

Michael Cowen:

This is Michael Cowen and welcome to Trial Lawyer Nation.

Speaker 2:

You are the leader in the courtroom and you want the jury to be looking to you for the answers.

Speaker 3:

When you figure out your theory, never deviate.

Speaker 4:

You want the facts to be consistent, complete, incredible.

Speaker 5:

The defense has no problem running out the clock, delay is the friend of the defense.

Speaker 6:

It's tough to grow a firm by trying to hold on and micromanage.

Speaker 7:

You've got to front load a simple structure for jurors to be able to hold onto.

Speaker 8:

What types of creative things can we do as lawyers even though we don't have a trial setting?

Speaker 9:

Whatever you've got to do to make it real, you've got to do to make it real. But the person who needs convincing is you.

Voiceover:

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'm here with my Marketing Director, Isabella Santellan. Isabella, how are you doing today?

Isabella Santellan:

I'm good Michael. How are you?

Michael Cowen:

I'm doing great. And today we are going to talk about how we have built a referral based practice so that if other people want to get more referrals for attorneys, maybe some of the things we do might be useful

to them. Before I jump into that though, I want to thank Law Pods. Law Pods is sponsoring and also producing our podcast. We really appreciate their help. They make it so easy. All I have to do is talk to people and then they make all the magic happen. They do all the recording, all the editing, producing, everything else like that. They make my life super easy so I can't say enough good things about Law Pods. Let's talk about attorney referrals. Isabella, you're fairly new to the firm.

Isabella Santellan:

I am, yes.

Michael Cowen:

So what was the biggest surprise coming in and seeing the way that we brought in business as compared to what you normally would expect from somebody with billboards and TV ads and pay-per-click and all that stuff.

Isabella Santellan:

It was definitely different. I'd just graduated from college so in a lot of my classes you're taught to reach out to clients, not so much other people in that field. So it's definitely interesting coming into the firm and learning how you all advertise and do marketing.

Michael Cowen:

So what were the questions that came to your mind and maybe those might be the questions our listeners would have and then I will try my best to answer them?

Isabella Santellan:

Okay. What strategy have you found most effective to lay the foundation for longstanding refer attorney relationships?

Michael Cowen:

Well I think the key word was the last word you said is relationship. The good thing in the personal injury space, the problem with just advertising to individual clients is that hopefully people aren't going to get hurt over and over and over again. So you have a fairly transactional relationship with your clients. That is, they have one case, they hire you do a good job and then they may or may not tell somebody about you. But it's just a lot of people aren't talking about their personal injury lawyer. Whereas with referring lawyers, it's another lawyer who is likely to get cases over and over again for years to come. And you can form a relationship with that person. It has to be a real relationship.

So you need to find out what does that person like? How do you provide an experience for that person nobody else does and how do you continue to let that person know that you care about him or her, that you're thinking about him and her? How do you stay top of mind over a multi-year period of time? And so there's a million things and we can talk about them in this podcast, but there's a million things we do and that other people can do to do that.

Isabella Santellan:

I feel like our relationships with our referral attorneys are super important. It makes our life easier keeping in constant communication with them and building those relationships.

Michael Cowen:

And I think a lot of it has to do is setting the expectations up front and finding out what does that other lawyer want? What is going to make that other lawyer happy? And there is a wide spectrum and so we have some people, they're coming in, they want to bring us another case because they want to learn how to do it themselves, which is fine with me, I have an abundance mentality. It does not bother me at all if someone brings me in on one case, it never brings me in again. And they learn all my "Secrets." I don't... To the extent they're already secrets in this world and does it themselves, that's okay with me. And so some people, they want to be in there on our strategy sessions, they want to have regular meetings to talk about the case. They want to show up to the deposition, show up to the hearings, read our briefings before we follow them with the court. That's fine. If they want to have that level of involvement, we give them that level involvement.

