

Intro:

This is Michael Cowen and welcome to Trial Lawyer Nation. You need to show people the worst possible harm that that negligence could have caused because that's what the case is about- What I'm asking you to do is to focus on what you can control because that's where the power lies- The Dalai Lama has a saying that, "In the face of anger, justice evaporates,"- If you can't focus group it, you have to be very, very critical of your process- The facts aren't good, you can't create a miracle- We can agree to disagree and be zealous advocates for our clients- Quit worrying about looking perfect. You're not going to. That'll come in time. But you can still be an effective litigator- Welcome to the award winning podcast Trial Lawyer Nation, your source to win bigger verdicts, get more cases, and manage your law firm. And now, here's your host, noteworthy author, sought after speaker, and renowned trial lawyer, Michael Cowen.

Michael Cowen:

Today on Trial Lawyer Nation, I have our firm's Marketing Director, Delisi Friday, and we're going to talk to y'all about marketing. How're you doing today, Delisi?

Delisi Friday:

I'm doing great. How are you?

Michael Cowen:

Pretty good. So let me just start by asking you a question. You've been with our firm for a number of years now. Is there anything that's surprised you from the things you've learned over the years about personal injury marketing?

Delisi Friday:

Yes. I would say almost my entire career has surprised me in working with you, because, and I think you could probably say the same thing as well, because when you hired me, I think we had a different vision for how I would factor into our marketing, and what our marketing plan was. And it was completely different. And then where it is today is not where I envisioned it. I really thought we would be doing marketing business to consumer when I took on the role. And now we're all business to business and we have our own in-house marketing team.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah, it's really developed over the years. You and I talked about, I think it would be useful not to sit around and brag about what we're doing, but to kind of talk about what works for us and then talk about the evolution of what we've done over the years, what worked, what didn't, and how we build up to where we are now.

Delisi Friday:

Oh, absolutely, we learned a lot of lessons.

Michael Cowen:

Yup. You said business to business, business to consumer. What do you mean by those two things in the legal field?

Delisi Friday:

So in marketing, we use B2C and B2B when we're talking about who our audience is. So B2C would be business to consumer, and that would be all the personal injury law firms out there who are marketing their business directly to those new potential clients. We market B2B, which is business to business. And that means our marketing is all marketing to other law firms that we could potentially partner on in a case.

Michael Cowen:

Now, I've had people tell me I'm insane for just having a pure B2B or marketing to other lawyers that might want to refer or co-counsel case, because I'm giving up a referral fee in every case, and wouldn't I be better off trying to just get 100% of that case when it comes in. I think every time we bring in someone new to work with us, they think that too. What are your thoughts on that?

Delisi Friday:

Well, I think first, I would agree with those individuals because I would have thought the same thing. But everything you do in our law firm, there's a reason behind it, and you put a lot of thought into it. So, actually, I think the reason that this works is because you put pen to paper, and you actually took a look at our dockets and the cases that brought us the most business. And you said, wait a second, we're getting most of our bigger dollar cases from other law firms. So, does it make more sense for us to market just to those other law firms?

Delisi Friday:

So, I hope that answered some of your question, but I'd also like to ask you, what was that thought process like for you? How did you come to that decision, because it wasn't an easy one, I'm sure.

Michael Cowen:

Well, it wasn't, and part of it was trying it the other way. I kind of came up on a, I went to go work for a lawyer, I left a big law firm, went to go look for a lawyer. And shortly after I made partner a couple years into it, he quit. I mean, he just said, here's three weeks notice, I'm becoming a public defender, you need to buy me out of the law firm. And for whatever stupid reason, I agreed to do it. Ended up with my own law firm, I didn't have the money to advertise.

Michael Cowen:

And so, back then I was really scratching a living so I went to other lawyers and said I'll try your little Allstate, State Farm fender bender cases for you, and eventually won enough of them to start making a name. So I really didn't have a choice, but I always thought, man, if I didn't have to pay the referral fee, I can make so much more money. And every now and then, we organically get a case, and it's like, oh, wow, we're getting 40% instead of a much smaller percentage when we got to cut other people in on it. And I thought, oh, man, it would be nice to get that.

Michael Cowen:

And so, at one point, I popped a big case and I had a fairly mature firm at that point where we had a good income stream. And I tried other things, I'm really dating myself, but we did like a full page Yellow Pages ad. We did a website, we hired web marketing people. And none of that ever really, at least in

deep South Texas where I'm from, didn't really work. So, I tried TV advertising. I got a budget, I got with a company that does TV advertising for plaintiff firms, and ran ads.

Michael Cowen:

And a couple things happened. One, I realized that it wasn't for me. The volume of cases that you have to screen, the number of people coming in. And then because you're spending all this money on the TV ads, the temptation to take cases you otherwise wouldn't take, because I just spent \$50,000 this month on TV advertising. I know I've never done slip and fall cases but the only people that are calling me right now. And we ended up signing up some. And just the unrealistic people, the people that have called five other law firms and been rejected, then calling us. I didn't like dealing with all that.

Michael Cowen:

But the other thing is, we did get some trucking cases, we did get some other cases. I put pen to paper after about a year and realize that even on our highest referral fee percentage we pay, our average fee was triple what it was than the average fee on the trucking cases that had no referral fee, because when we're taking referrals, at least at this point in my career, we're able to say no to a lot of cases, so we only take in cases that meet a certain criteria. Whereas when you're just advertising, they're coming in early. And thankfully, a lot of people that get in wrecks get better.

Michael Cowen:

And so, they would go and they'd treat a little bit at the chiropractor's office, or they'd go and see a doctor a couple times, and they'd get better. And those cases settled for what they were worth, but they still took time, then they took energy. And we had to go get their property damage fixed, and we had to get them in a rental car. Then sometimes there'd be no insurance coverage, they wouldn't want to get back out of the rental car. And then it would be on my credit card. We can do that in Texas and other states. I know y'all can't do that, we can in Texas, and if you don't, you lose the case.

Michael Cowen:

And so, for me, I found out that it's actually on a per hour or per case basis, it's more profitable to do big cases cutting in another law firm, than it is to do, to advertise and take enough cases to get those same big cases and make the same amount of money.

Delisi Friday:

Yes. And I even remember when you had me start at your firm, you had hired a company to help you with the website, and they said, don't worry, we're going to do tons of SEO and digital marketing, and you're going to get a lot of phone calls, and sign up a lot of trucking cases. And we tried it, and we didn't get those cases. And it's like the sunk cost fallacy that you and Malorie talked about last podcast, where you're signing up the cases you probably shouldn't, because you're just trying to make back the money you just invested in all the digital marketing. I remember how busy our intake department was. But they were busy with bad cases we weren't going to accept.

