

POSITION YOUR LAW PRACTICE FOR AUTHORITY



FullFunnel

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(MARKETING) LESSONS FROM A SERIAL KILLER

Are you familiar with the television show Dexter? If you don't know about it, the show has a great premise. Dexter Morgan is a blood spatter analyst working for Miami Metro Police.

He's also a serial killer.

Not any serial killer, though. He's got a "code" – he'll only kill (other) murderers who the criminal justice system couldn't convict.

But that's not what makes the show so compelling... it's his dual life, where he's an upstanding member of law enforcement to everyone else, a doting father, and a model citizen in most ways.

But one with a dark secret that he can't let anyone know. If his sister ever found out, she'd be broken. His son would be carted off by child protective services.

So he is careful – very careful – to cultivate the perfect exterior image.

And you know what? He does.

“You’re in control of how clients see you. The market takes you at your own appraisal.”

Now I’m not saying you need to become a serial killer, but there are some lessons here. The most important is that you *create other people’s perception of you*.

They don’t create the perception. You do. You’re in control of how clients see you.

...If you project an image of a low-rent, take-any-work lawyer, that’s how prospective clients will see you.

...If you project the image of exclusivity and only taking clients who meet your exacting requirements, you’ll attract more affluent clients who spend more.

The market takes you at your own appraisal.

Think about this: if you’ve got a former client and they’re thinking of sending you their friend, will they be embarrassed? (“Uh, yeah, you could call Lawyer Larry, just ignore the worn carpet and stuffed pheasant missing half its feathers on the mantle”).

Or will they be proud to refer business, because they’re sending their buddy to a lawyer who has cultivated an exclusive, referral-only practice?

This is critical. So critical that “Positioning Your Unique Practice” was one of the first members-only trainings I did for members of our practice growth program. Because if you don’t get this right, you’re chopping off your business before it even gets to you.

We’re not talking about hiding murderous tendencies here. It’s far simpler than that.

There are more than a few practices who turn everything around by changing how they present themselves – and radically alter market perception in a short amount of time. It’s the power of positioning, and it’s available to every practice practically free (if you know how to do it).

So think about it. *How are you positioned?*



HOW AND WHEN TO POSITION YOUR LAW FIRM FOR BETTER CLIENTS

Law practice positioning is something many lawyers never consider. They look to their left and look to their right, and they assume (incorrectly) that they should be just like other attorneys.

That's not positioning. That's just being passive and playing the hand you're dealt.

Positioning Is an Active Choice

The problem with being passive about your positioning is that you're not looking at potential clients. You're looking at other lawyers, most of whom have no idea what they're doing.

“Positioning is about occupying a specific place in the mind of your prospect – so they associate your law firm with a specific solution to a specific problem.”

Positioning is choosing to be perceived by potential clients as something specific. It's about occupying a specific place in the mind of your prospect – so they associate your law firm with a specific solution to a specific problem.

For example, most lawyers would say, “I'm an estate planning attorney.”

“The more specific your law firm’s positioning is, the more money you’ll make, and the better clients you’ll have.”

That’s not positioning. It’s a practice area.

Law firm positioning is, “I help neurosurgeons plan for their family’s security after they’re gone.”

Now you’ve said something much more specific. You’ve started to define a narrow group of people who you service, and when they should think of you. And, most importantly, why they should care.

Here’s the Dirty Little Secret that Will Make You More Money

Of course, most attorneys who hear this will say, “I could never do that. What about all of the other people who need my help?”

Here’s the secret: The more specific your law firm’s positioning is, the more money you’ll make, and the better clients you’ll have.

Positioning is all about being something specific in the mind of a prospect or potential referral partner. Before you market, you have to choose your position. (OK, you don’t have to. You only have to if you want your investment in marketing to be far more effective.)

Positioning tells you where to market and how to market. If you’re not positioned the right way, your marketing will fall on deaf ears.

Let’s go back to the example of neurosurgeons. You can think through where these neurosurgeons congregate, how to reach them, and what will resonate with them. Neurosurgeons don’t have a lot of time, so you have to figure out how to present your offering and emphasize that it doesn’t take a lot of time.

That positioning won’t appeal to everybody. Maybe the file clerk who needs help with estate planning doesn’t care about time. They’d rather save a few bucks even if the process takes a bit longer.

But if you want to get that price elasticity that comes with working with a client like a neurosurgeon, you take time out of the equation. You make it a selling point.

So you can see, positioning must be an active choice. But by making this choice we discover what kinds of clients will make our practice thrive ... and leave clues about where to find them.

Specific Positioning Will Make Your Law Practice More Successful

You'll attract more clients. You'll close with a higher frequency. You'll be able to command higher rates.