Other people say, "Look, leave me alone. I gave you the case because I didn't want to work on it. Let me know when the check comes in. I want to work on other things and let you do the work of this case." We respect that too. Those people, we say, "Okay. Well, call if you have any questions and if nothing major happens I'll give you a call." And then most people are somewhere in between. So we have people that just want... I have one firm that we do a meeting every month and we just go over all the cases we have together on a monthly basis, which actually helps us as much as it helps them. Not only does it help keep our relationship fresh because we're talking on a regular basis, but a lot of times they're in the same city as the client, we're halfway across the state.

And so the clients end up telling them things they don't tell us and we find out details with the client's medical treatment or problems the clients are having when we have those meetings with our referring counsel. We don't necessarily get on our phone calls with the client for whatever reason. So it becomes a really good thing. And often, also when you're having those monthly meetings, that becomes a time when they say, "Oh, by the way we have this other case. What do you think about this?" So it really makes a difference. And like I said, it's just finding out what level of input, what level of communication that person wants and giving them what they want and not giving them what they don't want.

But I found in general there's three things a referring lawyer, a co-counsel, really, really wants. They want to make sure that they get, of course, as much money as they can, as quickly as recently as possible without the client going back and complaining to them. So another thing that's really important if you want a referral based practice is you've got it to keep the client really happy. And that again comes down to communication, constant communication, over communication because clients don't have a way to tell whether we are doing good or bad legal services. They don't know whether we just drafted a beautiful complaint, how great our motion was. They don't even know when we settle a case whether we settled it for good money or bad money because they don't have a basis for comparison.

But what they do know is how they're treated. They do know how they feel, they do know are their questions answered? Are we keeping them up to date on things? Are we calling them before they have to call us? And if you do those things and the client's happy and doesn't go back and call and complain that the referring lawyer, well then the referring lawyer is more likely to refer you another case. If the client is unhappy and is calling them complaining, "Hey, they don't call us back, somebody was rude to me." Well then that person is less likely to send you a case in the future.

Isabella Santellan:

So while we're on that subject, how would you go about keeping their attention while they're considering sending you a great case?

Michael Cowen:

That's a good question. You and I have actually been working on that. So historically it's been really random. I've just try to, "Oh wait, I haven't talked to so and so in a while." So try to take people to lunch, maybe go for a drink after work, if it's a big prospect, maybe invite them to a sporting event, fishing, whatever the person likes. Try to find a way to do that. But we're actually trying to get better systems for doing that. And so I think the one we came up with is if I go meet with somebody, you'll make me write a handwritten note the next day.

Isabella Santellan:

Yes.

Michael Cowen:

And then you will call their assistant to find out what they like and then a week later we can send some gift of something that they like, not something that's got our brand on it because no one cares about a Cowen Rodriguez pen or plaque or anything like that. But give them something that they would like and then follow up with a phone call, follow up with the letter. It's just getting something to remind us to do it because what happens with us is we get busy doing our other work and we forget to follow up on a lead.

And then it may have been somebody was thinking about bringing us in on a case and then they just got busy doing their things or they tried to, "Let me give it one more chance to settle on my own." And then maybe they do settle on their own, that's fine. But if they don't, you still want to be top of mind when they decide, "I'm really not getting good offers on this case, maybe I will bring them in after all." And so you have to find some way without annoying them to stay in touch with them.

Isabella Santellan:

So when it comes to building these relationships and keeping in contact with them and getting all these cases or when they're reaching out to you regarding a case, what's the best way to turn down a case from a referring attorney?

Michael Cowen:

I think quickly is the best way. And this is something where I failed because I really struggle with saying no but it's so important to say no when it's not the right case for you. Because the worst thing to happen is to have a case come in and then you regret it and then you don't do a very good job on it because you really hate working on it because it wasn't a case that was right for you, or you work really hard but you still don't get a really good result. And even lawyers, I mean lawyers should be a little more sophisticated but they really think of, "Well, I gave lawyer A, a case and lawyer A, resolved that case for \$2 million. I gave lawyer B a case and lawyer B, settled it for \$20,000." While it may have taken a lot better lawyering to get \$20,000 on a really, really, really crappy case and it was to get 2 million on a really good case.