Michael Cowen:

Exactly. And I know people that are killing it on digital. But I don't know that hiring a company that is also providing digital legal marketing to other people in your area is a path to success. But with both the company, and I'm not going to name names right now because they're nice people, and I don't want to

slander people. It's not slander if it's true, but I don't want to talk bad about people. People will ask me privately whether they should work with somebody, I'll give you my opinion, but I'm not going to announce it here. But both the companies I worked with when we just were not getting good cases at all after spending what they recommend we spend. Their solution was always to pay them more money. Well, you pay us more money to do, they'll say, I'm going to do more of what doesn't work and it's somehow going to magically start working again. That'll work.

Delisi Friday:

Well, and I also think the time that we're in now, because we did this years ago, I've been with you for almost six years now. And when we did it, I feel like it was a different space. And now, if you are going to spend money in digital, you have to be highly competitive. And in order to do that, you have to spend a lot of money.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah, digital. It depends on how you do it. It depends on what you're doing. Like we're doing trucking cases. I mean, you're talking about the most competitive niche in the industry, and we're in San Antonio, Texas, where you have Thomas J. Henry. I think San Antonio truck lawyer, San Antonio injury lawyers, the highest priced Google Adword. We have people spending so much money on those to try to get those cases digitally that it's just frankly not a game I choose to play. But I know other people in San Antonio that do get cases digitally.

Michael Cowen:

Now they have a different setup than we do. They're not as big and they're not as focused on one type of case. But I think if you had a niche of a certain type of case everyone else wasn't trying to get, or you have some way to differentiate yourself, I do think digital, I think digital is the future. I mean, I think that fewer and fewer people are going to watch TV ads as time goes by.

Delisi Friday:

I agree. I agree. I also think there's a new space for that because now people are watching internet TV, which I remember Jim Adler talked about that in one of our previous episodes, where now that's a whole new space for digital marketing is how do you get on to internet TV?

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. And there is that rare client that goes and really, really researches online, different firms and the results and the reputation and stuff, and reviews. They exist. You talk to Steve Gursten who got in really early and is a master of digital marketing, and just organically does really well the search because he's just been doing it for so long, and has so much content out there. He says he gets clients that are really out there, and they've read all the reviews, and they've really, but I think, by and large, that's the minority in the personal injury realm.

Michael Cowen:

Now, I think those people are more likely to have a better case because it's a bigger decision, we have a bigger case like a death or a really serious injury. But I think a lot of people, people that know lawyers, I know people that know lawyers ask other lawyers and ask around to get recommendations. So the people that are responding to advertise and typically going to be less sophisticated, and it's more about

what benefits are you offering them in your advertisement. Are you showing strength? Are you showing aggressiveness in your marketing?

Delisi Friday:

It's a more educated client.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah.

Delisi Friday:

So, I wanted to kind of ask you a little bit about what it was like before you hired me, and what that thought process was, and that transition. So, what was the evolution before you decided to bring someone like me to the firm?

Michael Cowen:

One, it was not as good as before you. You bring a lot to the table. It was a long, a long evolution. I've been doing some kind of marketing since 1999, 2000, 2001, somewhere in that 20 years or so ago. When I started, I did not have much of a budget. Like I said, I think I had a yellow pages ad because that's what everyone did back then was a yellow pages ad. That was never particularly, never really got us much. I don't know it even ever paid for itself.

Michael Cowen:

And so, I did different things. When I first, I got a local ad agency. And then the guy that that I want to work with, looking back, he probably got fired, but he left that ad agency and convinced me to hire him and bring him on in-house. He had a lot of good ideas but wasn't really good at follow through. We'd run an event here or there but we didn't really follow up very well. I went to the Ben Glass Great Legal Marketing. I got a lot out of working with Ben. Honestly, some of the things work and some don't. Every market's different, every practice is different, and you don't know unless you try it. I think his disability practice is very different than South Texas personal injury practice where frankly, you have case runners going to people's doors and calling them directly as your competition. So the kind of the slow burn stuff he does, I don't think works as well in that market. But it works really, really well in the B2B.

Michael Cowen:

I went to his seminars. I tried developing some newsletters, I wrote a book for consumers. I tried running a TV ad to say, before you call a lawyer, get this book and find out whether you ever need one. And pretty much, I think we gave away 10 books to consumers and all the rest went to other lawyers and asked for a copy of the book or judges that asked for a copy of the book. But I tried that, like I said, I had a couple other people work for me before you but they were, frankly, they were flaky. With all respect, there's a lot of flaky people in marketing, there's a lot of people they just bullshit you and promise you the sun of the moon, and they don't deliver.

Michael Cowen:

But other people they did okay. At one point, we at least got decent branding. We had some people that did that for us, it worked really well. But just the idea of, I could never get anyone to take my ideas and run with them. I think the problem I was hiring the wrong people with the wrong strengths. Now that

we've learned more from this like Patrick Lencioni, the different working geniuses and people have different areas that really need people with more tenacity. And what's the other one? I like tenacity, galvanizing and tenacity, getting other people around things, sticking with it till the projects done. Instead, I got a lot of other people that are more idea people.

Michael Cowen:

And then I had the one person that, it wasn't even getting after them, but we were working with a consultant called E-Myth. Michael Gerber wrote a book, E-Myth: Why Most Small Businesses Fail and What you Can do About it. And we were working with E-Myth coach, and one of the things we were doing is learning how to be more efficient in our time. And so, we did it for two weeks. We would track our time. You would plan your day for the next day, and you'd track what you did through the day. And then at the end of the week, we'd turn it in and we'd compare to see, can we find ways where we can become more efficient, are we wasting time. I hand it to him and he goes, I can't work into this kind of suspicion.

Michael Cowen:

The first day he put like, nine to noon work, noon to one lunch, noon to five work, or one to five work. I said, dude, you got to give this some specificity. And I can't work into this kind of suspicion and he just walked out.

Delisi Friday:

Well, you mentioned time. So let me ask you, how much time did you devote to your marketing before then? Did you have a strategy that that you thought about first or was it every month or how did you do it?

Michael Cowen:

It went in fits and spurts because that's my weakness. I'm a really good idea person. If you look at the things in the Lencioni working genius model, I have wonder and innovation. I'm really good at thinking about things and thinking about new ideas, and coming up with plans. I'm not the best at making sure that three months later, we're still working on it, and I haven't come up with some other wonderful idea. And so, I would spend weeks where I would do just a ton of work on it. But then I didn't have someone else, until you, I didn't have someone else to really hand it off to that would really do a good job of running with it.

Michael Cowen:

That was the big weakness I had. So, it was a very inconsistent, we did a firm newsletter, so we got, three months, we got newsletter every month, and it was every two months, and three months, and six months went by. And then we had two more out every month, because I was trying to write it myself. But I didn't have the money to hire someone else back then either. Part of the problem was just the, part of it was the budget that I had to hire people. But part of it, frankly, was me not knowing how to hold people accountable. And so, I wouldn't speak up soon enough, I wouldn't tell people, hey, you can't do that. And I'd think that that part of my natural growth of learning how to nicely, but being real, and telling people when their work is not acceptable, was really important too.

