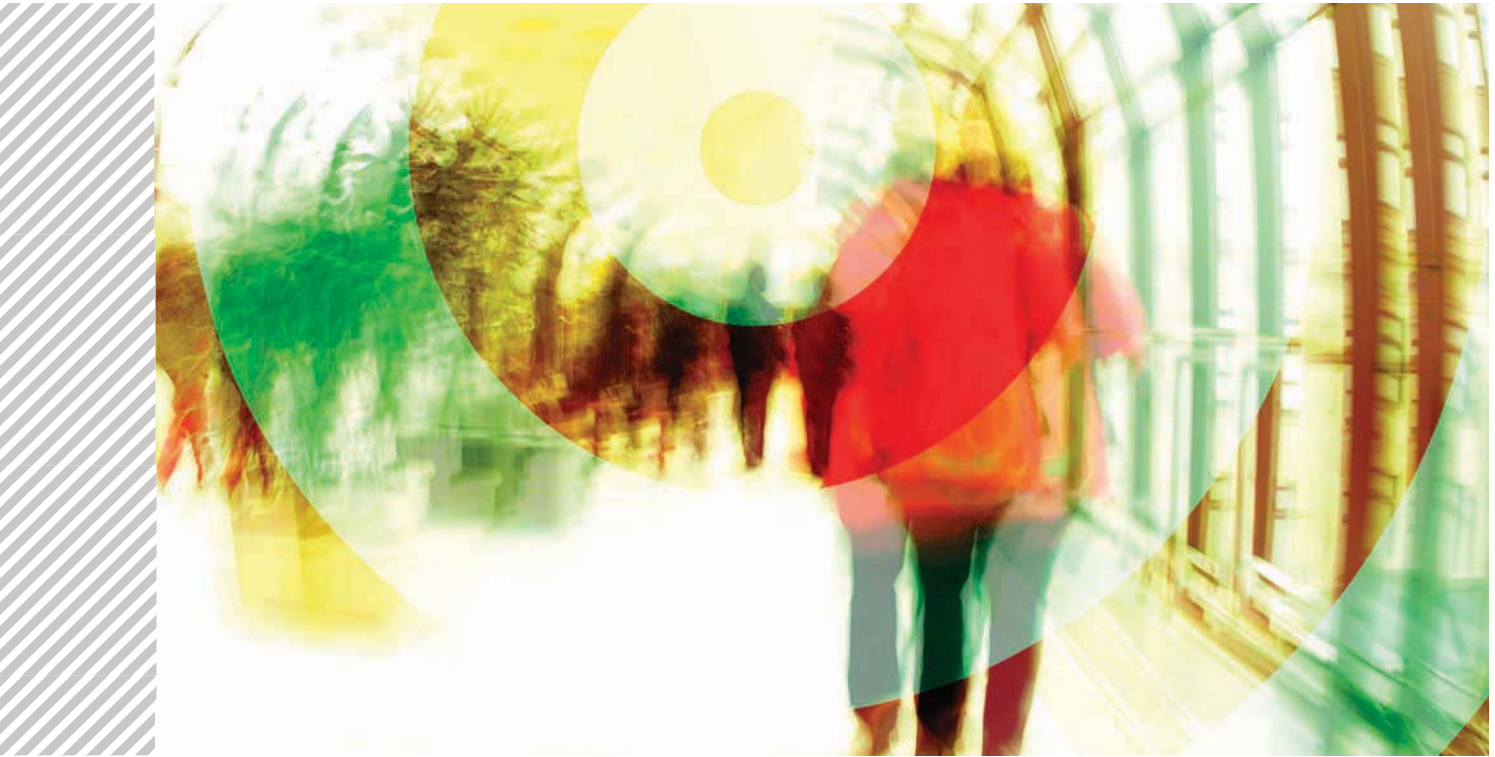


# WAYS TO LOVE YOUR LEVERAGE: HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR MARKETING ACTIVITIES



BY BARBARA LEWIS

Research shows that a marketing plan can increase revenues by as much as 35 percent. As a tactical month-by-month strategy, a marketing plan is generally divided into two sections — relationship and reputation. Relationship activities consist of strengthening bonds with current clients, prospects, and referral sources, such as one-on-one meetings and networking. Reputation activities include the following marketing activities:

