

Welcome to today's episode of Vandenack Weaver Truhlsen law visionaries, a weekly podcast discussing updated legal news, as well as evolving methods of providing legal service. My name is Mary Vandenack I am CEO, founding and managing partner of Vanden Weaver Truhlsen LLC and I will be your host. As we talk to experts from around the country about closely held businesses, tax trusts, estates, legal technology, law firm, leadership, law, practice management, and wellbeing. On today's episode. My guest is at Carol Schiro Greenwald. Carol owns Marketing Partners and is a coach strategist and marketing consultant. Carol is a frequent author and speaker and has published books, including strategic networking for introvert's extroverts and everyone in between as well as build your practice, the logical way, maximize your client relationships. I ask Carol to join us today to talk about strategic networking. Welcome Carol.

Carol: Thanks. I am glad to be here

Mary: I appreciate your tips on Broadway shows before we got started. So, Carol's my go to when I'm looking to go to New York. So, can you explain what you mean by strategic networking?

Carol: Yes, strategic networking is how you get clients, friends, referrals, and other good things. Networking happens all the time. It is random acts of lunch. It's going to the movies, seeing common friends and going, oh, I want to introduce you to Susie. Who is sitting next to me? It's all those kinds of things. So, networking happens all the time, but networking that is designed to help you get work and meet people who can help you with your career has to be strategic. In this sense means intention. I have the intention of creating a networking plan that creates a process that helps me to find, meet and put together trust based personal relationships with people who can help me achieve my goals, whether they're economic, social, or emotional, basically strategic networking is an investment strategy. You are spending the time now so that your future will be bright rosy, and you'll be rich and also the other thing about it is strategic means that it's about your attitude, not your aptitude.

Mary: So, and I we've talked about this Carolyn going off what we talked about talking about, but I think you'll be great, because I've asked you this question before. So, I early in my career was really blessed to find it rather easy to make rain and I didn't do it with any strategy. I was just liked to network. I'm an extreme extrovert is what people tell me and I go to the gym, which is something where I have met a lot of my clients or people that came to classes. Or I worked out with things like that. But somebody said to me at some point, have you thought about why you are skilled at networking so that you can pass it on? I would admit at the time that I had no idea, I just, it is just what I did. I just went places and I talked to people because I like people. I like to get to know people. I like to hear their stories because I find them fascinating. But if you say you are talking to somebody like me and I'm making that into a strategy one for my firm and trying to pass on this is how I do it. How do I convert from just doing what I do to really a strategy?

Carol: So basically, you do as strategy. You just don't know it. You have a very limited number of practice areas. They are interrelated. When you talk to people about what you do, you are talking about that area. So, for you, the niche that you're selling is a very interrelated practice, right? It is tax strategies and then two offshoots of it selling your business and <laugh> having money when you retire. So, it's, it's very close. And so, for you because you're an extrovert, it's easy. The other thing is, is you have the clue to successful networking is caring about the other person it's giving back before you get it's being more interested than interesting and it's being curious, like you said, I want to know about other people. I want to know how their lives touch mine and how they have lived their lives. If you can do that, you can network anywhere. However, most people cannot do that. They do not have a very tight practice base and they don't know how to talk about it. So other people care about it. You never say what your practice areas are. You always talk about the benefits. Most people do not know how to do that.

Mary: So, the benefits in terms of, when I talk about a benefit, this is something that might be helpful to the person I'm talking to and care about. Mm-hmm <affirmative> yeah. So why is the strategic networking important for lawyers and law firms?

