

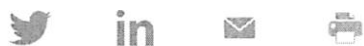
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5 MINUTES TO READ · 800 WORDS

Provide Value and See Your Network Grow

By Christopher Earley

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There are many ways to expand your professional network, and some are more effective than others. But for me, the most effective way to expand my network is to provide value to others. This, for me, is so effective because it is genuine. Too many lawyers approach networking from a selfish standpoint. They seek quick wins and are more focused on taking rather than giving. I find the better approach is to view networking as a slow, long game that requires focusing on others instead of yourself. By focusing on providing value, my network not only widens, but more importantly, it deepens into meaningful relationships. The best part is that with this approach, I find I receive more referrals, more business opportunities, and countless other benefits. Here are some of the ways I continuously expand my network by providing value that, over time, has returned dividends.

A dark-themed advertisement banner for Sage Timeslips. On the left is the Sage logo. In the center, the text reads: "Let your control freak flag fly with Sage Timeslips" in a bold, white font. Below this, in a smaller font, it says "There's an easier way to stay in control of your time and billing". At the bottom left of the banner is a rounded rectangular button with the text "Learn more". On the right side of the banner is a stylized illustration of a person sitting at a desk with a computer monitor and keyboard, appearing to be working.

Public Speaking

I love public speaking because it is a way to network one-to-many instead of one-to-one. I'm constantly hustling for public speaking events by reaching out and asking different organizations if they need a speaker. I have five different programs I provide on different topics, and I am frequently creating additional programs. I reach out via email and/or phone and ask the organization's decision-maker which program they think their audience would enjoy the most. With persistence, I have been able to secure multiple public speaking opportunities with different

bar organizations. I simply spend the time to develop a program theme, write the slides and talking points, and voilà, I have a program. The program developed is evergreen content that I can reuse again and again in front of other audiences in the future. This eliminates the need to recreate the content every single time. Plus, it allows me to tweak and improve the content of a given program based on how the audience responds to it. At the end of each public speaking presentation, I encourage the audience to subscribe to my free attorney newsletter, called *The Earley Edition*. That way, I can continue the conversation with the audience members into the future. This opens the door for potential cross-referrals and other opportunities. I've noticed that the more speaking opportunities I get, the easier it is to get additional speaking opportunities. This is because these opportunities stack on one another.

Writing

Another great way to expand your network is to publish content. I'm constantly putting out written content. Each month I write for three different attorney publications (I only got these opportunities because I asked for them, just as with public speaking). I also write two different newsletters (one for attorneys and one for clients). I also send out more than 100 value-packed email blasts per year to clients and referring attorneys. Throughout these various channels, I provide value to the audience, as opposed to asking for something. If I am writing for my attorney newsletter, I provide helpful tips to fellow attorneys that have helped make my own practice more enjoyable, less stressful, and more profitable. When I write my client newsletter, I try to write content that provides value to non-lawyers. This is mostly personal and inspirational content for my clients to get a peek behind the curtain at who I am as a person. The key is to have a consistent writing schedule and to stick to it.

LinkedIn is another venue where I can use my writing to grow my network by providing value to others. I am constantly posting content on LinkedIn. In 2023 I intend to post one piece of content per day. I find the more content I write, the wider my LinkedIn network grows. Engagement on my posts also increases the more frequently I post. And I don't always need to recreate the wheel. If a piece of content I write in a newsletter or for an attorney publication performs well, then I will post the content to LinkedIn. For example, my marketing assistant every two weeks posts our printed and mailed attorney newsletter called *The Earley Examiner* to LinkedIn. This has worked well and gotten good engagement.

Connecting People in My Networking

I frequently will pair two people in my network who don't already know one another. This provides value by augmenting the existing network of the attorneys I connect to each other. It not only brings me great satisfaction but also helps me to help others within my existing network. It is another way I am able to network by always providing value, as opposed to asking for something.

Conclusion

I believe networking is all about providing value and showing up often. Personally, I try to be in as many places as possible, and that has helped me expand my network. Whether it be public speaking, writing newsletters, writing for attorney publications, or writing on LinkedIn, I aim to be as visible as possible and to always provide helpful and valuable content to my audience.

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