But what that lawyer is thinking is, "That's the 2 million lawyer, that's the \$20,000 lawyer. The next big case is going to go the 2 million lawyer." So it is a mistake to go take everything. But I did find when I say no to bad cases, I get more good cases. But the big thing is just to be polite, be up front. And what I try to do is also offer them a solution because someone's reaching out to you because they have a problem. The problem is, "I have this case and I don't want to do it myself, I want some help on it or I want someone to take this off my hands." And so if it's not the right case for me, I try to direct them to the other lawyer who will be right for the case.

So often I'll say, "Five years ago I would love to have this case, right now I'm not taking this level of case so and so is doing a really good job. Would you like me to hook you up with so and so?" Then there's a

whole generation of lawyers that are coming up there that's five, 10 years, 15 years younger than me that are happy to get those cases. So I'm making my referring lawyer happy because they still get a solution to the problem. They get someone good to come into the case. I'm making another law firm happy because they're getting work that they want and so everybody's happy. I'm making me happy because I'm not having to do cases I don't want to do.

That took a lot of courage to start doing because what's the fear in the back of your head? "Well, if I hooked them up with some other lawyer and that other lawyer does a good job, maybe that other lawyer is going to take my referring lawyer away." But it doesn't work like that. It's surprising but when you have the confidence to say, "This is what I do and I'm really good at what I do." And they'll still come to me with everything but if it's not what I do, "I hope you find the right person." I still maintain that relationship. I've not lost any referring lawyer since I started doing that. In fact, I've made actually new referring lawyers because then the people that are... where I'm giving the mid-level case to those people and then when they get a big case they're more likely to bring me in on it to help them. So it's just a win, win, win situation.

Isabella Santellan:

Exactly. So since you cannot predict the outcome of a case you're receiving, what types of guarantees can you make to a referring agent or attorney that would make our firm more appealing?

Michael Cowen:

Yeah, I think the guarantees we can... Obviously, you can't guarantee outcome. I wish we could but there's just... even a case I thought, "There's no way I could lose this case because you have great liability. You have..." I had a case that's an 18 wheeler death and then the trucking company goes out of business and then the trucking company's insurance company went out of business. The insurance company is something called a risk retention group where there's no state guarantee fund. Basically when the insurance company went out of business and the trucking company went out of business, there was no money.

So even though it was some incredible case when it first came in, by the time it was over, everybody's in bankruptcy or in insurance insolvency and there's probably not going to be any money for anybody. But what we can promise is one, we're going to work really hard on it and two, that we're going to keep them as informed as that they want to be kept and keep their clients super informed on the case, that we can't promise.

And we have a certain way of doing our cases and we share what it is loud and proud. We have seminars, we talk about it, we have a method that we follow and as long as we're following that method we tend to have good results. And so it's just keeping that promise, that's the important part.

Isabella Santellan:

So how should a new attorney start building their referral network?

Michael Cowen:

That's a great question. It's something I had to do because it doesn't start off... You can't just graduate from law school and say, "I'm just going to do catastrophic injury and wrongful death cases on referral." So you have to really get a realistic sense of how you're going to be viewed in the market. You can't be too hard on yourself and see yourself less than other people see you. That false humility will hurt you. I did that to myself for a long time and cases I didn't need to take. But you also can't have an inflated view of yourself because if you say, for example, if you're a one or two year lawyer saying, "I'm only going to

do wrongful death and catastrophic injury cases." No one's going to give them to you. I wouldn't think at that point, because you haven't earned it yet.

And then start off with people you already know and find out what is the level of case you think that you can get and that you can preferably do. And then who has those cases and then what are those people like? How can you make those people happy? How do you get in front of them? So it's easiest of course to start with people you already know, take them to lunch, just ask, just ask. It's amazing how much you get if you just ask for it.

