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## Attorneys can mix family and marketing

This year, I spent a considerable amount of time mentoring young attorneys relative to client marketing issues. Although often enthusiastic about marketing in order to develop their own client base, many of the attorneys I met with openly shared how difficult it was for them to find the time to market to prospects and clients. I learned how conflicted young attorneys are over the time they want and need to spend with their families — particularly those with young children — and the time required to effectively market to clients and prospects.

To many, there simply were not enough hours in the day to do both; it appeared to be an either-or proposition. Either spend time with one's family or forfeit "family time" to spend time marketing. I believe that if one is prepared to take unconventional approaches to marketing, this challenge, what I term the "family time dilemma," can be solved.

Whenever an attorney shared that they were experiencing a family time dilemma which either prevented or interfered with their ability to spend time marketing, I asked them the following question: "What is the real purpose of marketing?" To me, the answer to this question is central to solving the family time dilemma. After hearing various theories on the purpose of marketing, I would share that, in my opinion, the real purpose of marketing is to simply connect with a client in order to form a personal relationship with him or her. It seems simple enough, right?

I would then remind the attorney that many clients have

the same time constraints that attorneys do. Indeed, many clients have spouses and children and also find it difficult to meet an attorney for dinner, drinks or a game and be home in time to have a family meal, help their children with homework, read their children a story, give their baby a bath and tuck their little ones in bed — let alone spend quality time with a spouse.

It is this shared life experience that may allow an attorney the opportunity to market while still enjoying time with their children or spouse. By this I mean combine marketing time with family time wherever appropriate and feasible. But how?

When interacting with a client, learn as much as you can about the client's family and share as much as you are comfortable with about your own family. Learn whether the clients are married and whether they have children. If they do have children, find out their ages and what types of activities their children participate in on the weekends. The information you gather is critical to solving the family time dilemma.

**“(M)y recommended solution is to involve both the client’s family and your family on marketing outings whenever appropriate.”**

### GONE FISHIN’



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### Children

If a client has children, consider taking your child on the weekend to see the client's child play soccer, basketball or participate in some other event, like a play or musical performance. That way, you get to spend time with your child while at the same time connecting with the client who will undoubtedly appreciate your interest in the person who is most important to them.

Alternatively, consider inviting the client and their child to join you and yours at a Bulls, Bears, White Sox or Blackhawks game. Consider even asking a client and their child to join you and yours to go tobogganing in winter. The point is that there are an unlimited number of things that you and your child

can do with a client and their child. And in so doing, you are connecting with the client on a very personal level which, although admittedly unconventional, can form a bond between you and the client that far surpasses any traditional marketing experience.

### Spouses

An attorney's spouse can often feel left out when an attorney entertains a client over dinner or at an event. The same may be true for a client's spouse. I often remark to friends and family that my wife, Belkis, is my best marketing asset. Whenever possible, I ask her to join me for dinner when entertaining a client and I also invite the client's spouse to attend.

Often, the spouses hit it off. And before you know it, you are double dating with clients and they, in time, become more of a friend than purely a client. I have found that the dinner or event dynamic is much more personal and that I connect with the client in unique ways which are absent when spouses are not present. I find this to be true even if the client is not married and Belkis accompanies the client and me to dinner or an event.

When it comes to marketing, everyone has to do what comes naturally to them. But, for those who are suffering from the family time dilemma, my recommended solution is to involve both the client's family and your family on marketing outings whenever appropriate.

I appreciate that this recommendation is slightly unconventional. However, it might just enable you to be with your loved ones while at the same time connecting with a client which, after all, is the real purpose of marketing. Good luck.