Carol: Because law firms are just really collections of lawyers with a common culture and common practice areas or complimentary practice areas. If people hire people, they hire people that they know that they like and they trust. They hire people that they think can help them to resolve a problem promote an opportunity help them to change their mind about what they're doing, help them to grow, giving them advice, all those other good things and networking is the most important thing that an individual lawyer can do to show off their brand, to show how they will be with other people, show how it would be if I hired you and they do this through their networking techniques and their networking skills. So, if I'm a lawyer or you're are a lawyer, I'm a only a PhD in law. So doesn't count. So, if you're a lawyer talking to a human and you say, I have an article that I want to send you and you don't send it, the human thinks. So how can I count on them? If I am they're my lawyer, if you say, I'm going to meet you at a certain thing I'm event at one o'clock and you're a half an hour late, the human says I don't want to work with them. They have no respect for me. They are going to mess up my time. They are not going to be on time ever. Imagine if they went into court like that and so it's very important in terms of what you're doing, that the lawyer show themselves as they would be if they were hired. So, the firm is important in the sense of a culture. It's a foundation, it's a culture, it's a brand, it's a reputation, but people don't hire firms. They hire human beings within those firms.

Mary: I was going to say what in discussing that at one point, I said to somebody who was talking about location of law firms, and I said, I actually don't know where these lawyers, I just remember this lawyer because I think he's really skilled at, or she's really good at, and I don't always even remember what firm they're at necessarily. I might have to Google them to find out. So that's a great point. Well, many lawyers will say I'm just not made for networking. Carol, what do you advise those lawyers?

Carol: I think it's because they don't have the right definition of networking. They consider it. One of two things. One is they remember back to their freshman year mixers where they stood on the sidelines and thought, oh my God, no, one's going to dance with me. Or they think this is selling and I'm a professional and I don't want to sell, but really, it's not random acts of lunch. And it's not freshman year dances. It's a

lot like every day lawyering because it starts with research. If you're going to do it effectively, you have goals. You create action plans that blend the research and the goals you implement it, and you have a result. This is what networking is and so what you've got to do is think about all the different ways you meet people from the gym to the kids' soccer games, to conferences, to dinners, to group meetings, whatever it is and figure out where you're going to be most comfortable. What I say to people is don't ever, ever, ever, ever, ever go to a networking event because your boss told you to and be uncomfortable because you'll be a tragic mess, fragile mess. People will see the discomfort and they won't believe anything that comes out of your mouth.

Mary: So, network on a path that you already love.

Carol: Exactly.

Mary: What about the introverts? You know, especially since the pandemic, I've had a lot of people say I'm really a homebody and I like it all the better after I got to spend so much time at home and I'm an introvert anyway. So, tips and tricks for the introvert.

Carol: So, I'm an introvert. But one day I realized that if I was going to have my own business and make money and put my kids through college, I'd better start getting clients and so I looked for things that I liked to do and I looked for groups that were small, where I would see them every month where I would get comfortable, et cetera. But the most important thing, whether you're an introvert or an extrovert is preparation for an introvert preparation, provides them with a fallback. It's their safety net. It's their cushion. They've already thought about what they're going to do, where they're going to go, how they're going to talk about themselves, and they're prepared. So, an introvert first has to research the event. Why am I going to this? Why am I spending three hours? Or why am I going to sit online for a four-hour conference and never have a chance to get up and get a glass of water? Why am I doing that? Then they're going to think about who's going to be there and you're going to connect ahead of time with the speakers, with friends of theirs, they think are going to it. Now, if the friends are going to it, they can say, let's get together there. If they think the speaker's someone they would like to meet, then the most effective way of meeting a speaker and having a connection that will lead to something in the future is to email them first and say, I'm coming to this event because of you and I would like to be able to spend 15 minutes with you at the, at the event, do you have time? I've never heard of anybody who got a no never, ever. Sometimes you get a, I'm running for a plane in a half an hour, but let's set something up through LinkedIn or calendar me or whatever it is they never ever say no. They are so excited that someone cared enough to call them ahead of time that they're just in love and then you're going to develop talking points based on what's going to go on at the meeting. You're going to think about what can I contribute to a conversation? And what do I want to ask other people that I'm interested in that's happening these days. So, in New York city, nobody's going back to work and all the businesses that depend on it are going out of business and New York looks terrible because it's 12 empty store fronts and a lunch place, 20 empty store fronts at a store where you can buy something. It's very scary and why, because not enough people are coming back to keep that infrastructure working. So, a lot of people talk about that. All of us have opinions about that. So, you could have an opinion before you go, but you also want to think about I'm going to this meeting for a purpose. What can I ask? Other people that move the purpose along. Finally, you're going to define success for yourself. If you don't define success for yourself, you can't measure it afterwards. You won't know if you made progress or not. If you never know, if you made progress, you think marketing is bullshit, am I allowed to say that?