But then you want to try to get in with other people that you don't and that's a little tougher. And I think gifting is a really good way to do that. Find out what someone likes, find out who the decision maker is. I've learned at some of the big advertising firms, I would go and work on the person who was on TV, the face of the firm and take that person to lunch and send that person gifts and then I'd find out that person was running the firm but they're a giant firm, that person wasn't actually the person that was making the decisions on referring cases out.

So I found out who that person was. Found out that person liked the rodeo, took the person, got a suite at the AT&T Center here in San Antonio and had that person and his family out to the rodeo. They had a great time and, lo and behold, I got two cases. And so let's say you're a younger lawyer, you want to get into litigation, find the people that have a bunch of car wreck cases and say, "Hey, I want to try some cases. Do you have any cases you want me to try? Do you have cases where you have a conflict? You've signed up the passenger and the driver but you can't represent both because the passenger needs to make a claim against the driver. Can you consider me on those conflict cases?"

And at some point... On one hand I talk about the importance of saying no to things, but when you're starting you also need to get your foot in the door. So you don't want to just take absolute trash cases but you also got to start somewhere. So I really recommend just going in there and being hungry and being humble and being persistent. I mean, you don't want to be a pain in the butt but you know can ask once and the person at the end of the conversation can have every intention of sending you work, but then they get busy and you're not the most important thing in their life, believe it or not.

And so when that next case came in, they just forget about you. So find some way to say top of mind. I do notes, letters, maybe email, although email gets lost so much. I think a handwritten note, or a letter, or some little gift every now and then to the right people I think can make a huge difference. Of course, if it's people that are more peer-to-peer lunches, drinks, hosting little events, all that stuff, it really does work.

Isabella Santellan:

I agree. We've worked hard on our plan working with our referring attorneys and keeping in constant communication with them.

Michael Cowen:

Now once you know get more... You were asking about starting up now we use software to make sure that we keep track of who we're talking to, when we're talking to them. We can set up sequences in advance so we can write the letters and write the emails and program them in and then over the next six months that we just automatically send stuff out. But that's when you get more up and going in a bigger program, but really it needs to be intentional. I think so many of us, and I did it for so much of my career, you just expect it to happen. It was like, "Well, I have a good reputation, people are just going to bring me in on cases."

But what we forget is there's lots of other people out there that are great lawyers. And what makes us so special, so unique that people are going to beat a path to our door. And if you look at other organizations outside of law and look at the sales departments they have, look at pharmaceutical sales reps with doctors, what all do they do there? Look at similar types of industrial distribution, other types of sales. What do they do when they're selling to professionals? What experience do they provide those people? Because what I tell you is, "How do we make working with us a better experience of working with anyone else? What is it that makes these people happy? What makes them feel special? What makes them feel cared for?" And then you try, to extent you can afford it, and then you try to provide that.

Isabella Santellan:

Definitely.

Voiceover:

Each year the law firm of Cowen, Rodriguez & Peacock pays millions of dollars in co-counsel fees to attorneys nationwide on trucking and commercial vehicle cases. If you have an injury case involving death or catastrophic injuries and would like to partner with our firm, please contact us by calling 210 941 1301, to discuss the case in detail and see where we can add value in a partnership. And now back to the show.

Isabella Santellan:

So what have you learned as you've developed your referral marketing process?

Michael Cowen:

Oh, I've learned lots of things. One, don't hire people away from referring lawyers. That was a one I learned the hard way. By being, I don't know why I had to learn that the hard way, it seems so obvious. But don't hire people away from your referring lawyers. They don't like it. Really, learning to treat referring lawyers with great respect, we're not better than they are just because they're referring us a case. And it doesn't even mean we're better lawyers. We all have our gifts. Some people are really, really, really good at getting clients. Some people are really, really good dealing with adjusters and selling things pre lit and getting cases, making sure that people... remind them to go to the doctor and go out and get photos and all that stuff.