- |                   |                   |                     |
|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Advertisements | 6. Press releases | 11. Surveys         |
| 2. Articles       | 7. Seminars       | 12. Trade shows     |
| 3. Blogs          | 8. Social media   | 13. Webinars        |
| 4. eNewsletters   | 9. Speeches       | 14. Website content |
| 5. Media          | 10. Sponsorships  | 15. White papers    |

Marketing is not an ad hoc activity that's done haphazardly. Activities should be executed consistently and tested over time for success. By monitoring

OTHER ACTIVITIES LEVERAGED FROM DIFFERENT MARKETING STRATEGIES															LEVERAGABILITY SCORE	
	ADVERTISEMENTS	ARTICLES	BLOGS	NEWSLETTERS	MEDIA	PRESS RELEASES	SEMINARS	SOCIAL MEDIA	SPEECHES	SPONSORSHIPS	SURVEYS	TRADE SHOWS	WEBINARS	WEBSITE CONTENT		WHITE PAPERS
<b>SURVEYS</b>		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•				•	•	•	11
<b>NEWSLETTERS</b>		•	•		•	•	•	•	•				•	•	•	10
<b>SPEECHES</b>		•	•	•	•	•	•	•					•	•	•	10
<b>WEBINARS</b>		•	•	•		•	•	•	•		•			•	•	10
<b>WHITE PAPERS</b>		•	•	•		•	•	•	•		•		•	•		10
<b>BYLINED ARTICLES</b>			•	•	•	•	•	•					•	•	•	10
<b>BLOGS</b>		•		•			•	•	•		•		•	•	•	9
<b>SEMINARS</b>		•	•	•		•		•	•				•	•	•	9
<b>QUOTED ARTICLES</b>			•	•		•		•	•				•	•	•	8
<b>PRESS RELEASES</b>		•	•	•				•						•		5
<b>WEBSITE CONTENT</b>		•		•				•					•		•	5
<b>TRADESHOWS</b>			•	•		•		•								4
<b>SPONSORSHIPS</b>			•	•				•								3
<b>SOCIAL MEDIA - LINKEDIN</b>				•										•		2
<b>ADVERTISEMENTS</b>																0

marketing tactics, you can determine whether that specific activity is accomplishing your goals.

One of the largest marketing mistakes professionals in the retirement planning business make is the lack of marketing leverage. The success of one marketing activity can be expanded into several other activities. There is only so much time and money you can put into marketing. By capitalizing on the success of one activity, your efforts

can yield a much higher return on your marketing investment.

To determine the value of an activity's leveragability, we've developed a leveragability score, which denotes the extent that leverage can be used in capitalizing on an activity.

### **SURVEYS**

Surveys have the greatest leveragability of all marketing activities, because they're

unobtrusive, great for research, and increase your firm's exposure to multiple individuals. The negative aspect of using surveys, however, is that they're difficult to construct. Questions may not be impartial and they may influence the respondents' answers. When creating a survey, it's essential to make sure that questions are as unbiased and objective as possible. Surveys are easily converted into a variety of other marketing activities. For this reason, surveys

The best way to discover if tactics are working is to track the source of all new clients on a monthly, quarterly, or semi-annual basis, depending on the volume of new business.

---

have a leveragability score of 11, which is equal to the number of other marketing activities that can be leveraged from surveys.

For example, the results of a survey can be written up in an article, a blog, and a press release, included in a newsletter, pitched to the media, posted on a social media page and website, and serve as the basis for a speech, a webinar, and a white paper.

### **ENEWSLETTERS**

Enewsletters are another great marketing tool. They can be sent out on a regular schedule, giving your firm consistent exposure to clients, prospects, and referral sources. Constant Contact and other platforms generate automated reports that provide a breakdown of individuals' areas of interest as they click on the newsletter links. eNewsletters can contain information about services, client success stories, and areas of expertise.

As eNewsletters increase in popularity, it's important to brand your eNewsletter and your firm in a way that stands out. eNewsletters can be time-consuming to write and ideas for articles can be difficult to develop. Nonetheless, eNewsletters have a high leveragability score of 10.

### **SPEECHES**

Although speeches are often difficult to book, they have great potential for client development. Usually, organizations plan a year in advance for speeches at their national conferences. Although speeches require time to prepare, they can be leveraged into a variety of other marketing mediums with little effort and receive a leveragability score of 10.