Delisi Friday:

I think a part of that also is sometimes when you're marketing strategies, you have to give them time to see if they're going to work. So, I think that's also a struggle too. Because if you're going to bring someone on, or if you're going to try and do something yourself, you have to give it time to work, and you can't expect everything to have results immediately. Like this podcast, when you and I talked about it, it was a long term marketing strategy, and something we had to think a lot about. But if someone has a marketing idea they want to do, I think the fun and scary part about marketing is sometimes you see results right away, and sometimes you don't. And sometimes you just have to learn from them.

Michael Cowen:

And it's true. I had lunch with a friend of mine a couple weeks ago, was a big TV advertiser, and he just moved into a new market. And he's like, man, I knew this was going to happen, but like the first year, the cost per case is astronomical. I mean, the amount of money they're spending for every case they're getting in is astronomical because they haven't built the brand yet. And with TV advertising, you have to build the brand, people have to think of you right away, and not just call you just when they see your commercial. If they've seen someone else's commercial for five years and yours just popped up, a lot of people aren't going to call you. And so, he's been through this before. It's his third or fourth market to go into for TV. So he knows what's coming, but it's still painful, because he's trying to convince me to invest with him on a new market.

Michael Cowen:

But he's warning me, like okay, this is what we're going to have to do it. We're each going to have to write a check for this amount of money. You just know that don't expect to make money until the third year. That's the way that goes. And same for a lot of stuff that we do. It just takes time. You got to be out there long enough, and then someone has to see it, like it, and then need to. It's not like we're McDonald's and people need to eat three meals a day.

Michael Cowen:

And so, if you get them hungry enough, that week, you can get them to come in and try your new Travis Scott meal, which I had to deal with my, who puts lettuce on a Big Mac, I don't know. Who puts lettuce on a quarter pounder, of course you put lettuce on a big mac, but who puts lettuce on a quarter pounder? It's just wrong. We went there and ordered. He ordered the Travis Scott meal, and he wanted it with no lettuce, so he got to with no lettuce. My wife and I just ordered quarter pounders and they put lettuce on our freaking quarter pounder, ruined it.

Delisi Friday:

I'm the wrong person because I eat it as a lettuce wrap.

Michael Cowen:

If I want to eat lettuce, I'll go In-N-Out or Whataburger, I'm not going to McDonald's for their high quality meat. I don't know where that came from. But basically, it does take a lot of time. It's hard because you don't want to keep spending money on something that's not working at all. But then you also have to stick with it long enough to let it work.

Michael Cowen:

Now, the podcast I did for fun, I had no expectation of getting a case when we started this podcast. I just did it because I learned what a podcast was and I couldn't find one that I liked. And I thought if nothing else, I'm going to get to go talk to lawyers and consultants that I want to learn from, and I'm going to learn something. The fact that some people have been nice enough to bring us in on cases that have been fans is an added bonus, but that wasn't the the pure, this wasn't a purely marketing driven thing, and I think it's one of the reasons it's work it's because it wasn't purely marketing driven.

Delisi Friday:

We've learned a lot.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah, we have.

Commercial 1:

Each year, the law firm of Cowen Rodriguez Peacock pays millions of dollars in co-counsel fees to attorneys nationwide on trucking and company vehicle cases. If you have a case involving death or catastrophic injuries and would like to partner with our firm, please contact us. We have experience finding potential defendants that other firms miss, and we've added millions of dollars to cases by finding these sources of recovery. If you have a catastrophic injury or death case where the policy limits appear to be insufficient, give us a call. If we can find another defendant, we can partner on the case. And if we can't, then we won't ask for any of the fees. You can reach Delisi Friday by calling 210-941-1301 or send an email to [podcast@triallawyernation.com](mailto:podcast@triallawyernation.com). She will coordinate a time for Michael Cowen to speak with you in person or by phone to discuss the case in detail. And now, back to the show.

Michael Cowen:

So going back, so yeah, we tried multiple, multiple things. We went through a lot of people. And actually I hired someone else to help me develop a marketing plan. And she helped me put on a seminar, which was a flop, but she helped me find you. And this is funny because I originally, on paper, you weren't my number one candidate.

Delisi Friday:

I wouldn't have picked me either.

Michael Cowen:

You didn't have as big of a marketing background, and then she said, oh, you should hire her because her dad was a lawyer and she'll know other lawyers in town. I'm like, I don't give a crap about that. No one's going to hire me because they knew her dad. And frankly, the lawyers in San Antonio weren't my target audience anyway. I had a different geographic area that I was going after. It wasn't till I met you, like, okay, this is the person I want to hire, and thank God I did. But it was the interview that really sold you, and let me kind of see who you were.

Delisi Friday:

So let me ask you a question because that's got to be something that a lot of our listeners are wondering is, when you were thinking about hiring someone, what were you hoping to find and what did you learn through that process?

Michael Cowen:

Well, a couple of things. One, I really needed somebody with tenacity. I needed somebody that could stick with things and get things done and kick me in the butt when I don't feel like doing things or when I, you know me, I'm like a cat, you shine a light here and there and I'm just chasing after it everywhere. And so, I really need somebody to say, Michael, you said you're going to do that this week, you better do this this week. Michael, I know you want to take that new kind of case on but you said we're not going to do those kind of cases anymore. Are you sure we're going to that? I need that person in my life. I have not lived with my mom for decades, and I need someone else to be that for me. I hate to say that, but it's just the honest truth. So that's one thing I was looking for.

Michael Cowen:

Another thing frankly, is I need someone that is poise, classy, someone that can talk to other lawyers professionally so that I don't have to do it all myself. And frankly, I think the big mistake a lot of people hire, during hiring, and don't take this wrong way, you're an attractive woman, but just hiring the young hot looking, low cut shirt, short skirt person because they think that they're going to get in the door. And the idea is it's mostly going to be male referring lawyers, and they're definitely going to want to talk to this young lady. And they are, but they're not going to be thinking about referring you a case, they're going to think about something else altogether.

Michael Cowen:

I've seen that, I've seen that happening with funding companies, with medical offices or chiropractic offices wanting business. I've seen it happen with lawyers trying to get business. Getting someone that can actually fit in and have a conversation and kind of appear with the lawyers I think it's more important.

Delisi Friday:

I agree with you and I can also relate because I have had different people help me. I've had marketing assistants in the past, and also we've done marketing interns, which we can talk about later as a way to get someone in on a budget. And what I noticed, regardless of each individual person is, the ability to talk to other lawyers is critical, especially for a firm like us where we do business to business. If you can't actually write a full, complete sentence, this isn't going to be for you. And for us, we do so much writing. And especially in the legal industry, it needs to be well written and it needs to communicate a message. And yes, sometimes those other candidates who are easy on the eyes in not so many words. They don't have that, and it's so important to have that in a person you want to stay long term.