And some of us are good at litigating and there are many things in law that I am not good at. I'm not allowed to talk to insurance adjusters very often because I just get mad at them and threaten them with file lawsuits in cases where I shouldn't. It's funny because I can hustle with lawyers all day long to get business, but in the regular community I feel weird and uncomfortable hustling for business. So I'm not really good at generating work from non-lawyers, its just not one of my skill sets.

I'm not as good and patient about meeting with clients and talking about the importance of going to the doctor, reminding them. And so what I found is when I'm teaming up with other firms and other lawyers that they're good at the places where I'm weak and I'm good where they're not as strong, we make a better whole. And so learning to treat people with that respect and getting the mindset of "We're a team, not that I'm the big badass and you're the peon," has been super important.

And I'm not going to claim that I've never had a little bit of that attitude when I was younger. We all have egos, but I've really learned honestly to appreciate the help and the teamwork I get with the referring lawyers. I think that's a big one. I think the one I talked about a little bit is just finding out what they want and making it about them, not about me. And so I think one of the biggest mistakes we make is

people want to give out promotional items with their name printed all over it. When nobody really wants to have a plaque or a pen with your name on it in their office for their clients to see.

So what we try to do is we try to get personalized things that have their name on it, that have something that they love. So an example, if someone is kind enough to bring us in on a case that has a resolution for a million dollars or more, we create a beautiful award for them. If it's a trucking case, we have this crystal 18 wheeler we do, if not we do it with some other crystal plaque and it only has their name on it, it does not have ours. So say like, "Thank you to whatever law firm for your..." Or whatever lawyer, we'll have their name on it, "For your great work resulting in a..." Let's say an 8 million settlement in a company vehicle case.

And they keep that in their office because it's got their name on it, but they know who gave it to them, they remember that. But we give them something that they like and that they can use to then go out and promote themselves and get more cases.

Isabella Santellan:

Right, something more personal.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah, absolutely. But not just personal but about them, not about us.

Isabella Santellan:

So what are some of the most common mistakes lawyers make with respect to getting referrals and how do you fix them?

Michael Cowen:

Okay, here's some big ones. One is just not calling people back quickly enough. If someone's nice enough to reach out to you, you've got to get back to them quickly. Not saying no quickly enough because you just don't want that false hope. You sit on something for a long time and you leave a bad taste in their mouth, when you come back three or four weeks later with a no instead of one or two days later.

And if you do need to go... Sometimes the answer is, "I need to find out X, Y, and Z before I can say yes or no." Well, then get right on it and tell them, "I need to fight X, Y, and Z and so I've hired an investigator, I sent this request out." And then keep them updated, say, "Hey, it's been three weeks but the investigator told me X, Y, and Z. But I am waiting for the information back from the government on that part, once we find out this stuff..." And then if it ends up being a no, it's like, "Well, here's all the stuff we got. Let me give it back to you. This is why we're saying the no." How quickly you say no, and then when it takes time, keeping someone informed so they don't just assume that you're working on it or that you're not.

Either they've assumed you're taking it and they get disappointed when you go back or they think you've just forgotten about it. Either one is really bad. So I think that's the big mistake. I think not taking people for granted. Just because someone has referred you cases for years doesn't mean they're going to keep referring you cases. And I think of it a little bit like a dating relationship.

If you're dating somebody but you don't take them to dinner for 3, 4, 5 weeks, some other dude's going to be calling her up and ask her to take her to dinner. That's the way it works. And same for... And it's hard because we're also practicing law and working on the cases. We also have our own families but we have to make that time to be in there with them.

I think the other thing I see a lot is making false promises. Making promises you can't try to get the referral in, backfires at the end because you have to think of, you're not thinking about this as one case,

you're thinking of a lifetime of cases. So one thing I always ask is, "What is the lifetime value of this referral relationship over the next 10 or 20 years?" Some of our referral relationships, we get 500,000 to a million dollars in fee, year in, year out. Been doing it for over 10 years.