### **WEBINARS**

One of the most inexpensive and easy-to-use marketing activities is webinars. Gotowebinar and other platforms use technology to construct a meeting quickly and seamlessly. Unfortunately, only about half of those who sign up for webinars actually attend. The disadvantage of using webinars is



that there is no personal contact or immediate feedback, as in speeches, and this can make webinars difficult. But webinars can be easily leveraged into other marketing activities. For this reason, webinars also receive a high leveragability score of 10.

### **WHITE PAPERS**

White papers are a great way to entice people to sign up for your newsletter. Then you can add them to your database, the core of any marketing program. White papers indicate that you have expertise in a specific area. Although white papers take time to research and write, they still receive a leveragability score of 10.

### **BYLINED ARTICLES**

Bylined articles demonstrate your credibility because they showcase your expertise. Ideas for bylined articles must be pitched to an editor and then written in a specific format, which can be time intensive. Because the length of time to publication varies from one to five months, planning ahead is important. It also helps to be familiar with the scope and editorial policies of each publication you pitch to. Bylined articles receive a leveragability score of 10.

### **BLOGS**

Blogs are another useful technique for marketing because they can become viral, as well as increase your ranking in Google and other search engines. Blogging requires

a commitment to write and can be time consuming. Although useful, blogs don't offer as much leverage opportunity for other marketing activities and receive a score of nine.

### **SEMINARS**

Seminars have very strong promotional potential, but tend to be very expensive and time consuming to organize and conduct. It's also a very risky venture since a high percentage of registrants are no-shows. Despite these drawbacks, seminars still have a leveragability score of nine.

### **QUOTED ARTICLES**

In the media, being quoted in articles increases your credibility and helps establish you as an authority on the



topic. One of the drawbacks of these articles, however, is the possibility of being misquoted or not quoted at all after spending valuable time being interviewed. Occasionally, reporters will call an individual for background information and won't quote the person they interviewed. This type of article has a leveragability score of eight.

### PRESS RELEASES

Press releases are another way to increase your search engine rankings. Several hundred media outlets can pick up the press release and those media outlets will be accessed by others. This increases your exposure and enhances your credibility while being relatively inexpensive. Depending on how widely you want the information distributed, costs range from about \$300 to \$700 for distribution. By writing your release with a national angle, it's more likely to be picked up by other news sources. The leveragability score is five.

### WEBSITE CONTENT

Website content is an important marketing tool, since it may be the first impression a prospect or referral source has. Most websites focus on features instead of the benefits for the viewer. Many websites waste space with flash, animation, or large logo headings. Research has shown that people don't want to use more than three or four clicks to obtain the

information they need. If a lot of space is devoted to a picture or animation, viewers can't easily obtain information. The leveragability score is five.

### TRADE SHOWS

Trade shows are a great way to meet people and build a database. These events also have speaking opportunities but they often require travel, tend to be expensive, and require a lot of pre-planning. Often, firms don't have a marketing plan for the trade show and sometimes traffic around the displays is low. The leveragability score is four.

### SPONSORSHIP

Although sponsorship is great publicity, it tends to be expensive. It also may have a low return on investment (ROI). The leveragability score is three.

### SOCIAL MEDIA - LINKEDIN

Social media, such as LinkedIn, is a great activity. Recent surveys show that LinkedIn generates clients, as well as increases publicity. However, the leveragability score is still low at two.

### ADVERTISEMENTS

Advertisements are great for publicity, but they're very expensive. One-time ads usually don't work. You should use a formula that indicates frequency of distribution to maximize ROI. For this reason, advertisements have a leveragability score of 0.

Marketing success is influenced by the leveragability of each of these activities, as well as analysis of whether the tactics are accomplishing your goals, such as developing new business. The best way to discover if tactics are working is to track the source of all new clients on a monthly, quarterly, or semi-annual basis, depending on the volume of new business. Adjust your marketing activities based on the results. If you discover that you generate a lot of clients through speeches, for example, then make sure your calendar is filled with speaking engagements.

By leveraging your marketing activities and tracking your new business, you will be well on your way to marketing success. **PC**



*Barbara Lewis has been a marketing consultant in the retirement industry for more than two decades. She serves as the outsourced chief marketing officer for her clients, many in the financial services industry. You can follow her blog on marketing tips at [www.centurioncmo.com](http://www.centurioncmo.com). She can be reached at (818) 784-9888 or at [barbaralewis@centurionconsulting.com](mailto:barbaralewis@centurionconsulting.com).*