Michael Cowen:

Absolutely. And it's not that we're like trying to hire ugly people. Our people are perfectly fine looking. I mean, you're a former beauty queen.

Delisi Friday:

Who am I to say anything? I was Miss Latina World.

Michael Cowen:

But that has nothing to do with why we hired you. I think that's what I'm trying to say. And you definitely don't dress like a hooch or, I'm trying to find a not so derogatory but not too offensive word.

Delisi Friday:

Thank you.

Michael Cowen:

But I do think getting someone professional. And even if you're doing direct to consumer, I mean, you got to get someone that will make a good impression, if you're not going to be talking to all the clients yourself with your clients or with whoever you're talking to, or your ad agencies, or whatever level you're working on.

Delisi Friday:

And I will also say that finding someone who at least has, because we've hired entry level individuals to help out because it's a great way to groom them into how we do our marketing in our law firm. And we have found success in that, and it's all about finding the right person, but also that formal education, that bachelor's degree in marketing or in public relations gives them that entry level experience or knowledge that you can expand upon.

Michael Cowen:

Well, yes and no. And that was going to be actually the second point that I just go so caught up talking about the first one, I forgot what I was going to say. So not only was I looking for somebody with the tenacity, with the class, with the poise, but I had to also find someone that was willing to implement my marketing plan, because so many other people, they're like, but I learned this at school or we need to do this because this is what, a lot of it's like, well, this is what all the other law firms are doing. There's a Super Lawyers that comes out every year, which, to me, it's like Prom Queen or something, it's like a popularity. I'm glad my name is in it but I don't think it's really that scientific of a thing.

Michael Cowen:

But people spend all this money to put a big ad in the Super Lawyers magazine that the only other people going to read are the people that get the Super Lawyers. I mean, I don't know of any clients that look at superlawyers.com or read the Super Lawyers magazine when picking a lawyer. Maybe there's some out there, I don't know any. So, if I'm going to spend, you know, so many thousands of dollars for an ad, do I want to run the ad where all the other lawyers are running it, or do I want to find someplace where I can dominate the space?

Delisi Friday:

Yeah, I agree.

Michael Cowen:

So what advice would you give, let's say you have someone that starting off their practice, does not have a big budget, what are some things that you would recommend on getting cases?

Delisi Friday:

On getting cases, I would say my first piece of advice was to do what you and I did. And it's going to take time, but it was extremely important for us, and we do it every single year now because it works. And that's sitting down and looking at where you get your cases from. Every single one of them. It is very tedious but you can't figure out where you can be successful until you realize what has been successful

in the past. So, you can continue to do that, and then also see, where have you not been successful, and what should you not stop doing because it's not bringing you cases.

Delisi Friday:

So that, absolutely, that's something you taught me. And we do it every single year, and I think it's critical in determining what's working, what's not, what should we continue doing, and what should we not do anymore.

Michael Cowen:

I think just looking at people that already know you, that you already have relationship with, who's likely to either hire you or who's likely to be able to recommend that other people hire you, and be in a place for that. And so, some people, I mean, I know people that are very involved in the Christian community and there's pastors. And they just flat out ask them. There's nothing wrong with that. They're involved, they're believers. And they ask the pastors and they get a lot of referrals from congregations and those pastors' congregations. But they also put the time in, they also spend time doing things with those churches and giving back to, it's not a quid pro quo, they're not saying, give me a case, and I'll give you something back. But they're also giving back to those communities, spending time. It's other lawyers.

Michael Cowen:

Like what I did. I was wanting to get going as a trial lawyer so I went and found lawyers volume practices who didn't want to try all their cases, and asked, do you have anything? Lunches, cocktails, whatever it takes, going up there. And then letting people know when you do something well. I used to be, I've fallen off of it now, I need to get back to it, but when I was getting started, I made sure that every time I got a verdict, it wasn't the Verdict Reporter. And if I had a non-confidential settlement, it was in the Verdict Reporter, so that people started seeing my name, and realizing that I was out there. It was really important to do that.

Delisi Friday:

I've also seen something else increase and I find it really fascinating. And that's finding organic referrals through Facebook groups and the app Nextdoor. I am constantly seeing in Facebook groups, someone saying, hey, do you know a lawyer who does this? And the same thing on Nextdoor because people want to hire someone who's recommended, or someone that they may come across or know. And those are two areas that I've seen a lot of potential in, and are free.

Michael Cowen:

And that's something that really, if I could, if I didn't have to worry about pissing off my referring lawyers, who I'm not going to bite the hand that feeds me, the one thing where we could get more business and we choose not to, is talking to our happy clients. If you ever needed somebody else, call me. Even if it's not something I do, let me be your source, let me help you find the right lawyer. Because one, you might get a referral fee out of it, but if not, you're the relationship, when they have something legal, they come to you. And asking them to recommend friends and family. We have some of that happening organically.

Michael Cowen:

But I will tell you that we would do more of it, except I've had some referring lawyers specifically tell me that's how they get their business, and they want to do that, and they want it to be them, not me. And that's okay if that's the deal. I'll pick that, because frankly, I don't want a lot of smaller cases anyway, which is mostly what you get from there.

Michael Cowen:

But that's the one I guess huge piece of potential business that we leave on the table at our firm intentionally that I think a lot of people, if they don't have, you either don't have a referral lawyer network or ours, specifically we're getting referrals from personal injury lawyers that want those other cases. If I was getting referrals from family law lawyers, criminal lawyers, as other types of lawyers, I wouldn't worry about that as much. But because I don't want to bite the hands that feed me, and a few of them have very, very specifically told me, this person is in my tribe, and I want you to consider them part of my tribe, and you don't market to them, you don't market to their family. Okay.

Delisi Friday:

I think for our fans who are listening, they should most definitely make it a part of their procedure when they close on a case, that they ask that client, if you ever have someone who needs an attorney, please refer me. And they go the additional step in saying, can you please leave me a testimonial, because a lot of people look for lawyers on Google. And if you don't have any testimonials, then people don't feel as confident in calling you because they wonder why. But if you just ask, then you may receive a great testimonial that will help you get new business somewhere down the line.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah, one thing we do is we ask people to do a survey at the end of the case. It's usually around the time they're going to get their check, so it's when they should be the happiest. And then they give us all 10s or nines and 10s. Then we ask, hey, you want to give a review, we send them links to review sites. If they aren't as thrilled with our performance, which is rare, but happens every now and then, then maybe we don't suggest a review. You have to be careful with that. I've never left a one star review online for anyone before until a couple weeks ago. And I had a horrible experience.