So if I have to go and do something to make it right or make that person happy to keep that, even it means I'm going to lose money on one particular case, even if it means I've got to take on something I don't really want to take on to keep that relationship going, what's the value of that relationship? What do I have to do to keep that? I think... What's the other one?

I've never done this but I've heard of other people doing it and it kills your future referrals is renegotiating the referral fee after you've cut the deal. So let's say you did a 60/40 deal on a case and you did a ton of work on the case and the case turned out to not be as big of a recovery as you thought. And so it's tempting, you go back and tell the referring lawyer, "Hey, this isn't the case we thought it was. I had to do all this work, I had to spend all this money. Can we do 70/30 instead of 60/40?"

Now that person might say yes, but they feel like you screwed them. They feel like you cheated them. Bait and switch. They don't like that. It is much better, even if you made a horrible deal, even if the deal turns out the referring lawyer didn't tell you some things they should have told you about the case and you wouldn't have taken the case, eat it. Stick with the deal you made, always honor the deal you made because that's going to get you the next case.

And it's not only that, maybe you don't want to work with that one person again because that person... sometimes people leave bad facts out when they're sending you a case or you find out they did something unethical, you don't want to work with them. You still don't want to piss them off and change the deal because they're going to tell everybody else, "I sent so and so a case and he screwed me over. He changed the deal on me, he took advantage of me." Never, ever do that.

So if you make a deal, you stick with a deal no matter how it ends up being. And it's amazing, I've been shocked how often people agree to one deal and then when the case is settling they try to change it.

Isabella Santellan:

So what's one way you've simplified the referral process for your referring attorneys?

Michael Cowen:

I think the biggest thing that I've done is I give them someone other than me they can contact and send everything to because I can be a bottleneck. And by a bottleneck is if I say, "Well, call me, send everything to me." And then I'm busy, I'm out doing depositions, or I'm in trial, or on vacation, then everything sits there. And so luckily I have you, I have a whole team of intake people and they're all trained on how to politely speak to somebody, how to get the information, get a copy of the file. I've created automatic yes and automatic nos on cases so that if a case...

Let's say if it's a trucking or company vehicle case with visible property damage and surgical recommendation or more, we automatically say yes to it. And then there are types of cases that we automatically say no to. If it doesn't involve a vehicle and it doesn't involve death or catastrophic injuries, we automatically say no to it. And then in between sometimes need me or one of the little lawyers at the firm can make a judgment call. But getting those instant yeses and instant nos where we don't have to wait until someone can talk to me, I think has really simplified things.

Isabella Santellan:

I agree. It's a good way of doing things. So how has hosting your own seminar, Big Rig Bootcamp, added value to the referrals you receive?

Michael Cowen:

Yeah, I think that's a good... We have what I call a referral funnel. So part of it, frankly, it's this podcast. People listen to this podcast and we hope that I sound like somebody they might want to do business with someday. Obviously that's not a requirement to listen to the podcast and we're not blatantly selling our services. But there's the hope that we start a relationship and then I speak at other people's seminars, but we have our own seminar, the Big Rig Bootcamp every year. And I think that's a chance.

And what I do is it's a fully... I don't sell at that. It's purely me giving away what I do and it's just showing this is exactly what we do. This is exactly what we use. But I think it's a way for me to let people know that we really do know what we're doing and also that we're not lying. This really is a culture of sharing and respect. If you want to be part of this family, you're welcome to be a part of this family and work with us on cases.

And I think that really... And I'm not stuck with whatever topic someone else wants to give me and I'm not making someone sit through a bunch of other lectures that might not be as good. And it's not that I'm worried about competition from other people, it's just I want a certain quality in there and plus, it's my deal. I like doing it. We used to have other lawyers at the firm speak at it, but the comments we got was they were there to listen to me. So we just do me for six hours.