Mary: You're allowed to

Carol: Okay. If you can't measure how you're doing, you don't think that you're getting anywhere and then you think that marketing is just bullshit and why should you participate? Also, I've got to tell you that in the end, introverts are better networking people than extroverts because they'll take the time to move from small talk to an interesting discussion about something that the other person cares about. They'll take the time to follow their curiosity, extroverts don't.

Mary: So, what about tips and tricks for the extrovert?

Carol: Again, the main tip and trick is preparation. Why? In this case to slow them down, everybody knows the social butterfly who goes hi Charlie, kiss, kiss. Hi Suzy kiss, kiss. Hi. Hello and kiss kiss. Hi George kiss, kiss, kiss, kiss, kiss. I'm going to tie a low to everybody that I notice and it's so fun. I know 40 people. Oh, my goodness. I'm having such a good time and they never stay. They never connect. They just flip. That's why we call them social butterflies. So, for an extrovert, the preparation of why am I going? Who do I really want to talk to? What do I really want to find out about is a way of focusing them of saying to them, when you get to those three people, stop, have a conversation? Don't just flip. Take it in, you know, be the hummingbird that goes after the nectar. For those three people, it helps you to create the priorities that you need so that when you measure the success at the end, you have some content, and it helps you to tie the networking to goals. So, for introverts, it gets you there with a smile on your face and for extroverts, it slows you down and I've watched you Miss Mary. And I know that you can flip when you want to, you can talk to a hundred people in the room while I'm still standing in the corner going, oh, who do I want to talk to?

Mary: Yeah, I was, I was identifying with your description. I'm just going to admit, okay. One of the things you talk a lot about, and I've really learned a lot from you over the years is body language. Can you talk to how that impacts communication?

Carol: Absolutely. Body language is one of my most favorite hobby horses. As you know, because 93% of communication is nonverbal. 55% is what you see 38% is how people talk or gesture or converse without words and only 7% is words, which is a terrible thing to think about if you're a lawyer or if you're a writer and speaker like I am because what are we we're wordsmiths, but nobody gives damn a they're not paying attention to that and why is that? That's because we're only, you know, 10, 15,000 years away from being cave people where there was no language, there was no spoken language and we followed, and we learned by watching. So, it's very important that you show yourself the way you want to be. So, when you come in, you want to make an immediate impression, you're going to stand tall, just like your third grade teacher told you to, you're going to walk with energy. You're going to smile and you're going to put on a face that says, I am happy to see you. Now, if you do that, not only are you telling other people that you're a leader that they want to know with interesting thoughts, you're also telling your body that it's time to

play, get with it brain, pay attention, remember their names. Remember why you came here. We're working because underneath strategic networking, we're working, we're working towards whatever that goal is. If you're in a bad mood, if you had a fight with your significant whatever, if you don't know, who's going to pick up your child after school, don't go because your body will betray you and whatever you do there, it's not going to seem sincere because it, your body and your words are not going to be in sync and humans recognize that immediately. We learn it as babies. We can tell the difference between a stranger who we really don't want to deal with and mommy, and we learn it right away. So, it's very important that we pay attention.

Mary: I think that's a really great point. I remember once early in my career worrying about my kid getting picked up along with a few other things, but going to a meeting, a networking meeting and at that meeting the person that I was seeking to network with said, wow, the, your energy feels really negative. <laugh> I'm sure that was I'm picking up my body language and from that moment forward, I have to say that made a huge impression on me and I didn't think of that until you were just sharing that in terms of body language. But that's what I'm sure got picked up as the negative energy, right?