Michael Cowen:

I was getting my hair cut and the place was packed and people weren't wearing masks or had the mask down under their nose. And then finally got my, my son and I each had appointments at the same time. I got mine cut, I walk out, they hadn't even talked to my son yet, they'd taken all these people that came in after him. We just left. And then I get a text like 15 minutes later, do you want to leave a review? Hell yeah. So that wasn't a very good idea on their part.

Delisi Friday:

It's always the people who are the most upset or the most happy who leaves the reviews.

Michael Cowen:

Exactly. So you definitely want to try to get your happy clients to leave a review. But I also think that they will forget about you, unless you're a huge, huge advertisers they see all the time, I think if you want to get repeat business from former clients, you need to send them something periodically, even if it's just a little note, a birthday card, something to remember you.

Michael Cowen:

I remember, I mean, I had someone refer me a case once, we did an easy job on the case. And they got another crash like five years later, and they hired a different lawyer that time. They hired two different advertising lawyers. That lawyer referred the client to me. And she comes in and says, "Oh, Mr. Cowen, you did such a great job last time, I'm glad I'm back with you." And I'm like, I appreciate that, but I'm just kind of curious, why didn't you call me directly if I did such a great job for you? "Because I didn't remember who you are. I didn't remember your name." How do you expect someone to remember you years later?

Delisi Friday:

Right. It's what you refer to all the time as top of mind marketing, you have to stay top of mind.

Michael Cowen:

You have to stay top of mind. And same for if it's business to business. You speak at a seminar and someone sees you speak once where you do a great job. Are they going to think of you a year later. If you go pick someone to lunch, and you wait a year and you haven't reached out to them. I mean, you have to find a way to keep touching them if you want them to go and refer back.

Michael Cowen:

And then curate your list. I mean, if you've been reaching out for two years and they never sent someone over, well, then maybe you don't keep spending the money if you've got a budget issue. And we've done that, we used to do a beautiful little magazine, everyone loved. We spent a ton of money doing it. We were doing 1600 copies a month or something like that we were sending out.

Delisi Friday:

It was a lot. It was a lot.

Michael Cowen:

It was a lot of work to do. It was beautiful. Everyone told us how great it was, how awesome it was. And it didn't bring a case.

Delisi Friday:

Nope.

Michael Cowen:

And we cut it out and we saw no loss of business. So you have to be smart about it, but at the same time, if you want to get people to refer you cases, you have to regularly reach out to them. Even right now during COVID, I mean, I miss going my lunches, my fishing trips, my dinners, drinks, whatever it is, sports games that we do with our referring lawyers, I miss that. But if you look at my texts, you look at my phone calls, I'm still making sure, and I really do care about these people because they are my friends, but I am making sure that I am keeping in touch with them on a very regular basis so they don't think I've forgotten about them or that I'm too busy, what they have isn't big enough for me anymore and I don't need them anymore. It's not even, hey, do you have any cases for me? It's hey, how are you doing today? How are you holding up with COVID?

Delisi Friday:

Great. I agree. We miss that connection.

Michael Cowen:

I miss it a lot. That was the most fun part of what I did. Trials are a lot of fun, but you don't get to do many of those. Hanging out with other people and calling that work, that's a lot of fun. Let's go have dinner, let's go to watch the Spurs game, let's go on a fishing trip, that's fun. And it works. It only works when you deliver afterwards. You can get a case by taking someone out and them giving you a chance. But to keep it up, I mean, doesn't matter how many little gifts you send, it doesn't matter everything else. If you don't deliver and give good legal services, get a good check at the end for the value of the case, it doesn't make a difference, they're not going to keep giving it to you because they like you.

Delisi Friday:

I agree.

Michael Cowen:

Something else I find, I know I'm just kind of rambling now, but something else that I found has helped get us some work, even though we're not asking for organic referrals from our clients, we've put a huge emphasis on customer service, including monitoring and enforcing regular substantive client calls so that our clients know what's going on in their cases. They get called more than once a month because there's different things going on, but at least once a month, they have what's called a client contact, where we have to go tell them what's going on in the case, we find out what's going on with them medically, we ask if they need help with anything.

Michael Cowen:

One, we don't have people calling in and saying, I don't know what's going on my case and complaining like we used to. But that has really caused people to recommend us a lot more because people have no idea whether you got them good money on a case or not because they have no basis for comparison. So you may have gotten them a fantastic settlement but money wise, they're comparing it to some case they saw on TV that had nothing to do with theirs. But they know service, they know whether they were treated with respect, they know whether they were happy, whether they were well informed.

Michael Cowen:

And I think to a lesser extent, that's true for referring lawyers or co-counsel too. Yes, everyone likes to get that big check at the end, but not every case ends up in a big check. A lot of that's back to, is it a good case or not. How hurt was the client, how much insurance coverage is there? How bad are the liability packs? But regular communication with them. Not having clients call and complain. Having clients say that, yes, I had a good experience there, thank you, this was a good thing for me. Letting them know what's going on instead of just feel like I sent this case into a black hole, and then I got a call a year and a half later saying, we got to sit, let's see if we've got problems. Or even they got a big check, but a year and a half after knowing nothing. Giving someone that better experience makes them more likely to come back.

Delisi Friday:

I think that is just as important as all the marketing you do to get the case. If you don't deliver, then, and we've talked about this many times, but if you spend a lot of time and effort and money and thought into your marketing, and then you get the case, and you don't deliver good results, then you're losing money.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah.

Commercial 2:

Thank you to everyone who attended Cowen's Big Rig boot camp in August. We had an excellent virtual turnout this year and are already thinking of how we can continue to raise that bar for next year. If you'd like to attend virtually in 2021, be sure to mark May 20th, 2021 on your calendar now and save the date. To stay updated with details as they become available, visit [bigrigbootcamp.com](http://bigrigbootcamp.com) and sign up for our mailing list. And now, back to the show.

Michael Cowen:

So marketing, like I said, we started doing things ourselves. And then I think you can get interns, you can get local people to help you. But at some point, you get to where you don't have, you want to do more than you have the capacity. It's very tempting to get a marketing agency. And we did that. Tell me what you think about the pros and cons of working with a marketing company?

Delisi Friday:

So I think the pros and cons kind of depend on the law firm and what their needs are. I think for us, it made sense for us to have a marketing agency sometime after I began because you and I were trying to figure out what was going to work, what were we going to continue doing. And I needed support to do it. And I'll describe what I mean by that. I am the creative person and I am the writer, and I am the person who can help make sure everything is implemented. However, even though I'm a millennial, that does not mean I know how to create graphics. That's not what I do so I need help with that.

Delisi Friday:

So, before we found other solutions, we thought, okay, if we hire a marketing agency who can help with that, that will make things easier for us. And it did, it helped us understand what marketing strategies were going to be successful if we had help. It helped us create some really incredible looking marketing pieces. Everything we did was a very great quality. And it was nice for me to do that with help. And I appreciated it.

