and it integrates with Clio's client intake software. Traklight also automatically sends you a report for each client that can be used for consultations, referrals to other lawyers, cross-selling, and client intake.

4. Educate your clients on their legal needs and the services you provide

For cash-strapped new entrepreneurs, an in-depth legal discussion may not be the order of the day. Often, these clients simply wish to know what they need to do and how much it will cost. They are less interested in the how, and more interested in the why and the price.

Laying out a priced, step-by-step plan will allow company founders to budget for their legal requirements, making them feel more comfortable about using your services and getting the IP protection they need before it's too late. They may even be more likely to recommend your services to others. Make this information easily available on your website to help potential clients see what to expect from the outset.

Save time on client intake, save your firm money

Taking on new business clients—and correctly identifying and managing risks for their business—doesn't have to be a headache. Much of the upfront work can be done by technology. With the right tools, you can create a streamlined process for your firm, saving you time on client intake so that you can focus on practicing law.

About Mary

Mary Juetten is founder and CEO of Traklight, and has dedicated her more than 30 year career to helping businesses achieve and protect their success. In 2015, Mary co-founded Evolve Law, an organization for change and technology adoption in the law. She was named to the ABA's Legal Technology Resource Center 2016 Women in Legal Tech list and the Fastcase 50 Class of 2016. She serves on the Group Legal Services Association Board and is an Access Advocate for LegalShield. Follow her on Twitter @maryjuetten and check out her new book, "Small Law Firm KPIs."

About Clio

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with legal sources drawn from Clio Library, a growing collection of more than one billion legal documents. Over 400,000 legal professionals in more than 130 countries rely on Clio to run their legal world. Learn more at www.clio.com.