

# Your Path to Growth: How to Build a Stronger Legal Practice in 2021



SCORPION

# The Opportunities Ahead

The legal industry, and case acquisition as a whole, is full of opportunities for law firms that are looking for growth. The decision for you to make is how much growth you want in the years ahead.

Today, you'll find that to take advantage of the opportunities that exist all around you, you need a system to grow your practice that's powered by proven strategies, uses valuable data, and leverages the best technology.

This ebook will show you how to take advantage of the opportunities that exist in your market today using the same kind of system we've created to help top firms grow their practices and set revenue records.

## Growth Is What You Make It

### Why you need goals for your practice

The industry is more competitive than ever, making it vital for attorneys to lay out a clear roadmap for growth. Whether you're a solo practitioner or the managing partner of a large firm, growth is defined by the expectations you set for your practice.

How you choose to define growth is important because without clear, specific goals, you can't take your practice from where it is today to where you want it to be tomorrow.

# How to Set Tactical Goals

Whatever your goals may be, finding one that motivates you is critical. Are you looking to bring in higher-value cases? Hire more attorneys? Become known as the #1 firm in your community?

If you're not intensely motivated by your goal, you'll get discouraged, you'll get distracted, and you'll never achieve it.

## Be SMART

### The most powerful goals are SMART:

- **Specific** goals help you stay on track and motivated
- **Measurable** goals allow you to evaluate your progress
- **Actionable** goals can be achieved without waiting on outside conditions
- **Realistic** goals allow you to fulfill your long-term vision with a step-by-step action plan
- **Time-sensitive** goals cultivate urgency and provide benchmarks for measuring progress

# How You Can Achieve Your Goals for Your Practice

## It Takes an Exceptional Client Experience

You know the expression “a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush”? Well, your existing clients are the proverbial “birds in the hand.” If you want to achieve the goals you’ve set—the goals that will allow you to grow your practice—the best investment you can make is to strengthen the relationship you have with your current clients.

That means evaluating and improving your **client experience**.

### What Is the Client Experience?

The client experience is the total and combined impression you give your clients from every point of contact they have with your firm. It’s the experience you create as you guide someone through the process of working with your practice—appointment setting, phone calls, availability, empathy, the billing process, and anything else a client might experience.

### Why Does the Client Experience Matter?

Here’s why: **65% of people consider a great experience more influential than even the most well-planned advertisements.<sup>1</sup>**

How your firm works with its clients has a bigger impact on your business’s growth than the most well-produced commercial or banner. Thanks to the Internet, people have more choices than ever before when it comes to working with an attorney.

To counteract that volume of choice, your firm needs to provide an exceptional client experience. Why? Because a strong client experience not only increases retention but will grow future revenue by boosting the strength of your firm’s brand in the community.

## Are You Providing the Best Client Experience Right Now?

Not sure if you're providing clients with a great experience?

Here are some important questions to ask yourself right now:

- Does my firm always reply to client calls on the same day?
- Are clients greeted with a warm welcome the moment they step into my firm?
- Are my paralegals and support staff empathetic, well-spoken, and accommodating?
- Do I make it easy for clients to contact me and my firm in a multitude of ways?

If you answered YES to all of the above questions, you might already provide clients with a great experience.

But beware of false confidence: **80% of business owners believe they currently provide a great client experience, but only 8% of clients actually believe they receive a great experience.**<sup>2</sup>

Remember, the client gets the final say in whether a law firm provides a great client experience.

And more of them than ever are going online to tell other future clients whether their experience was positive or negative. This is another reason measurable goals are critical to growth.

Most businesses think they provide a great experience, but only the best firms will test it by measuring and improving client satisfaction.

## Know What Your Clients Actually Need

If you want to build a better experience for your clients, you need to get clear on what their real needs are—the reason behind the reason they're contacting you. The unspoken worries and concerns that are pushing them to pick up the phone and call your firm.

For example...

Does your client simply want their divorce taken care of?

