

BASIC MARKETING FOR THE SMALL FIRM



BY MARK A. CHINN

Chinn & Associates, PLLC

P.O. Box 13483, Jackson, Mississippi 39236

(601) 366-4410, Fax (601) 366-4010

mark@chinnandassociates.com

BASIC MARKETING FOR THE SMALL FIRM

BY MARK A. CHINN

JACKSON, MS

ABOUT THE PRESENTER: Mark Chinn operates the largest divorce firm in Mississippi. He is the author of *How to Build and Manage a Family Law Practice* published in 2006 as a joint venture of the Family Law and Law Practice Management Sections of the American Bar Association. He is also author of a chapter entitled, "Marketing is Not a Dirty Word," in *How to Capture and Keep Clients*, published by the American Bar Association General Practice Solo Section in 2005 and "The Exit Interview" in *101 Practical Solutions for the Family Lawyer* published by the Family Law Section. These publications are available through the American Bar Association at 312-988-6085 or www.ababooks.org.

I. WHY MARKET?

"Law is an honorable profession, but it is also a business. The two concepts are the yin and yang for the delivery of quality services." Author Unknown

- A. You must be successful to be a good lawyer; to have the staff, equipment and facilities to deliver top rate service.
- B. Lawyers who are in trouble financially get into more ethics related trouble.
- C. Lawyers who are in trouble financially cannot provide essential family support.
- D. Even if you are already relatively successful, marketing is essential to maintaining and growing. For example, note that the most successful of businesses have the most aggressive marketing. Competition is incredible. It is estimated there are 1 million lawyers in the U.S.

- E. Happiness. Lawyers who plan and market are happy lawyers.
 - F. Marketing can increase both the volume and the quality of business.
- II. The three competencies of successful practice.
- A. Every business depends on three things:
 - 1. Getting business
 - 2. Doing quality work
 - 3. Getting paid
 - B. To get business you must market
- III. Develop a marketing attitude. Marketing must become a way of life, not a one time project.
- A. Greeting people. Treat people with respect, friendliness and dignity. This includes your clients, your staff, opposing lawyers and their staff.
 - 1. I have had clients come to me from other lawyers and as a part of their complaints, complain about the way the former lawyer treated not only them but also their staff.
 - 2. A lot of business comes from former adversaries who feel that they were beaten but treated with respect. This includes parties.
 - B. Read think and talk about marketing. Eat, drink and sleep it.
 - C. Make sure your presentation is consistent from your card, to your stationary, to your name tag, to your office layout.
- IV. Market existing business first.
- A. Develop a service oriented attitude.
 - B. Develop systems in your office that are attuned to your clients.

- C. Show clients you care.
 - D. Develop good interview techniques.
 - E. Work with your staff to develop good phone and interpersonal qualities.
 - F. Conclude your business with an exit interview. Give the client closing explanation of what you have done for them, thank them, and tell them what services you offer and that you hope they will call you for additional problems in the future.
 - G. Follow up with past clients. Check on them periodically. Send them relevant decisions or recent developments.
 - H. Always write or call people who refer you business and thank them.
- V. Market new business.
- A. Write articles.
 - B. Speak.
 - C. Join trade organizations
 - D. Conduct seminars
 - E. Participate in community activities
 - F. Join local groups such as Rotary, Kiwanis, church, etc.
 - G. Become active in local, county, state and national bar activities
 - H. Join affiliated national organizations
 - I. Obtain certifications and specializations such as American Board of Civil Trial Advocacy, American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, Who's Who...
 - J. Publicize yourself through "People in the News" sections of the papers.
 - K. Advertise firm events such as additions of lawyers.

MARK A. CHINN

Chinn & Associates, PLLC

P.O. Box 13483, Jackson, Mississippi 39236

(601) 366-4410, Fax (601) 366-4010

mark@chinnandassociates.com

Mark Chinn operates Chinn & Associates, the largest divorce firm in Mississippi. He has received following distinctions in the field of family law:

- Mid South Super Lawyers Mark is one of only 15 lawyers selected out of all the lawyers in Tennessee, Arkansas, and Mississippi to be a Mid-South Super Lawyer in the field of family law.
- The Best Lawyers in America
- Bar Register of Preeminent Lawyers
- Outstanding Lawyers of America Mark is one of the one hundred attorneys that were selected from Mississippi for membership.

Mark was the recipient in 1996 of the Award of Merit for distinguished service to the Bar and the public and was enrolled as a Fellow of the Mississippi Bar Foundation in 1997. Mark has been Chairman of the Family Law Section of the Mississippi Bar twice and is a member of the governing council of the Family Law Section of the American Bar Association. His other work with the Mississippi Bar has included: Chairman in 1995-96 of the Solo and Small Firm Practice Committee, and past service on the Ethics, Client Relations, Women in the Profession, and Fee Dispute Resolution Committees.

He is the author of *How to Build and Manage a Family Law Practice* published in 2006 as a joint venture of the Family Law and Law Practice Management Sections of the American Bar Association. He is also author of a chapter entitled, "Marketing is Not a Dirty Word," in *How to Capture and Keep Clients*, published by the American Bar Association General Practice Solo Section in 2005 and "The Exit Interview" in *101 Practical Solutions for the Family Lawyer* published by the Family Law Section. These

publications are available through the American Bar Association at 312-988-6085 or www.ababooks.org.

Mark has been featured in the National *Lawyer's Weekly* Magazine for delivering world class service. He has been a frequent speaker for the American Bar Association Family Law Section and the Mississippi Bar on issues of family law practice management and delivering world class service.

Mark was Chairman of the Lamar Order of the University Of Mississippi School Of Law Alumni Association in 2002. He was President of the Hinds County Bar Association for 1998-99 and is a Master of the Bench in the Charles Clark American Inn of Court.

He was elected Vice Chair of the Supreme Court's Gender Fairness Task Force and was appointed by the Governor of Mississippi to the Children's Justice Task Force.

Community activities include: Chairman of the Jackson Urban League Board of Directors (1995-2000); Chairman of the Tenth Jubilee! Jam in May 1996 which featured the Olympic Torch; Jubilee! Jam Foundation Board, Arts Alliance Board, Opera Board and Leadership Jackson.

Mark and his wife of thirty years, Cathy, have four daughters. Mark is a Black belt in Karate and kick boxing, a veteran of 20 years of Rugby, and a private pilot. When Mark is not sitting on the side of a soccer field or basketball court watching his daughters play, he enjoys golf, weightlifting, and piano lessons.

Mark received his undergraduate degree from Iowa State University in 1975 and his Law Degree from the University of Mississippi in 1978. He is admitted to practice in all courts in Mississippi, the Fifth and Seventh Circuits and the United States Supreme Court.