

QALFM PRESENTATION

1 June 2006

The case for integrated marketing – marketing and HR working together

Let me paint you a picture of what it was like when I first joined a law firm as a Marketing Manager in 1988.

- Brisbane was booming largely due to a good property market
- The city was coming of age with the hosting of Expo 88
- Long lunches were the order of the day – I can't tell you how many Sir Lunchalots I got to know!
- Work literally "walked in the door"
- Clients were grateful if lawyers actually returned their telephone calls
- There was a general mystique about the processes of the law
- Time recording had been introduced but it was common for 4 chargeable hours a day to be the norm... and fees rendered usually included a component for "care and consideration" - a curious concept for a professional, don't you think?
- Law firms were doing very nicely, thank you, and enjoying being a "practice"
- Males dominated the graduate lists and the profession generally
- There were very few female partners – the ones I recall frequently practised in family law or were regarded as "spinsters"
- There were, however, many long-term female employees – in secretarial roles mainly but also in admin, accounts and office services
- Maternity leave was not an issue – as there was none. Yet I'd enjoyed this almost 15 years earlier as a federal public servant
- If you mentioned part-time or flexible conditions it was assumed you'd get a job elsewhere
- The larger firms had a dedicated HR Manager – but I think only one other had a dedicated marketing "girl" or "PR lady", as partners generally thought of us!
- There had been some recent local merger activity but the dingo fence was still in place – few lawyers were admitted in more than one state and the firm name had to include partners practising in the state
- Advertising was virtually banned - and limited to 4cm x 4cm. Our firm had a box at the tennis and had to show cause why it shouldn't be pursued because of the sign size
- The top tier and established firms still vied for the "best" graduates – but from what I saw the criteria were simply GPAs and the school you attended. All firms wanted the "pick of the crop" – PLUs – or "people like us", as one partner explained to me.

Then that wicked man Paul Keating put paid to this fairy tale existence.

In 1990/91, we saw “the recession we had to have” as interest rates rose to 17 or 18% and between 20 – 25% from lenders of last resort. The Qld economy, relying heavily as it did on property transactions, was devastated. Law firm employees were retrenched – in one day, one of the best known firms put off more than 20 staff.

The halcyon days were over. In the next few years, concepts you are all familiar with were introduced as firms started to take a business approach to the practice of law. While much has changed, particularly the use of technology, today’s topic areas of marketing and HR are truly the ones where significant change has occurred - and where there are significant challenges ahead. It is these challenges that provide the incentive for an integrated strategic approach for Marketing and HR professionals and their firms.

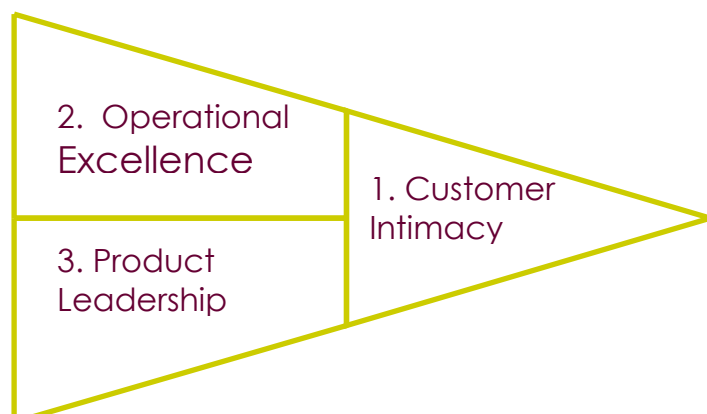
Strategic options

The word “strategy” was not frequently used in law firms – or other professional firms – until the late 1980s and early 1990s. But once the word was discovered by law firms I think they truly grasped the concept. My experience is that most law firms rate well when compared with other businesses in terms of being strategically managed. Whether they’re strategically led is a topic for another day.

Let’s consider the 3 strategic options available to businesses, including professional services firms.



The rule is to excell at one and meet the market on the other two. Generally, strategy can be depicted as a wedge like this:



I suspect this is what the strategy of the firms represented here tonight looks like – you would be trying to excel at customer intimacy (all agreed). Now let me ask you, how likely is it that the majority of people in your firm would agree with this?

Why am I asking this? The reason is this. All members of the firm must be aware of and support a firm’s broad strategy for it to succeed. It is necessary for everyone in the firm to be SINGING FROM THE SAME HYMN SHEET.