But it all starts with the right positioning.

Positioning flows through everything in your practice, from how you market, to how you interact with clients and referral partners, to how you ask for referrals from former clients.

Think about it this way. If you were buying an attorney's services, would you prefer to buy from the generalist who claims to represent everybody under the sun?

Or would you want to work with, and be willing to pay more to, a specialist who focuses on solving your specific problem?

Case in point: there's a reason why Practice Alchemy only works with lawyers. Do you want your marketing campaigns done by someone who's working for the local dry cleaner one day, and your law practice the next? Or by a company founded by an attorney, staffed by legal marketing experts?

We've picked our positioning very intentionally so our prospects understand the value we bring. It also means we know how to find them. So we can deliver value.

So, how will you apply this to your business? Let's talk about three things you must do to position yourself as an authority.

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HOW TO BECOME AN AUTHORITY WITH YOUR LAW PRACTICE MARKETING

Too many lawyers fall into the trap of being a commodity because they haven't positioned themselves as authorities. And let's face it. The market is rigged that way.

Most lawyers feel like they're competing for clients. That clients always have to do the choosing, because that's just the way lawyers have to be.

Stop doing this.

“The only winning move is not to play.” (Bonus points if you know what movie that quote is from, by the way.) Stop competing for clients and have them compete for you – as an authority.

Here are the three things you must do to make that happen.

I. You Must Position Yourself as an Exclusive Practice

A low-end practice cannot be an authority.

If you're giving off a low-end vibe and letting the client boss you around, you cannot be an authority. If you keep positioning yourself as the “taking all comers,

because I need the business” generalist, then the only thing you have to differentiate yourself is price.

If you’re not showing that you have a disciplined process for managing clients and gathering the information you need to do a great job, you cannot be an authority.

You may have your practice area down cold. But let’s remember, your client doesn’t know that. She doesn’t know that the questions you’re asking are fully on point to the representation. They just remember a conversation.

But what if you have a framework? A discussion document? The very same conversation takes on an entirely different meaning to the client. They can see your expertise. The conversation can be exactly the same, but you’ve elevated your practice. You’re an expert.

You’ve got a process. You’re exclusive.

Clients feel they’ll get things done, and get them done right.

Just remember - you’re an expert at what you do. If a client could really, truly solve their own problem they wouldn’t be talking to you. So get credit, get paid, get thought of as the expert that you are.

“If a client could really, truly solve their own problem they wouldn’t be talking to you.”

2. You Must Publish

You don’t have to write a book, but you do have to continue to position your practice over time using multiple media. You can’t just say you’re the best. You have to prove you’re the best.

In our “done for you” marketing programs we accomplish this by providing our members with content that positions them as experts over time.

Because repeated exposures to the message of you as an authority are critical to actually becoming the authority in the market.

3. You Must Be Prolific

You can't just publish once. Respected thought leaders don't just do one thing and stop. And sit back. Bask in their own glory.

Lawrence Lessig, Seth Godin and even Supreme Court Justices constantly lean forward and continue to publish.

The moment you become complacent is the moment someone begins to steal your position. And your clients.

Position, Publish, Prolific. The three legs to being an authority.

Why It Never Gets Done...Unless –

It's hard, I'll grant you that. If you don't have the time, if you don't know what to publish, how to position – or don't have the stamina to keep it up, then get help. Because you can't just “kind of” do it.

You can't skip a month. Even if you're in trial. You need to DO it. Always. Without fail.

I just got off the phone with one of our members, Liza. She's an author and has a great message. A solid market position. But she wasn't really publishing in the right medium. And despite having great content, didn't get it out into the world.

The fact is, even though she had content, she needed the structure of when to publish, the overall campaign plan, the most effective and real-world tested templates...and time to get it all done.

We helped her structure her campaigns, get the right content in front of the right people. In under thirty days, we had an entire years' worth of campaigns ready for her.

“The moment you become complacent is the moment someone begins to steal your position. And your clients.”

It's been only four months, and she's paid for our program three times over. Engagement rates on her campaigns are triple industry average. And the best part for her? It's "set and forget." For a whole year of reaping the rewards. She's on target for a 10x return on her investment.

Why? Because we used the formula. Position, publish, prolific. (Well, and some proprietary wizardry that makes our campaigns faster and more effective than lawyers going on their own – we have to keep a few tricks up our sleeve, don't we?).

The rewards are immense. The keys to price elasticity. To more clients (More on that in the next chapter.) And the key to a practice you really, truly enjoy.



LAW

HERE'S HOW TO SELL MORE BY SELLING LESS

Too many lawyers are desperate. And act desperate.

