



MIKE ROWLEY

“To remain competitive and relevant, firms need to maintain growth and keep focused on clients’ futures.”

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FIRM GUIDANCE

Startup helps attorneys hone business skills

By Jennifer Marangos
Contributing writer

Law school teaches young attorneys how to practice law, but it takes more than good legal skills to run a successful law firm, according to Ed Miller, who heads Emmaus-based ESquisite Marketing.

ESquisite, which opened its doors in April, specializes in teaching the basic marketing and business development tools necessary for young lawyers to succeed. ESquisite works with law firms and individual lawyers in three main areas: training and coaching, marketing communications, and development and management.

“I’ve been doing this for 30 years,” said Miller, who spent 20 years as chief marketing officer at a large legal practice before launching ESquisite with business partner Cady Darago, “and what has been clear to me is that young folks do not get taught the business side of law.

“Young lawyers need to build the skills not taught in law school. To learn how to get clients and keep them happy. There are thousands of good lawyers out there. Why aren’t they all rainmakers?” he said. “That is kind of where ESquisite came from. There is a need out there.”

Darago added: “I find it astonishing the costs involved with studying for the LSATs, attending law school, preparing for the bar exam and buying a wardrobe for those lucky enough to find jobs. After all those costs are incurred, few attorneys invest in themselves to achieve personal and financial success. Our goal is to help them get there.”

Today, Miller said, large firms have their own marketing staff, but there is a need for marketing support at smaller firms that often wind up seeking assistance from a local marketing agency that doesn’t understand the legal industry.

“There are other legal marketing firms that cater to the big firms,” he said, “but there is a trend among millennials to start their own thing and there is a lack of people understanding the needs of smaller firms.”

Jeralyn Lawrence, who heads Lawrence Law in Watchung New Jersey, said she and Miller began working together about 20 years ago, when they were both employed by the same firm and he has helped her throughout the course of her career.

Today Lawrence Law specializes in divorce and family law. Her firm employs four associates and a paralegal, as well as office staff.

One key aspect of what Miller and Darago do for her, Lawrence said, is to hold monthly lunch-and-learn sessions for her team.

“He will pick the topic and talk to them,” she said. “Things like social media, blogging. He’s big on blogs. He will review blogs, edit blogs, so that it is more appealing to the reader. He also works with everyone one on one too. He asks them what kind of lawyer do they want to be, what are their goals, Then he helps you to map out how you are going to reach those goals.”

“Not only are they marketing people, they are definitely business coaches,” added Lawrence, who recalled the way Miller showed her how to continue to build her legal career while out on maternity leave. “He walked me through three kids. I was blogging. So much of this job is really staying present and staying active and keeping your name out there.”

When it came time to open her own practice at the beginning of 2019, there was no doubt in her mind that Miller and Darago were the right partners to help her to do it.

“It was a natural fit for me, hiring his company to help make sure everyone knew I was going out on my own and that it was widely publicized,” she said. ■