Delisi Friday:

I think the flip side to that, when you think about the cons of it, is the cost. It is not always cost efficient to hire a marketing agency. If you hire an agency, you're going to have to have an account rep, then they're going to have to pay the people to do the work that you need. Maybe you pay a flat rate or maybe you pay an hourly rate. And depending on what it is that you're using them for, it can be costly. And I think one of the things I learned was our marketing agency was great for us to figure out what worked if we had all the right manpower, and we implemented it perfectly. What was not going to work? What was too expensive? And what can we do with a smaller budget or on our own? And that's

when you have mentioned Upwork. We started using up work to contract out some of the stuff that we needed. And we realized, hey, wait, we can do this without an agency.

Delisi Friday:

But I think it depends on the lawyer. I think it depends on what your needs are, what your budget is, what's your expectation, how much marketing are you going to do. And then writing down, how much is it going to cost if I hire an agency, and how much is it going to cost if I contract this work out?

Michael Cowen:

Do you need someone to come up with your strategies for you, or do you need someone to bounce around ideas with or need someone to implement your ideas? And I was very careful, I've worked with several agencies over the years. One thing is, I will never again work with someone that does "legal marketing," because that's just regular marketing that costs five times as much. I think lawyers are viewed as suckers in the marketing world and they just bamboozle us right and left. I had an idea of what's called direct response marketing, I wanted to send things to people. They were informational, and keep sending them stuff in the hope of creating that I wanted to do B2B which is not, most people tell me, no, no, no, you need to do, you need to worry more about your brand and branding yourself to consumers.

Michael Cowen:

I'm in San Antonio, Texas. There's two million people here. There are people spending a million dollars a month branding themselves to consumers. I'm not going to beat that. And frankly, if I had \$12 million a year to spend advertising or \$5 million a year advertising, which I don't, but I wouldn't want the number of cases coming in every month it would take to pay for the advertising. I don't want that firm. So I have to see what works for me, and I need to get someone that's going to do that.

Michael Cowen:

I love the guy we had that was doing our marketing. I loved him as a person. And when we started, he was very much in line with our vision. I think he got towards the end a little bit too in love with, he was making these things that looked really cool. And they were, they were beautiful. They looked awesome. But they weren't performing. And the one thing I hate when marketing people is they keep wanting to find a metric other than making you money. The internet marketing, look how many page views we got you, look how many clicks we got. It's like, I don't give a damn about a click. I don't give a damn about an inquiry, a lead. How many cases that I wanted did I get and how much money did I make them? Because I can't deposit clicks. I can deposit settlement checks and that's it.

Delisi Friday:

Agreed. And then when you talk about that, because you have to, if you have an agency, you have to talk to them about what new business came in and what didn't. It was funny when you hear, but if you spent more money.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah, it's always, always, what if you spent more money. It's like a bad relationship sometimes. If I just give it another year, if I just try harder. It's like, no, this isn't going to work anymore. And while they're great people and they were a great fit for a while, it made sense for us to bring it in-house, which we

couldn't have done first. I mean, we had to learn a lot. And then to make the connections, we're not at a point now where we want to just, they'll set up an iPhone on a tripod to film a video anymore. We want to be able to find professional people, we had to make those contacts. A lot of stuff you really can do through Upwork or these other sites where you hire contractors to do it. You can get a lot of really good design work, you can get a lot of good copywriting done, without having to bring in the full time people.

Delisi Friday:

I agree. We even contracted a graphic designer who was local in San Antonio because we wanted to be able to meet with someone because we used them for case graphics as well. And so, that worked out for us too. But there's definitely different ways to go about doing this.

Michael Cowen:

And she was great. And I still like her a lot. If the situation came up, I would hire again in a heartbeat. I mean, she was really good. But what caused you to think that, because it was really I think more your idea to say, instead of hiring contractors, we're going to hire more full time employees in our marketing department when we go to that point.

Delisi Friday:

So, I think when we started talking it out, it made sense because you and I had an idea. And that's how it always starts, you and I just have this idea. So we had an idea of hiring a graphic designer and using them not just for marketing, but also for our case graphics, because whenever you do this, your concern is, I needed to be a success, but I also need to make sure they have enough work to do. We thought, if we have them do marketing and case graphics, it'll be enough work to do. And so, that's where the conversation started because we realized how many graphics we are creating, not just on the marketing side, but on the case side, because we want to be elite trial lawyers, and elite trial lawyers put in that work. That's where the idea came from.

Michael Cowen:

And it has been so awesome. I think one advantage, contractors, you don't have to have the cost every month. I mean, you can cut it off anytime you want, you just pay for them when you need them. But you don't have the same continuity, they have other projects, they have other jobs. You're not always their top priority or you have to whine a lot to become their top priority because they have other people that also want them to work on things. And if you don't work with the same person all the time, they don't necessarily get you, and you have to kind of re... this is the style we want or this is the branding or the messaging we want. And you kind of have to keep going back and kind of reteaching them.

Michael Cowen:

For our trial graphics, we have very, very, I mean, down to... because we work with Rodney Jew, down to the font we want to use, and the color scheme we want to use. And there's like, you don't have enough white space in this. Or you have, no, no, I know that, but this is what we want because someone spent a bunch of money researching this. And we're not running an ad in Vogue. We are presenting this on a board to a jury in a courtroom. And so, it's different.

Michael Cowen:

Having someone full time, we've been able to get someone that just does what we want and he's learned the way we want it, so it just gets easier and easier to work with him.

Delisi Friday:

It's been absolutely great. And I think, in full disclosure, I was a little bit nervous too because I thought, man, are we going to keep this person busy. And if anything, it helped us create more work in a positive way that impacted our cases and impacted our marketing because we didn't realize until we made the jump from contracting out someone to do that, to hiring them to work full time in our firm, that we realized, man, a real positive with having someone in our firm is we get to bounce ideas off of them. And then other people in the office are like, hey, you know what would make this mediation great? If I had a graphic like this. And then it just snowballed. And our fear of not having enough work for this person went right out the window, and it improved our firm in more ways than one.

Michael Cowen:

Even for the book I'm writing, it's like, how do I describe this? I know, let's get a picture because when you're publishing, when I'm doing a presentation at an attorney conference, I just go online and find an image. Well, when you're publishing the book, you can't just take other people's image. Maybe I shouldn't be doing at a conference either. But you just can't take someone else's image off and put it in a book and publish it and sell it for money.

Michael Cowen:

Here's what I want, and it's like, somewhat like what you saw on the internet, or let me hand draw something out, and can you do this for me? Usually the same day I get it back. We'll make a couple little changes, but it's just so awesome. And it's so much easier to explain concepts when you have a visual.