Carol: Oh yeah, absolutely. Because if you had had a cell phone at that point, you would've been on your phone instead of at the meeting, you would've been calling all over to who's picking up today. Who's got my kid who understands, I'm going to be two hours late. Can you feed them? Right and so you weren't there. So that person was right. Negative might be the wrong word. It was just, you were not at the meeting, you weren't present.

Mary: So, failing on the mindfulness strategy at that moment. So how can you develop a successful networking strategy with a schedule that is already maxed, which is just the case for so many of us and I know that, especially talking to attorneys in private practice, that's just a challenge.

Carol: Yeah. It's a challenge for all of us. It, it doesn't matter whether you're in private practice or general counsel or any kind of professional who sells their knowledge. I mean, you always have opportunities to sell. You're always too busy, whatever. So, the best thing to do is to cut down the focus. You do that by creating goals that are based on what you want to be when you grow up and we always want to be something more than what we are. We want to be better at this or work with these kinds of people or do more of this kind of work, and then look at your clients, take your best clients, and replicate them. Your best clients nine times out of 10 are going to be similar in some way, they're going to have a similar problem. They're going to be in a similar industry. They're going to have issues that are similar. So, you want to focus on the niche, the smaller than niche, the better and more effective you'll be at networking within a given time period. So, what you're going to do is you're going to go where they go. The first thing about your networking since it's intentional is go where they go join their groups, read what they consider valid information sources, follow what they're doing. When you feel so comfortable that you are accepted in the group as a member of the group, then you have successfully found a niche and can work it. So, for instance, I'm an ABA active as you well know, Mary, and that's my group. I work with lawyers 99% of the time. So, I'm accepted in that group. I know how they think. I know what worries them. I can help them, and I do that because I'm in that niche. Could I also go and do accountants or financial planners?

Sure. But I'd have to start all over again to learn the depth of information that I now have and that's part of me so that I can relate to lawyers on a different kind of level. But the other thing is, is you have to make it a habit. You have to do 10 or 15 minutes of marketing networking a day and that's easy. Everybody has a down period. It might be after lunch. It might be at four in the afternoon, whenever it is. So, stop, work and go on LinkedIn and see if there's anything interesting. Read an article that somebody that you know, who's important to you has sent you connect with somebody and say, do you want to have coffee or meet at the next meeting of the groups? So, groups helps you because it's a lot of people when you're together and so you don't have to do 1,001 on ones, scheduling it and making it a habit helps you. You will never in your life have a Friday afternoon to devote solely to networking planning. So don't count on it, count on 15 minutes, somewhere a day and put it in your calendar and that way, even though you're maxed out, you're using it as an alternative part of wellness, taking a break from clients and deadlines and doing something that you like.

Mary: If you're networking with people, you like, that's really easy. Right. Which, oh, absolutely. I think you said the ideal clients are people that you kind of like, which I like that thought that's true of my client base. So, what are your top tips for lawyers seeking to build referral marketing strategies?

Carol: Well, the first thing is figure out who knows people in the areas in that niche where you want business. So, for instance, if you're a divorce lawyer, you want to know T and E lawyers. Why? Because they're likely to know when life is tough for somebody you want to know real estate lawyers. Why? Because usually when people are going through divorces, they have to sell real estate, all kinds of things like that. So, you figure out colleagues that are in practice areas, where they're going to meet people who might be good clients for you. You also want to join groups. As I said before, where there are people who might be good refers for you. Now, the thing about refers as opposed to just plain networking people is they're the best and they're the best cause like you, they care more about the other person than themselves. They're willing to give first and they know that it will come back to them. One of my favorite people that I interviewed for my book on strategic networking is the co-managing partner and the head of litigation of his firm, it's a midsize firm in New York. So that makes it about 200 people, and he never asks for business ever and he brings in a million dollars a month in new business or repeat business. How does he do that? He knows everybody that you could, there is not a need. You could have that Larry has an idea about who to talk to, how to solve it and he never says to you, so what are you going to do for me? He never says that. He says, I'm so glad I can help you. Let's talk again and let me know how it goes. You know? And I hope if there's ever anything in my wheelhouse that you need, that you'll look to me. He never asks him for business. He never says so why are you going to give me back? Never. He always reminds them and he's a litigator. You know, litigation's not something that you can necessarily plan ahead for. So, he does that all the time and he's one of my favorites. So, you're going to identify these natural refers and then remember there are two things that are really important in the referral process. First one is what you learned in kindergarten. Courtesy says, thank you, tell them how it's going. The worst thing that can happen to a refer is Charlie comes up to them and says, I'm so glad you sent Susan to me. We just really hit it off and she's going to be great at our firm and Charlie and Larry doesn't know because Susan hasn't called him, or Charlie hasn't called him whichever. So, you must keep your referrer in the loop so that they know what's going on.