And that is a thing that I do recommend doing too. If you want to build a referral base and you don't have to do a full on big old seminar with hundreds of people, you spend a ton of money to do it. My very first one was at a restaurant. I just got a room at a Mexican food restaurant. As long as I was spending the eight to \$10 a plate, they were happy to have the room. And it was a lunchtime presentation. We have something called the Stows Doctrine in Texas, which is our way to open a policy. If you write a letter offering to settle a case within the policy limits and you have certain magic phrases in there that you have to have, and the insurance company doesn't pay. And then you get an excess judgment and if the jury finds that they were negligent and not paying when they should have, then you can collect the whole thing and not just the limits of the insurance policy.

Well, I'd noticed that a lot of my referring lawyers were writing letters that didn't meet all the requirements and it was frustrating because then we were losing opportunities. So I did a seminar just on how to do those letters and gave everyone a copy of a form letter that had all the magic language, that didn't take a whole lot to do.

And so we started small, we started with lunch seminars, we started with small two or three hour seminars where I would get together with two or three other people and we put them on together. And then eventually when I build up more of a following, started doing my own. So I think that's something, all of us, there's something that we know more than the average lawyer on and so give that away.

But I do really, really, really recommend the in person seminar over the webinar or a virtual seminar. Yes, it's cheaper and easier to do virtual and you can get more people, but there's a value of being in person. You're going to be more dynamic when you're speaking in person, but the biggest thing is it's not just the lecturers, it's all the conversations that you have with people. So you get to go meet with people.

And then for us, there's also what I call Social Proof. So if I get in a room with people that I want to refer me cases, we get new prospects in there and they're sitting next to people that have done business with us for years who are super happy about us and then they start talking about us. Well, our satisfied clients, our customers, referring lawyers, tell the new prospects what a great job we would do, how we take care of them. They're more likely to want to do business with us.

So always make sure that you don't just think about getting new business when you're doing a similar type thing. Always make sure you invite and make a big deal about the people that you already do business with.

Isabella Santellan:

I agree. Well, I think those are all the questions I have for you, Michael.

Michael Cowen:

Okay, well I guess that's one last thing I just wanted to point out too is that once you get the referral relationships, it's spend more of your effort keeping your existing referral relationships than looking for new ones. Yes, you always need to be... You never know, you can never just rest in your laurels because people sometimes do move on. Our people get sick, they pass away, they retire, move, all kinds of things can happen.

But it is so much more fruitful to spend your time and energy keeping your existing relationships, keep keeping your herd pinned in basically, than it is to spend all your time and energy trying to find new people, because that's a lot harder to get someone to send you that first case. Once someone sends you that first case, if you do a good job, it's easier for them to send the second, third, fourth. It just becomes... You become their person.

But getting them to trust you in that first case is a lot harder. So keeping them happy and doing a really good job on the cases and letting them know what you're doing on the cases is so much more important. So if you have limited time, money or energy, focus more on your existing referring sources than on trying to get new stuff.

Isabella Santellan:

Definitely.

Michael Cowen:

All right, well that was fun. Welcome to the podcast world, Isabella. I'm sure we'll have you on again and I enjoyed it.

Isabella Santellan:

Thank you.

Michael Cowen:

Just wanted to mention a couple of other things. So I will be on the road. I will be teaching in Denver in early November, I think it's the seventh, eighth, and ninth, at the AHA Trucking College. Any of you all are... One, if you do trucking cases, I really highly encourage you to attend. And if you do, come up and say hi. I always like it when someone says, "Hey, I like your podcast." It doesn't bother me. It won't be awkward. I will be very friendly and welcoming.

Similarly, November 17th, I will be speaking at the Indiana Trial Lawyers Association seminar. So again, please, if you're a listener, please come up and say hi, I'd love to meet you. And we'll continue to keep you guys informed when I'm speaking at other events. So thank you for listening and I hope you join us next time on Trial Lawyer Nation.

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Voiceover:

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