And who in the firm – apart from the partners – has the responsibility for ensuring this occurs? Your IT Manager? Your accountant – I don’t think so. Yes, you, the HR and Marketing professionals. Do you agree?

Let me ask the marketers a question. What proportion of your marketing activities can be carried out **without** the input/co-operation of others in the firm outside of your marketing group or external marketing consultants? (Note: The responses were around 20%).

So on whom is your success dependent? OTHER PEOPLE IN THE FIRM, RIGHT? And who is largely responsible for attracting/retaining these people? Your HR staff.

Now let me ask the HR people a question. What is it that drives demand for staff? Workload? Clients? Client needs? And who in your firm – apart from the partners – is responsible for this? MARKETING, RIGHT?

So when you think about it, would you agree that marketing and HR actually depend heavily on each other? How do you feel about this? What are you doing to exploit each other’s strengths and skills to maximize your firm’s growth and success – and your own personal and professional standing.

Inter-dependence/co-dependence of HR and marketing

Let’s explore this issue of inter-dependence or co-dependence of marketing and HR professionals a bit further.

I’ve prepared an activity that will help you better understand this issue of inter-dependence. Let’s break into groups of 6 or so with a mix of marketing people and others from HR, training and recruitment. The activity requires you to develop 2 lists:

- (a) which HR activities can marketers assist with or influence?
- (b) which marketing activities can HR managers assist with or influence?

(The responses from the activity were as follows)

HR activities/issues marketers can assist with or influence	Marketing activities HR can assist with or influence
Marketing KPIs for all staff	Client referral – staff incentives
Employee branding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advertisements • graduate/other recruitment • building the brand/attracting the rightpeople 	Client service standards – enforcement and KPIs for evaluation purposes
Advice regarding new clients/tenders won to assist with workforce planning	Charity events – community care programs

Training – business development skills and sales training	Training needs of staff in marketing/business development
Inductions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> organizational/marketing strategy style guide 	Introductions to new staff – role in marketing
Interviews – branding collateral	Internal communication
Business connections – staff attraction	Business connections – clients/referrers
Internal communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> client relationships service standards 	Business/strategic planning
Change management processes	Internet/intranet
Organising careers fairs	Firm promotion & branding
Recruitment needs/skill base	Developing the mission statement to know the values or philosophy that staff must share
Induction manuals	Corporate image/brand
Performance reviews – feedback on BDM aspects	KPI – plans/development
Certain aspects of job descriptions	Resources eg for tenders
Employee satisfaction	Events – staff attendance

The challenge for each of you is to work out how you should collaborate to make this happen. What are the barriers that prevent this happening? How can these be overcome? I would have liked time to explore this with you but time does not permit this. Perhaps it can be done at another session. You need to discuss this in your own firm.

The challenges that lie ahead

Finally, I'd like to consider for a few minutes the issue I alluded to earlier – the challenges that lie ahead for marketing and HR professionals in law firms that provide further incentive for an integrated strategic approach.

These are what I see as some of the likely issues in the next 5 years or so:

- Inter-generational change
- Advancements in technology
- Further globalisation
- Increased non-traditional competition
- Industry consolidation
- New markets and industries
- Significant changes in the labour market

Inter-generational change

- Four generations in the workforce – getting the most out of each
- Implications of the retirement of the baby boomers
- Gen X is the largest proportion in the workforce
- What the generations think of each other

Advancements in technology

- Information and communication technology
- Artificial intelligence
- Susskind grid

Further globalisation

- Developed countries
- Developing countries
- Citizens of the world

Increased non-traditional competition

- De-regulation/loss of monopoly
- Technology will bring new providers

Industry consolidation

- Fewer big players
- More niche players
- Greater segmentation

New markets and industries

- Impact of technology & innovation
- New distribution options
- Look at top 500 lists
- New areas of specialisation

Significant changes in the labour market

- Contract/part-time staff/job sharing
- Male/female proportions
- Flexible conditions

I'm sure you can see that collaboration is needed between HR and marketing to fully consider the impact these and other issues will have on your firms. You owe it to yourselves and the partners who have employed you to work together on issues such as these. Thank you for inviting me to lead this session.

Kathleen Singleton
1 June 2006