The second they get a whiff that there's a prospective client, they jump. They do everything they can to convince that prospect to hire or retain them. (Remember that word, "convince" – we'll get back to it in a moment)

Most lawyers don't like selling, but they feel like they have to. They're always chasing.

Just remember, it's much more difficult to get clients to value you when you don't value yourself.

The fact is, it's best to be chased. It's best to be pursued, not pursuing.

Think about it this way. In the world of dating, who's most attractive? The needy and overly "available" person or the one who won't give you the time of day?

"Do you want to go out with me tonight? No? How about tomorrow night? No? How about the night after that? No? How about

"It's much more difficult to get clients to value you when you don't value yourself."

sometime, I'm always free. Really. When?
Pleeeeeeease?"

Or maybe, trying to convince them. "Look at my fancy degree!" Doesn't work, really.

Get to the point where you're choosing them.

Doctors are different from lawyers...patients never ask doctors how much something costs. Doctors prescribe a treatment plan or medication and you follow it.

When you're pitching a client, remember that you're the expert. You're the one giving the prescription. You're the expert.

It should be you choosing the client, not the other way around. You being the one who holds the key to solving their problem, to their better tomorrow. You.

A client who's unwilling to follow your advice should feel like they're not worthy of having you as a lawyer.

Stop being so available. Stop being so needy.
Stop thinking of a client pitch as you begging for someone to cut you a check.

Start thinking of your pitches as clients auditioning to be served by you.

Be the doctor.

It may seem like a subtle difference, but it makes all the difference in the world.

You're no longer selling. You're finding out if someone is worthy of being your client.

When you do this, and you position yourself as an authority, you'll have a higher closing rate and

"A client who is unwilling to follow your advice should feel like they're not worthy of having you as a lawyer."

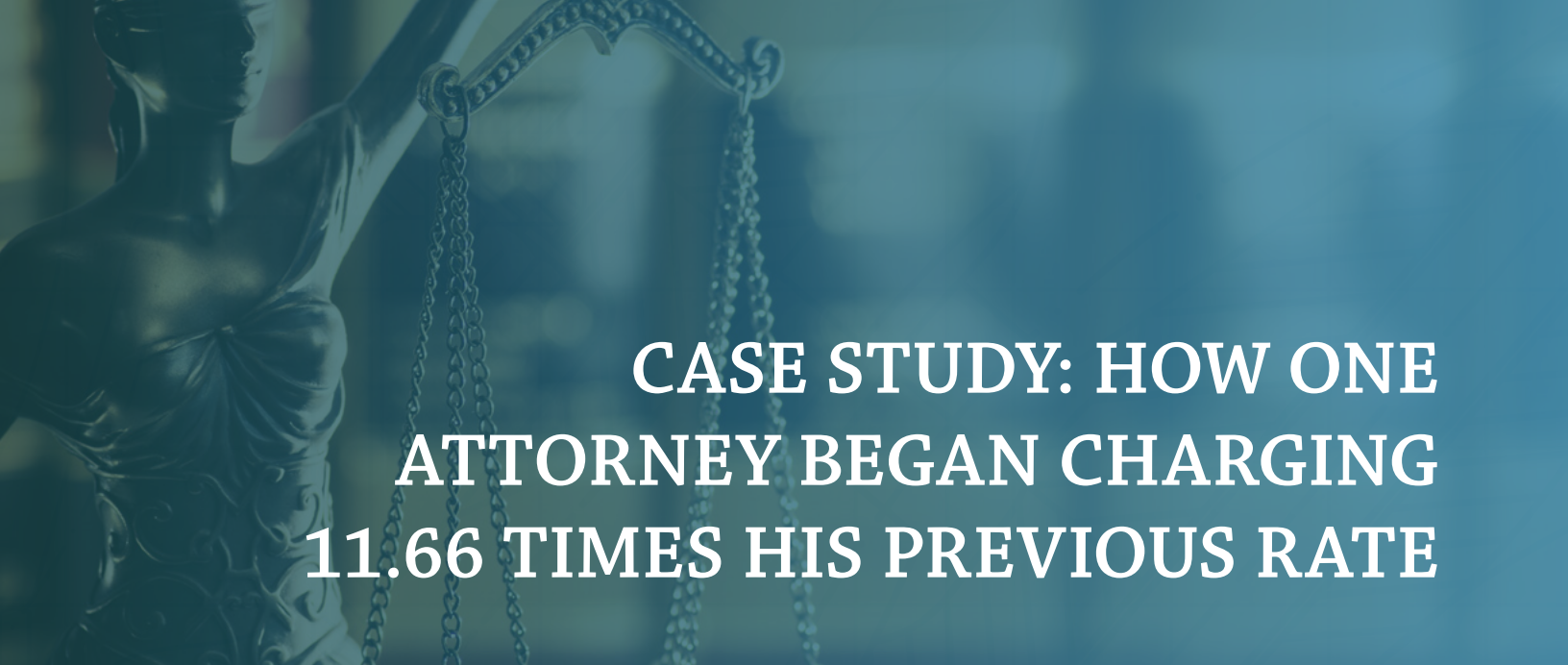
a practice that runs much more easily because clients will be so happy that you've accepted them. Remember "convince"? Convincing them to be your client doesn't work.

