

THE HOLY GRAIL OF CLIENT COMMUNICATIONS

By Philipp Thurnher

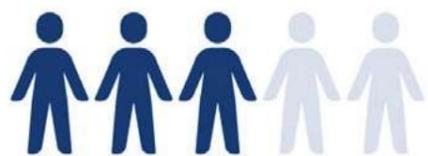


Have you recently sent out a newsletter that received little to no attention? Then this article will help you understand how you can improve this situation. Philipp Thurnher, CEO and founder of Nexl, shows what factors valuable customer communication should have and how you can achieve the holy grail of customer communication.

For law firms, client care and communications are critical to ensure long-lasting success. With the majority of client communications now being digital, lawyers have to make a conscious effort to stay connected with their important clients.

We have seen law firms all around the world underdeliver in this area. They fail to stay connected with their clients in a meaningful and relevant way, causing a bad client experience and ultimately losing some of their most valuable clients.

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Why is it so difficult for law firms to deliver great client communication?

There are many reasons why law firms have generally found it challenging to frequently engage with clients in a meaning-

ful way. Before we dive into suggestions to help you improve client communications, it is important to understand the different types of client communications and their effectiveness in generating new revenue.

Let's remember, clients engage lawyers they **know, like and trust**.

Marketing communications (one-to-many)

Marketing communications is still one of the most common forms of client communications you will find at law firms. Those generally include a monthly newsletter, regulatory updates, webinars and more. It's clear why those are still the most used form of communication at law firms. They are centrally managed; they are automated; they are relatively effortless to produce, and you can reach thousands of clients and prospective clients with a click of a button.

This seems to be the most effective way to communicate with clients but it's a trap many have fallen victim to.

Marketing communications have increasingly lost their effectiveness. Our inboxes are filled with marketing emails and our subconscious part of our mind has been trained to automatically dismiss any HTML formatted emails as useless spam.

Recent email marketing statistics have shown that the average open rate of marketing email campaigns for certain industries are as low as 10% and less than 1% engage with the email content. By sending your newsletter to 1000 client contacts you only truly engage 10 of them.

I recently spoke to a GC at a Fortune 100 company, and he told me that with any regulatory change he gets about 40+ emails from lawyers with basically the same content but no-one had ever picked up the phone to give him a call. He also told me that he didn't read a single one of them.

Newsletters are not an effective form of client communications anymore. They might help build your firm's and lawyer's brand, but they don't help your lawyers build relationships and most importantly help your clients to like and trust you.

Business Development [BD] Communications (one-to-one)

The holy grail of client communications is BD communication. It's the one-to-few or one-to-one communication with clients. Highly personalised emails, sent by people and not email marketing systems; A phone call, a meeting or a client lunch.

They are not focused on brand building but focused on building relationships with your clients and prospective clients.

Today, everyone generates expert content. Each law firm creates whitepapers and writes thought leadership pieces. Business Development communication is not about the content you share but rather about relationship building which gets your clients not only to know you but also to like and trust you.

Instead of blasting your next regulatory update to 1000s of contacts, which ultimately only 10 contacts engage with, take the time to draft a personalised email with a thoughtful note and attach your update. Mention why it is important for the client to have a look at this and why this is relevant to them.

Receiving a personal email that was drafted specifically for your client, will make your client feel special. They know how busy you are and appreciate you taking the time to reach out to them personally. This shows your clients you care about them which ultimately builds the trust required to build long lasting relationships which on the other hand turn into stable long-term revenue streams.

Tip: Follow up with a phone call as you will be the only one calling them about this update which will make you stick out!



This is how effective client communications work. This is how you build relationships and increase your client retention.

One-to-one communication are the only true valuable form of client communications that help your lawyers build deeper relationships with their clients.

It is important to understand that relationship building can't be automated. It is not something a computer can do for you. Relationships are built between people. Therefore, you have to stay away from the one-to-many, automated communication channels.

How do you improve client communications?

Law firms all around the world are investing heavily in improving BD communications. Here are a few tips to help you get started.

Remove information barriers and silos. Transparency and information sharing is key.

You need to understand who engages with whom, when and how often across your entire firm. This will enable you to build effective client communication plans and gives you the focus you need to focus on your high-value clients.

Set recurring reminders to stay in touch.

Every partner should have recurring reminders to stay in touch with their key clients. Once you set reminders, check that your partners follow through.

Assign clear responsibility and hold partners accountable.

Effective management starts with clear responsibilities. Be sure to over-communicate with your partners and help them understand who their key clients are they are responsible for client communications. They need to have full visibility of all engagements with their key clients.

Assist your lawyers with follow-ups, content and templates.

Partners are very busy and it is difficult for them to balance their legal work and client care work. Assist your partners by creating plans, follow up with them when they are falling behind and provide templates and content they can use to share with their clients.

Focus as much of your resources on one-to-one communications.

This is critical. Wherever possible, use one-to-one communications channels with highly personalised messages. The extra time spent by your lawyers sending those emails and making those phone calls will generate a much higher return on your investment than any other marketing activity.

How can Nexl help?

Nexl is a **Client Revenue Platform** to help your firm improve your client communications. Nexl gives you full visibility of all your client interactions and allows you to stay on top of your key clients. Set recurring stay in touch reminders and assign clear responsibility across the entire firm. All without data entry. Nexl makes client communications more successful and delivers time savings on client care activities by over 65%.