You also want to educate the refer about what you're really looking for, what your strengths are, the kind of client you want, the parameters of your niche so that they can understand and give you a good referral. There's nothing worse than having to thank somebody for bad referral. You want to monitor and track referrals who gave them to you? How did it work out? How much money did you make? How interesting was the assignment, et cetera. The every six months you should do that, but it'll do two things. One it'll teach you who you have to educate better. And two, it will remind you that when you have an opportunity to refer or to bring somebody in to do marketing with you or something like that you won't take the last person you spoke to, you'll take the best person on your list.

Mary: As you know, Carolyn, you mentioned that I'm a small firm and, and we have a niche practice. So, I remember a client saying to me early in my career, and I was really grateful for it. A point that you made was he said, Mary, you're smart and you're skilled that this is what you do, and you do really well and I'm going to have a whole lot of other needs. So, the best thing you can do for me is to create a great network so that when I have a need, that's not your particular skill set, you know who I can call and that was one of the things as an extrovert, I'm like, oh great idea. I'll go build my network, but that's <laugh>

Carol: Then you did

Mary: Done differently for everyone, right? So, a lawyer that is struggling to really start networking, what can they do to just start particularly a new lawyer?

Carol: They can start by creating a good solid contacts database who they know and that means going back to their best friends in high school, in college, their law professors, they're law professors, they're professors in college, people who are mentors to them, people that they know from summer jobs, people that they know from law firm internships and start to build one that way. That's what we call a friends and family section of contacts. Then they want to start building out wherever they're working now with colleagues, colleagues who can teach them more about what they're doing right now, and colleagues who work in a different section of a law firm, but are doing something that they might want to do later or that they want to learn about because it will help them do what they do better. So, for instance, you do trust in the states differently than non-tax lawyers. There are people in trust in the states who are not do not have masters in, in tax, but if you do, you're practicing in a different way. So, people who don't have it want to know people like you, cause they may need you to take over the case. So, but you want to begin by building that way. Then there's two other components in addition to friends and family and then second is colleagues and the work world you want to have what I think is almost the most important part and that's the aspirational component. That's a group of people that you don't talk to all the time. You don't see them all the time. That may be interesting, but whatever their thought leaders that you follow on LinkedIn or on one of the other websites, they're people that are leaders in what you care about or, and it doesn't have to be work related. So, for instance, I follow futurists like Jordan Furlough. He talks a lot about how law has to change and law schools have to change so that what comes out are modern lawyers instead of 19th century lawyers, which is what we get now and I follow Larry Richard, who talks about the psychology of lawyers, because I do a lot of work when in my coaching with the brain and how the brain impacts the networking and the marketing and the business development and the culture and everything else in the firm and this is a really important part. It's also where you involve people who do what you think you want to do next. So, if you want to be a leader in your firm, you want to grow up to be a practice leader, start paying attention to the best leaders in your firm network with them, put them

into your contacts list. That's how you grow. Weak links is always where people get their next job, not best friends and so it's really important to build it out like that and I've never known anyone, even if they were the biggest introvert in college and never talked to a soul who couldn't, when they thought about it, begin to build a list, a couple hundred people just from the people they've known in the 25 years. They've been alive.

