

This month:

Unusual culture and MI changes to affect performance and profits at the front end

It is just not new business but clients as well

Management Information to get the processes in place

Essential Coaching for Business Success

I had a director of a law firm contact me in March – a bit head in hands – saying that he was trying it hard to get others to see the return on investment in a call reporting and management information system – the cost just seen as an overhead.

That took me back instantly to a piece I wrote in April 2013, supplemented since by others, - have a read of that and subsequents -

<http://professionalchoiceconsultancy.com/articles.php> - where a managing partner showed me a report from outsourced telephone answering supplier www.moneypenny.com/uk showing by department the 400 plus in bound enquiries by department just for one month.

Just on inbound enquiry conversion the right approach can generate a great increase in revenue for the firm. 500 enquiries at a 25% conversion and just £500 per file is worth £750k per annum. 75% which is being achieved is worth £2,250k per annum. A small firm I was with last month opened 80 new files which was with an 80% conversion rate.

It doesn't stop here though – many firms are in danger of upsetting existing clients with poor communication.

As reported last month Such Amin made it clear about client wants

- Speed of communication and file handling
- Education – they increasingly want to know about the process and what will happen when – many these days do their own research that can lead to conflict
- Information – needs to be easy and in their language
- Customer service – the communication needs to be outward facing from the firm
- 24 x 7 communication even if the law firm is closed – even the nightshift man wants to ask questions

If you look at some of the surveys – again on the website - there are a number of clients who are very dissatisfied, paying good money and not able to get through for information and education. They do not hang around after the file is finished. I always remember that a dissatisfied client will tell c20 people (I deliberately told 20 when dissatisfied over a banking issue), who in turn tell some and so on – Maybe 500-600 people get to know. On the other hand, it's only about 10 that get good news.

About six years ago we also completed a mystery shopper exercise and with anonymous results I sat with the managing partner of a firm and took him through one result – he was horrified and told me it would never happen in his firm and he would deal with the HOD's responsible – I needn't say more. Information and measurement is key.

Industry consultants www.legal-mentors.com offer mystery shopping exercise and training in call conversion and client dissatisfaction removal and as they also state that the biggest cause of client dissatisfaction is "Communication – or more precisely, the lack of

communication and updates” – Delivering outstanding client service is all about keeping the client informed, taking their calls and responding quickly to their calls and e-mails”

As business managers with the responsibility for revenue growth, client development and client retention we need information to make sure that the right exploitation is in place and that everyone in the business is doing their bit against the service levels required.

- Many firms are now capturing in bound enquiries by department and reviewing conversion rates whether it be with workflow modification on their case management system or just with a simple spreadsheet – whether it is actually followed up and declared mandatory is very variable
- Our case management systems also enhance communication with built in SLAs and client communication requirements that can be monitored and escalated

New MI to assist

Something that is relatively new but thanks to technology enhancements “big brother” can now provide us with much more granular information to measure and improve performance of a critical issue throughout the firm.

Not handling calls right can have a severe impact on the revenue of the business – not just new business growth but also client retention.

Currently many firms do not have any form of MI and are making decisions emotionally based upon what staff are saying. It can be costing many thousands of pounds when maybe less voice lines are actually needed not more – just more intelligence on routing needed – let alone the lost revenue and clients

In addition to Call Recording – that is becoming mandatory in some businesses and developing into a coaching tool there is now available from many telecoms suppliers Call Reporting and Management Information on your telephone system. MLS Advantage supplier www.matrix247.com can advise on appropriate software to offer a solution on multiple types of installation.

Call reporting and or appropriate Management Information (MI) can provide

- How many inbound calls to the firm were unanswered and how many un-answered calls are un-returned to a prospective client by anyone in the firm
- When the busy periods are for the firm. Apparently as much as 80% of calls for some firms can be between 12.00 – 14.00 so this management information enables the system to be programmed to route the calls – not just to reception but to automatically trip over to other staff who can handle the situation and/or new business enquiries.
- The system can report factually when all lines into the firm are engaged with the client getting an engaged tone – decisions can then be made as to whether to increase the number of lines or finds alternative methods
- Enhance the return on marketing spend where different numbers are used for different promotions for the firm. This enables clear evidence of which media channel is generating the highest number of calls
- The cradle to grave journey of in-bound calls – how long ringing in reception, how long was a caller placed on hold, did the call get through to a department, how long

did the department take to answer the call, how many calls received by each department – the process can then be managed

As lawyers or managers within a firm we just cannot be complacent about communication with clients new or old and prospects – new. Using intelligence available from our case management systems, on boarding systems and now telephone systems enables us to address the key task.

Coaching for Success - Finally another mention of www.legal-mentors.com and another popular service and coaching exercise. I have written before about this taboo subject for many firms. Selling is just about a well-structured conversation but the results are the desired objectives of enhanced enquiry conversions.

As mentioned above systems, procedures and reporting are sometimes put in place but often there is little or no training in technique provided to those responsible for delivery – resulting in lost opportunities and the bigger the firm the greater the loss.

I see many untrained managers and staff feel they have no chance of success because the firm down the road is offering lower prices. That has to be overcome as in reality most people will buy services based on their perception of the value of the product or service and it applies whether it is a pair of shoes or a Will or Conveyance. You do not have to sell but build a rapport, empathy, highlight the benefits and ask for the authority to proceed so that you can handle the objection.

Legal Mentors mystery shopper exercises generally determine that

- They are never told about the quality of service that can be expected
- Prices and quotes are left to a subsequent e-mail putting the pressure on the potential client
- On many occasions a contact number is not requested
- Nobody asks if they want to proceed

Empathy is key. Understand the needs, the benefits being sought, explain the service, experience and quality. It is not a hard sell but the sort of dialogue a potential client would expect from a firm

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