Or do they want to know they won't lose their family? That their kids will still love them, and they'll still get to spend time with them?

Does your client just want to stay out of jail?

Or do they want to know that their DUI—a lapse in judgement—won't destroy their career and their reputation in the community?

Understanding what people are really after (i.e., reading between the lines) when they call your firm for help is one of the most important steps you can take towards building an exceptional experience. To do it, you need to remember that it's your job to focus on the person first and the legal problem second.

# A Few Other Keys to Maximizing Your Client Experience:

## **Be on Time**

Speed and punctuality matter to clients—especially in an emergency—so ensure everyone who represents the firm knows timeliness is a critical component of the client experience.

## **Be Personal**

The more you can make clients realize just how much you care about them and their well-being, the more you'll create an experience clients appreciate.

## **Be Honest & Transparent**

Many individuals going through a legal case worry about being beguiled or misrepresented. If you want to create a truly second-to-none client experience, make sure your firm is honest and transparent in everything it does.

## **Be the Solution**

Figure out your client's issue, analyze potential solutions, and talk to the client about what solution will make the most sense for their situation. If possible, do all this before charging the client a dime.

## **Be Thorough**

Clients continue to evaluate their attorneys long after their primary problem (e.g., a child-custody battle) is resolved. Small gestures like following up to make sure needs are met, offering flexible payment options, and staying in contact with former clients can all leave people feeling like your firm truly cares about them.

## **Be Focused on Feedback**

Make a habit of asking current and former clients about their experience working with your firm, then document that feedback and use it to improve the experience you provide.

## **Be Good to Your Employees**

The happier your employees are (from your interns to your associates), the more willing they'll be to go the extra mile for clients, and the better experience those clients will have.

## **Be Responsive**

When someone reaches out to your firm with a question (be it by phone, email, or online chat), you're quick to reply with a thoughtful, articulate message.

# It Takes Knowing the Power of Client Retention

Retention is something far too many attorneys overlook when creating plans to grow their practice. To succeed with your growth-related plans, you must understand and appreciate the importance of client retention.

Every business loves “repeat customers” because repeat customers equal repeat revenue. As an attorney you want people to retain your firm every time they need legal help. The longer you can retain a relationship with your client, the more value they'll provide you with over the years through repeat business and referrals.

The problem is, too many attorneys overlook retention in favor of new client acquisition. This isn't to say client acquisition isn't important. It is only to say that it should not supersede retention.

As it was mentioned at the start of the section on client experience—a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.



# It Takes a Strong, Recognizable Brand

Whether your goals are tied to profit or revenue, the number of associates you hire, or the total number of cases you win, they can't be achieved without a strong brand. When you operate a professional services business like a law firm, your success is directly tied to your brand.

## What Is a Brand (or a Brand Experience)?

Your brand is the sum of all the experiences people—be they clients, prospective clients, or members of your community—have with your firm.

Put another way, your brand is your reputation. Your brand represents what your legal practice does and how you do the work in the eyes of the community.

## What Can a Great Brand Do for You & Your Practice?

Great branding streamlines client acquisition and increases the value of any legal practice. If you find yourself questioning this, ask yourself why people are willing to pay twice as much money to get a cup of coffee at Starbucks when they can get a cup that's widely considered to be as good (if not better) at McDonald's for \$1?<sup>3</sup>

People are willing to pay that kind of markup because of the brand that Starbucks has cultivated. The Starbucks brand's panache is worth paying 100+% more, even though the quality of the actual product doesn't necessarily merit it.



# How Do I Know If I Have a Strong Brand?

Not sure how strong your brand is in your community? Start by asking yourself:

## Does my firm...

- **Show up at or near the top of Google Search?**
- **Project itself in the community in a consistent way?**
- **Own a strong social media presence on key platforms such as Facebook?**
- **Have lots of 5-star reviews on key websites such as Yelp and Google?**
- **Maintain a polished, professional website that instills confidence in prospective clients?**

If the answer to those five questions is a resounding YES, then the chances are good that your firm maintains a strong brand. If, however, the answer to even one of those questions is NO, there is opportunity for improvement.