Delisi Friday:

Well, and depo cuts. I mean, how happy are you that you have someone to help you with depo cuts before trial?

Michael Cowen:

Well, especially now, you've done all your cuts, and the judge makes some rulings and doesn't let some stuff in, and you have to sustain some objections, and you have to re-edit your video real quick. You having someone else in house that can do that now, where it used to be me and Premiere. There's some other programs where you can sync the transcript with the video. It's not clean. You'll start off with a big long pause or start off cutting into the word. It's just not as crisp as someone using actual video editing software to do it professionally. It is so nice.

Michael Cowen:

Now, the one disadvantage of bringing someone in-house is it's an expense to the firm bearer. When you outsource, you can pass the cost along to a client many times, whereas under the ethics rules, it's very challenging, and we don't even try to do it, there's all kinds of disclosures you have to give to have someone that is your employee or business you own that has services that you charge the client. And there's good reasons for that.

Delisi Friday:

Well, and so, let me ask you a question because you've mentioned this before, that some of our marketing dollars are not marketing dollars that we can write off. You went into more detail. So can you help explain what that means. If someone's considering bringing on someone internally, what's the-

Michael Cowen:

There are really two different concepts. What I was talking about right now is that like, when I have Raul, our graphic artist who's brilliant, if I have him make a poster to use for trial, I don't charge the client for the money I paid Raul to do that. Whereas if I hired High Impact to make the same poster, they charged me money, I would pass that cost along to my client.

Michael Cowen:

On one hand, it does decrease the margin a little bit. On the other hand, we have so many more graphics, and we get it done instantly, and we're not having to go through layers of people, we don't have to get in line with other law firms. I think it more than pays for itself in the long run. That is a disadvantage.

Michael Cowen:

The other thing you talked about is, under the tax cut that everyone else got, the Trump tax cut, those of us who do business to business marketing really got screwed, because they took away the business entertainment expense. I don't want to sound like I'm flexing here, it took us a long time to build up to this, but it makes sense for our marketing that I can only get out so often. Our people are spread out. And so, if I can bring groups of people to somewhere where I'm going to be instead of me having to go out and go around the state and meet everybody individually, it's beneficial. So we got a suite for the San Antonio Spurs at the Alamo, not the Alamo, the AT&T Center. And so, we get to go to concerts and hang out in the suite, and we get to go watch basketball games. It's awesome.

Michael Cowen:

And before the Trump's so called tax cut, we got to deduct that. And when we took the lawyers on fishing trips, and took lawyers out to other kind of fun events, we wouldn't be able to deduct that, and now we can't. There's no longer a tax deduction if it's business entertainment. And so, that really hurt, because frankly, it basically raised the cost of our Spurs contract by 40%. Those aren't cheap. It went from being a tax deductible expense to a non-deductible expenditure. That was not fun.

Delisi Friday:

Well, and I'm sure anyone who is doing any kind of marketing on any scale, that's something to think about now.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. Your traditional marketing stuff. Your brochures, your marketing pieces, commercials, all that is still considered marketing expenses, and it's deductible. But your business entertainment is not. One good thing about CLE marketing. A CLE is not considered entertainment, it's considered putting on education course or a seminar. You got to be creative. I've been audited twice. I've not had to pay a dime either time. We try to stay on the right side of the IRS.

Delisi Friday:

Right.

Commercial 3:

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Michael Cowen:

What were the biggest challenges that you had to deal with when we, what we did I think is we looked at our marketing, I remember what happened, we looked at what we were spending per year, and then we said, we were thinking about in-housing some of it. And so we told our people, we want you, they were just giving us a quote like, you pay us this much money and we'll do all your marketing for the year. And we said, well, we want an itemized quote. This much to put on our seminar, this much for the monthly mailings. And they wouldn't do it, they just refused. And so, we just broke off from them suddenly after that.

Michael Cowen:

And we took everything in-house. But we also saw on what we were spending, we could hire people and do it in-house and had money leftover. So what were the biggest challenges for you moving in-house?

Delisi Friday:

Honestly, the biggest challenge was we made that decision in December, and January, we had to start.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah, that's working with me.

Delisi Friday:

I think the challenge was, you don't want to do something like that and it not be a success. So, the planner and organizer in me thought out, okay, we've gone through all the things that we do in terms of marketing throughout the year. So what do I need to tackle in the first quarter, second, third, fourth? Let me focus on that. And then let me focus on how can we make those successful, and what do I need to do to get everything done on time and within budget? Because I didn't want the continuity of our marketing to stop and I didn't want the quality of our marketing to stop. So what was it like for me? It was planning because you have to have a plan. And then it was also having a lot of communication with you.

Delisi Friday:

When you and I made that decision, one of the things that we agreed upon was, if we're going to market this firm, we have to be on the same page. So you and I, we meet weekly, and as we got into our groove, if you remember, our beginning weekly marketing meetings would take a whole hour. Now, I think we spent like 10 minutes today, because we're in sync, we're on the same page, we have the same goals for our marketing.

Delisi Friday:

So, I think good clean communication between me and you was critical. And then having a plan and implementing it was crucial. And once we had that, it was easy because I'd already been doing the job. It was just doing it differently.

Michael Cowen:

I think the other thing that was, it happened later that really upped our game, was when I promoted you from not just being our marketing director, but to managing marketing and intake. And I think there's always a disconnect because the marketing just sees, well, we got so many calls coming in, we got so many leads coming in. I remember you get excited, this lawyer sent all these cases, and I'm thinking yeah, but they're all shit. And you wouldn't see it and then I'd worry about hurting your feelings when I said things like that, because I do say things like that.

Michael Cowen:

Now that you see them coming in and you're like, okay, this is why this case is good, this is why this case is, when we have, because we have automatic yes's, we have automatic no's, we have some criteria, but we have a lot of gray area cases where we have to talk it out, and you see what our thought process is. Oh, yeah, that's why this wouldn't be a good case. Now you're more no than I am on cases. I think I can do some of this. I think it's really helped because it's really taught you to see, with all respect, there're some lawyers, they're great people. They want to work with us, but frankly, they just don't have any cases we're the right fit for. We'd be happy to talk to them, we'd be happy to give them advice or resources, or connect them up with other people that would be great at doing those kind of cases. But they're just not the right fit for us.

Michael Cowen:

And so while we'll still be nice to them, they can come to our seminars. Probably not going to bring them on the fishing trip to New Orleans or Venice outside New Orleans, or the Vegas trip we're going to spend a bunch of money on people. And not because we don't like them, it's just that it's a lot of money to take someone on one of those trips. And you've got to see who has what we want, quite frankly. That's what I've been texting people about. There's a vaccine coming, we're going to go to Vegas, we're going to go fishing. That's been my gifts of jet planes and Vegas lights and big fish that I've been sending people this week.