Mary: So, what are the biggest obstacles and how can those obstacles be overcome?

Carol: Biggest obstacle is time and your brain time to think about what you want to do to create that plan, to make whatever you do, intentional, to stick with it, to not say, oh, well, you know, so I live in Omaha, but maybe I should look at Sioux City, Iowa, you know, as another state with more trees than people and, and why not? No, you're going to stick to Omaha. You're going to be the biggest fish in the bathtub of Omaha, even though I'm sure it's a bigger place than I think it is, but I'm a New Yorker. So, we don't think any place else is big. So, you need to take the time to create that plan so that you're not shooting from the hip and so that you have a strategy, you have goals, you have focus. Another thing is money. A lot of law firms are stingy in terms of marketing money. But if you want an associate or partner to be productive, you need to fund the groups. They want to join. You need to see that plan, look at it and say, okay, it makes sense for you to join geriatric caregivers because what you do is healthcare with a senior population. Okay? It makes sense. We'll pay that 5,000 a year. So, you need to do that. You need to spend the money to send them to conferences. You can't ask them to take the time away from work and the money, unless they're in a partner role where they can afford it. So, if you want to teach the young ins, you got to pay for it a little bit and finally, I think the best thing you can do is show by example. I don't know how many of your young ins you take with you when you network Mary, but you should be taking somebody at least once a week with you just to watch and learn because that's one of the best ways that, that a real networker, a Rainmaker can teach. Again, I say, it's the mindset. It's not aptitude. It's not whether you're an extrovert or introvert. It's the way in which you approach it. It's attitude and anyone can develop an attitude for it. I have to say that everything good that's ever happened to me in my professional career has come in the end from networking and even in my private career, the boyfriend, as I call him, came from networking. I met him in a networking group. I had no idea he was interested in dating. I thought he was married, shows what I knew about him, right? <laugh> Not much.

Mary: Yes, that's a, that's an interesting thought process. I'd have to say that. That's how I've met. I haven't used the online resources, but so I just had to comment on one thing, which is Omaha versus New York, because you know, I love New York city and I get on a plane to New York every time I possibly can. I will say having just been there. You're right. It's a little frightening right now and I'm hoping some of those storefronts fill back up with something I'm going, but New York is a creative city, and they will figure it out. That's what I believe. But my joke about Omaha versus New York is that there are more people on one city block in New York. When you look up at how tall those buildings are there than there are in the entirety of Omaha and that's probably true. Well, we're their end of our time for this episode. Carol, do you have any last thoughts?

Carol: Yeah. I just, I guess picking up on that's how I found a boyfriend. You know, if you do networking in a way that works for you, you're going to develop new friends. You're going to find allies; you're going to find mentors. You're going to find colleagues and you're going to find those golden refers. You're going to acquire knowledge. That's the part I like best about networking. Actually. I love getting competitive intelligence because I'm sitting there and somebody is talking about something and they don't know that my client needs to know that, but I'm learning it while I'm sitting there, and I inquire fun stuff. I mean I have a friend and yeah, we work together. But what we really do is exchange recipes for ice cream, because we both like to make ice cream has nothing to do with what we do for a living. You can also use it to build your reputation. You can use it to build your business. You can use it to build your visibility in your target market. So, all of these things are pluses and finally, when you find your niche, you're going to have fun and fun is a good thing for professionals. It's what the wellness people tell us is that we don't do enough of. So, I say, find your pond, your bathtub, whatever it is, buy a new bathing suit and jump in.

Mary: As you know, I'm a big advocate for wellness. So, I'm all for that and life I, you only have so many hours. So, find a path that you love and do work along the way, make it part of your life as opposed to a separate aspect. Well, we're at the end of our episode, I want to thank our sponsors, interactive legal Carson, private client and foster group. That's all for now. Thanks for listening to today's episode and stay tuned for our weekly releases.

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