Think "compel." What will compel them to want to be your client?

At the end of the day, you don't want to be the lawyer who gets business because of low prices. You want to be the lawyer who gets quality referrals because they're compelled to want you.

A world of difference, from a small change in perspective.

"At the end of the day, you don't want to be the lawyer who business because of low prices."



CASE STUDY: HOW ONE ATTORNEY BEGAN CHARGING 11.66 TIMES HIS PREVIOUS RATE

Just in case you still aren't convinced of the power of positioning, we'll close with this story of one of our FullFunnel members.

An attorney who recently joined us had been practicing for a number of years. He's an excellent attorney, but he just fell into the same trap most lawyers do.

He looked left, looked right, and decided, "Well, these people are charging low rates out of the gate before working their way up to the market rate, so I'll do the same thing."

He was getting some pretty good clients, but there was a major discrepancy between what he was charging and the value he was delivering.

What did we do? We changed how he presented his service offering. Instead of speaking in terms of hours or a laundry of things he was doing, we made sure he was conveying the overall value of his services.

And now? He's reaping the rewards.

Clients don't hire you for a "to do" list. They hire you for achieving an objective. They hire you for the end result.

Convey Value. Increase Fees.

When we changed how he presented himself – in a way that illustrated his true value in concrete terms, he was able to start increasing his fees.

And not just the small incremental increases that don't amount to anything, but substantial increases.

He was no longer reciting a list of "here's what I'm going to do" and being viewed as a commodity who would complete every task on that list (what I used to not so affectionately call a "contract monkey"). He was recognized as someone who could create an outcome that would improve the life of the client in a concrete way.

No longer just "papering" something. A partner in achieving his clients' life goals.

I'd say it's immeasurably different, but in a minute you'll see how very, very nicely measurable it was.

So we make these changes – and all of a sudden, he gained significant pricing elasticity - because he realized that if you give people what they want, they'll be willing to pay for it.

Nobody wants a list or a contract with a bunch of legal gibberish.

Nobody gets up in the morning and says "Hey, what I really want to do today is hire a lawyer. That would be awesome!"

They want the result.

"Nobody gets up in the morning and says "Hey, what I really want to do today is hire a lawyer. That would be awesome!"

To-Do Lists Have Low Value. Results Have High Value

If you're selling your services based on "here's what we're going to do", you're probably showing the same list as every other attorney.

How is a client supposed to make a choice?

We reworked this attorney's presentation so he was providing potential clients with a complete solution. In fact, we offered multiple solutions – basic, intermediate and advanced packages – so the client would be more inclined to compare packages rather than different attorneys.

This FullFunnel member's fees for his premium-positioned packages are now 11.66 times his average fees before.

That's not a typo.

Your perception of what your price should be is all in your head, especially if it's based on what other attorneys are charging.

Other attorneys and their misinformed pricing decisions are irrelevant. Only what the right clients willingly - happily - pay matters. I mean really, who's in charge of setting your price – you or your competition?

Regardless of where you are in the country, there are people who will pay far more than what you're charging. If you feel like a commodity and present yourself that way, the fee you receive has nothing to do with your practice area, and it has nothing to do with geography.

It has everything to do with whether you're presenting and positioning yourself properly.

“Regardless of where you are across the country, there are people who will pay far more than what you're charging.”

It's actually straightforward, if you go step by step, in the right order, with the right packaging, presentation, and positioning – just like this Practice Alchemy member did. He took our advice and is now reaping the rewards.

And there's no reason why you can't do the exact same thing.

What To Do Next

The contents of this book are just a small sample of the strategies and tools we offer our members. If you'd like to get step by step "how to's" and finally create the practice you've always wanted, we're happy to help.

Visit www.freedominpractice.com/session and book a complimentary ten-minute call to tell us a little about your practice. Our Practice Growth team will let you know if and how we can help you. If we can help, we'll have a more in-depth discussion about the practice you want and how to get there. If we can't help, you have our commitment we'll point you in the right direction.

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