## How Can I Build a Stronger Brand?

There are several steps you can take to build a stronger brand for your legal practice right now. Some are easy, some are more difficult, but all effectively help you build the type of brand and reputation that leads to sustained growth over time.

- **Figure Out Your Brand's Purpose**
- **Examine Your Competition & Find a Differentiator**
- **Get Clear on Who Your Best Clients Are**
- **Use Content to Teach, Not to Sell**
- **Use Happy Former Clients to Your Advantage**

## Above All, Be Consistent

The most important aspect to building a strong brand for your legal practice is consistency. If your brand is going to become a strong identity in the community, it needs to be reflected in every aspect of your firm.

When you are consistent with your brand, you'll instill confidence in your clients, strengthen your firm's reputation, and lay a firm foundation for growth.

# It Takes a Commitment to Client Acquisition

Acquisition is how you bring new clients to your firm in a repeatable, sustainable way. To be completely clear, client acquisition is NOT lead generation. At the end of the day, leads don't matter to your firm—cases do. It's clients, not leads, that bring the cases and billable invoices you need.

## How Do I Succeed with Client Acquisition?

There are certain tools that every attorney must keep in their "acquisition toolbox" if they want to attract new clients with consistency.

## The Tools You Need in Your Acquisition Toolbox

- **A Modern, User-Friendly Website**
- **A Robust Google My Business Profile**
- **An Email Marketing Strategy**
- **High-Quality, Informative YouTube Videos**
- **An Evolving Search Engine Advertising Strategy**
- **Targeted Facebook Advertising**
- **Email Inbox Advertising**
- **Paid Search & Local Services Ads**

## Adopt an Acquisition Strategy That Fits Your Goals

Optimal client acquisition is achieved by using the best tools—in the right way at the right time. An intelligent acquisition strategy should include:

### Sustainability

Drive long-term growth that keeps your phones ringing, your paralegals busy, and your revenue increasing for years to come.

### Flexibility

Keep up with your clients' needs using an adjustable client acquisition strategy that can be molded and reshaped depending on what people are responding to.

### Understanding

Obtain a clear and thorough understanding of who your ideal clients are and where they come from—then narrow your focus to leading them to your firm.

### Layering

Diversify your acquisition strategy to establish your brand both offline and online, across multiple platforms (Facebook, YouTube, Google, direct mailers, local newspaper ads, etc.)

# It Takes Operational Efficiency

Achieve maximum results with minimal waste:  
that's the goal of operational efficiency.

**You can achieve this for your firm, starting with:**

## Automation

Automation-based tools are affordable and easy to implement, eliminating unnecessary “busy work” and freeing you to focus on growth and your firm’s future.

Through the power of automation, you can offload many of your digital marketing responsibilities to machines that can do everything you need—quickly and correctly.

This includes building email templates, constructing paid search campaigns, and ensuring advertising efficiency.

## Delegation

If improving the efficiency of your practice is the goal, you must become a master of delegation. As the lead attorney, your time is precious.

Detailed, disciplined delegation is an ideal way to offload some of your work-related responsibilities, which will actually free your time and energy to build your firm’s future.

# The Time is Now for Your Firm to Adapt

No matter your goals for growth, finding increased success for your firm takes patience, hard work, and smart, intentional choices. Following the insights in this book and adapting to current client preferences will put you on a path toward capturing the opportunities that exist in your area.

The legal industry is more competitive than ever.

The cost to acquire clients is going up. And the firms that use data and technology to their advantage will be the ones who attract the most new prospects and the highest-value cases.

If you're looking to raise revenue over the course of the next few years, now is the time to put a strategy in place that helps your firm adapt to the ways in which people find attorneys today.

**For details on how Scorpion can help you reach the goals you have for your firm, visit [ScorpionLegal.com](https://ScorpionLegal.com)**