Marketing in a Team Setting

> *"Our most successful efforts have been when we are able to focus on one corporation and say this is the group we are going to penetrate as an organization. When we go and work as single individuals, we are not as successful."*
>
> Field Leader, Life/Planning

Adviser teams have found that team selling helps focus marketing efforts and channels the combined energies of the group toward tackling a target market or client. Team selling is especially effective and recommended for large-dollar opportunities and key-client transactions where several players need to be involved to consummate the business, as contact with the prospect will need to take place on several levels and by different people within the firm (for example, support staff need to be aware of service delivery issues, product specialists may need to be involved and so forth).

Our interviews indicated certain elements that help team marketing succeed:

- Field leaders (or team leaders) need to ensure that advisers' efforts are in synch; once again, the **WHAT** must be clear. Attention needs to be paid to role clarity (that is, the expectations and accountabilities of each member on the client team). One person — often the team leader — should spearhead the effort and organize the team's activities.
- Confidence in and respect for the other members of the team is another important element in making the effort fun and motivating. The foundation for this is laid in the behavior expectation-setting phase (the **HOW**).
- Successful teams continue to use the same tools used in independent marketing, such as referrals, community outreach and cross-selling.
  - Referrals from existing clients can help associates buy face time with prospective clients. They provide an effective "foot in the door," ensure brand and firm recognition in the community and create a receptive prospect. All of this makes the task of closing easier and makes each sale more cost-effective.
  - A good understanding of the firm's offerings and service capabilities ensures that producers are able to identify opportunities for team and firm growth even if they are outside their own area of specialization. Community outreach connects advisers with a broad range of potential buyers.
  - The team must define focused referral systems that will enable each team member to acquire his or her required number of referrals each week. Having these systems and associated activity requirements is critical to the team's success as it drives all future activity of the team. An example used by one field leader is provided in sample 2.4.

A few field leaders talked about introducing new associates on the team to their clients so that they learn to manage client relationships effectively from first contact and are able to build long-term relationships with clients. This marketing technique has proven successful in many cases and allows new associates to take on account-management responsibilities. There a few situations in which this approach works particularly well:

- In some cases the process of introducing new associates to clients starts as soon as the new member comes on board and receives his or her basic orientation training. New associates accompany senior members on rides and client calls to observe and absorb, which helps

Sample 2.4

Lead-Generation System Focusing on Tier-One Clients		
Technique/Approach	Team Member(s) that will use approach	# of Tier-One Leads Required (for each team member)
Advocacy Talk (at end of sales cycle)	KC	
Annual Policy Reviews	KC/CR at first, then CE with TL/LG	
Personal Meetings (lunch, golf, and so forth)	KC, CR	
Prompting Lists	Full team	

them improve their customer-contact skills. On subsequent visits, they take the lead with the client, with the senior member providing back-up support. This allows the junior team member to grasp all aspects of client management. Field leaders using a mentoring- or skill-based structure seem to use this approach most often.

- In other cases, after providing basic orientation training, new associates are asked to obtain their own clients and manage these relationships independently. This is more typical in teams that have a market- or product-based team structure. One team leader talked about using standard marketing materials that introduce all the members of the team to their clients and has provided an example shown in sample 2.5. Samples 2.6 and 2.7 are examples of marketing planning tools used in another firm.

Marketing in a Team Setting: *What You Can Do*

> **Have planning sessions and communicate clearly.** Have clarity on **WHAT** you want to focus on (for example, specific clients, markets or income groups) and share this with your team at every forum (weekly meetings, marketing training, and so forth). Discuss individual roles, team roles and the firm role in the marketing process. Communication is also important in situations such as a new product launch or change in structure of the team. Because multiple associates may be making contact with the same individual, providing clarity is crucial to success in team marketing.

> **Track activity.** While a simple spreadsheet can assist you in tracking activity, some agencies are using sophisticated and customized software to accomplish the task. At a minimum, have your associates use a checklist that incorporates all of your firm's products and services. Make sure that the checklist includes each individual, by name, and what he or she is responsible for doing on behalf of the team. Without clear tracking, rewarding activity in a team setting is very difficult and charges of inequity are hard to argue against.

- > **Maintain the momentum.** Generate interest around the team marketing concept by holding referral contests, providing cross-selling credit and incorporating these concepts in a scorecard design. Again, provide clarity about what recognition and rewards are available and what each individual and the team as a whole must accomplish to succeed.
- > **Draw on lessons learned from individual practice.** Many field leaders stressed the importance of joining a local organization or club, participating in community service, using social and professional networks to obtain referrals and tapping into associations such as the CPA Network, Bankers Association, and so forth. They also trained associates on the basics (for example, uncovering client needs, getting referrals, cross-selling). By incorporating lessons learned from the individual adviser model, field leaders were able to maintain momentum and continuity.

Sample 2.5

Letter Introducing a Team for Marketing Purposes

ABC Agency: FIVE GREAT REASONS ***YOU*** should do business with ***US!***

Who We Are

My team and I are dedicated to providing a variety of products and services to meet your individual needs. With a team of four fully licensed, full-time insurance professionals, we stand ready to serve you as no one else can!

Name 1: Area of Specialty (for example, Investment Specialist)
Name 2: Area of Specialty
Name 3: Area of Specialty
Name 4: Area of Specialty

Round-the-Clock Service

Walk in … to our office for personal service.
Call in … for 24 hour service, toll-free 1-888-XXX-XXXX, anytime.
Click in … to ABC.com for valuable information, or e-mail me at XYZ@ABC.com
Mail-in … to ABC Agency, 1234 Main Street, Anytown, VA 54321

The choice is yours!

Exceptional Claim Service

Our firm boasts the world's largest network of knowledgeable, professional insurance-claims specialists who provide prompt, courteous and excellent claim service. On top of that, we pay many auto claims right out of our office. Quick service with hassle-free repair options.

Variety of Products and Services

We offer the products and service you and your family need to help manage the risks of everyday life, recover from the unexpected and realize your dreams. You already know that life brings change, and along with it comes added responsibilities, risk and opportunity. Our investment products provide the perfect complement to our insurance offerings. You have a vision of what your future looks like … now you can reach your dreams by working with someone you already know and trust.

Financial Strength

Ours is a conservative company, consistently receiving top ratings by independent financial rating organizations for our ability to pay claims. Isn't that why you buy insurance?

Sample 2.6

Short-Term Marketing Plan Activity Tool

Markets	Needs	Methods	Contact to Appt. Ratio	Weekly Contacts	Weekly Appts.	Time Committed
Natural	Varied	Referrals	3:1	12	4	4 hrs.
Small Business Owners	Employee Benefits Retirement Planning	Networking COIs Mass Mail	4:1 4:1 10:1	4 8 40	1 2 4	1 hr. 2 hrs. 3 hrs.

Sample 2.7

Long-Term Marketing Plan Activity Tool

Market:		
Speaking Activities	Complete by	Priority
Writing Activities	Complete by	Priority
Events and Seminars	Complete by	Priority
Advertising and Mailings	Complete by	Priority
Centers of Influence	Complete by	Priority
Community/Charity	Complete by	Priority