Delisi Friday:

I agree with you, though. I think that was also really important too. I think when I as a legal marketer was able to see what cases were accepted and what weren't, it helped me understand why I do what I do in a different way that I needed to in order to be more successful and to better fine tune the messaging that we were doing in our marketing. And it helped me see what was successful and what wasn't, because you're right, until I became the person who was managing the intake department, I would see 10 cases come in, I would get so excited. But it's very different if I know only one of those was accepted. So I agree with you.

Delisi Friday:

And you also mentioned, it's just as important to market well, and then provide excellent customer service. I have absolutely loved managing the intake department because now I can make sure as soon

as that new case comes in, they are getting that excellent service, and everything is happening exactly how it should. And the perfectionist in me loves it.

Michael Cowen:

And also, you can nurture those relationships and talk to people when, I'm going to be in trial, or I'm going to go take a week off and leave my phone behind so I can work on my book or whatever else I'm going to do. Or go on vacation. And you can keep the relationships going. Frankly, there's some people that we do business with that they started during COVID, I get to meet them in person, but you've done such a great job nurturing them.

Michael Cowen:

I think the other thing is, I was just thinking of this as you were talking, when you have an outside agency, they always have to justify their existence. They have to justify the fact that you're spending all this money. So they're always going to fight with you on, but we got these calls, we got you these clicks. But you've got to take that into account. Whereas you're on our management team with the firm. You see not just the intakes, but you see the overall firm numbers, you talk about everything because you're a part of our leadership team, we meet every week on that too.

Michael Cowen:

And so, you're really in it for what's best for the firm, not just what makes the marketing department look best, which I think that alignment that we've generated by doing in house I think it's something we could never get if we did it. So, I think for those of you that are listening, I think the goal of everyone should be to do at least part of your marketing in-house and have your own marketing people. But realistically, this is a 20 something year process. Frankly, when I first started even 10 years in my career, Delisi, I couldn't have afforded you. Frankly, I didn't have the money to pay someone of your caliber.

Delisi Friday:

Well, and I also think that is very kind of you to say. But I've also grown professionally because you and I have tested different strategies. We've talked out why we do things. We've made adjustments along the way. And we've done it together. So I think that relationship and that communication, and like he just said, being a part of a leadership team, I have buy in in our entire process. And I will be one of the first ones to say, hey, let's talk about changing something if I see something that needs improvement. And it's very fulfilling for me professionally when I can see a case from beginning to end.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah, whereas before I'd have someone say, because they'd want another year of their website service. But you have to see this, there's some luck involved. You just have to keep going and doing this. Whereas you're like, this isn't working, we need to do something better. How can we improve and how can we make it work? It's just a very different thing. Everyone listening, I think that is the ideal. But start small, start doing things yourselves, start hiring interns, hiring contractors. Build it up, invest in yourself, invest in your firm, until you can get the cases that you want and you deserve. And believe that you deserve them because you do.

Michael Cowen:

One last thing I just want to talk about is, my biggest thing I had to overcome is just my doing things in fits and starts. I would do really strong for a while and then I'd forget about it, start working on something else. I'd do really strong for a while and I'd forget about it. What is it that we're going to do in a week, is it next week or the week after where we're going to sit down and take a full day?

Delisi Friday:

So every year, we have an annual marketing meeting, and it's a full day that we dedicate in December, where all of us will get together. We will analyze our budget, we'll analyze every lead that came in, all of those leads that came into cases, all of our strategies for the year. And then we plan for the next year. And that is extremely important. In this podcast, we talked about why it was important for us to talk about what's working, what's not, so we can adjust. And I think that's incredibly important for people to be doing every single year, if they want to succeed.

Michael Cowen:

We're talking about, we're planning for the year, we're planning like, we're going to so, this year is a little more complicated guys, we're having to make some vaccine projections and stuff. We're going to so our seminars at this point in time. We're going to take people on a fishing trip on this date, and we need to go book it now, and we need to contact them and decide who we're gonna invite. And we're going to take people. These are the events we're going to have. We're going to give out gifts for whatever we're going to give a gift for. Whatever we're going to do, we plan it out way in advance. So we leave some budget for kind of discretionary things. Even the birthday gifting and different levels of, this person's like one of our highest referring lawyers. We got to make sure, what is that person like? How much money can we budget to give him something he would like for his birthday, let him know we love him?

Delisi Friday:

Yeah. And I agree. And I think that's really important. It's obviously going to be a little bit trickier this year because we have the pandemic. But that doesn't mean it should stop you from planning in advance. You can't start 2021 without some kind of a plan in some direction.

Michael Cowen:

Yep, absolutely. I do think that there's going to be some real opportunities in 2021 because these times have been tough. And when there's tough times, not everyone's going to make it. There's going to be people out there that aren't going to be able to fund their cases. There's going to be people out there that aren't going to be able to spend the same kind of money marketing. So if you can do it smart and not spend a fortune doing it, I think there's going to be some real opportunities for people in marketing the next year. Every time there's hardship, that leads to opportunity.

Delisi Friday:

Absolutely.

Michael Cowen:

And so we just need to survive and then we can thrive.

Delisi Friday:

Absolutely.

Michael Cowen:

Okay, Delisi, well, thank you so much. I think we've hit over an hour now. Delisi, thanks so much. I always like talking to you. I'm looking forward to working and planning out next year. And thank you for everything you've done to create the success of our firm. I really do appreciate it.

Delisi Friday:

Thank you for letting me be a part of your team.

Outro:

Thank you for joining us on Trial Lawyer Nation. I hope you enjoyed our show. If you'd like to receive updates, insider information and more from Trial Lawyer Nation, sign up for our mailing list at [triallawyernation.com](http://triallawyernation.com). You could also visit our episodes page on the website for show notes and direct links to any resources in this or any past episode. To help more attorneys find our podcast, please like, share and subscribe to our podcast on any of our social media outlets. If you'd like access to exclusive plaintiff lawyer only content and live monthly discussions with me, send a request to join the Trial Lawyer Nation Insider Circle Facebook group. Thanks again for tuning in. I look forward to having you with us next time on Trial Lawyer Nation.

Commercial 4:

Each year the law firm of Cowen Rodriguez Peacock pays millions of dollars in co-counsel fees to attorneys nationwide on trucking and company vehicle cases. If you have a case involving death or catastrophic injuries and would like to partner with our firm, please contact us. We have experience finding potential defendants that other firms miss, and we've added millions of dollars to cases by finding these sources of recovery. If you have a catastrophic injury or death case where the policy limits appear to be insufficient, give us a call. If we can find another defendant, we can partner on the case. And if we can't, then we won't ask for any of the fees. You can reach Delisi Friday by calling 210-941-1301 or send an email to [podcast@triallawyernation.com](mailto:podcast@triallawyernation.com). She will coordinate a time for Michael Cowen to speak with you in person or by phone to discuss the case in detail.

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