By: Thomas Coyle - August 4, 2016

This is the second of a two-part series featuring advisors' views on marketing that works without breaking the bank. Yesterday, part one revealed tips on cost-effective (and smart) marketing.

Despite its potential for low-cost marketing, experts say technology isn’t always viewed in a positive light in financial advice circles.

It’s often seen as a cost drain, something constantly to be kept up with — especially, says market measurer J.D. Powers, if you’re keen to attract younger FAs.

And if you put “robo” in front of “technology,” it conjures a mechanized attack on traditional approaches to product and service delivery.

In addition, as consulting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers puts it, wealth managers have to cope with differing perceptions of technology in the marketplace.

In this sense, advisors are caught between tech-loving Millennial customers and older clients — vitally, still most advisors’ bread and butter — who regard technology with much more suspicion. The over-45 crowd is particularly wary of mobile apps that rely on siphoning users’ personal information for their cutting-edge outputs.

But technology is also a great leveler. To the extent small firms are giving Wall Street a run for their money, it’s because of tech-driven enhancements to front-, middle- and back-office tasks. And because — through social media especially — technology puts in their hands low-cost alternatives to traditional mass-media marketing.

If you’re working with a tight marketing budget, “there is no better way to generate business than through LinkedIn” — a social-media platform that fosters business and professional interaction, says financial planner Michael Resnick of GCG Financial in Deerfield, Ill. “LinkedIn is a window to who your connections work with, connect with, and hang out with.”

In this strategy, Resnick recommends using LinkedIn’s messaging function to ask clients and COIs for insight on likely customers who are also on LinkedIn.

“ Asking about a specific person or several people will help the client to see who you want to meet and the type of people who would be good introductions,” says Resnick. “It also lets you know if these are people who your client really knows or if they are extended connections that may not be a true opportunity for a referral.”

For Resnick, “the best thing about this strategy is that it costs nothing and is a very personal approach to the old concept of asking for a list of five to 10 names.”

Mark Snyder of Mark J. Snyder Financial Services agrees.

“More and more of us are getting information from social media and other online platforms,” says the Medford, N.Y.-based advisor. “Clients expect cutting-edge technology, therefore we’ve moved our communication efforts into that realm and have produced our first video with our PR representative.”

The video’s theme is “Being a Registered Fiduciary” and it’s distributed across a variety of social media including mobile-device formats.

But if anything, technology is the norm these days for thrifty FAs, not the exception.

For example, Sullivan Financial Planning in Denver may focus on public relations to win new business, but she amplifies her media appearances using Facebook and Twitter.

And Philadelphia-based Wescott Financial Advisory Group may take a traditional approach to COIs, but that marketing tactic is bolstered by its website, which invites visitors to sign up for its newsletters and take quizzes — all requiring contact information the firm can use to slow-drip its messaging to at least somewhat-qualified prospects.

A mixed tech-and-old-school approach makes sense to Edward Petersmarck, a sales coach with M&O Marketing in Southfield, Mich.

“In our industry, the most successful marketing campaigns involve the right mix of relevant social media, advisor-authored books on industry-specific topics, placements in both local and national publications, and features on your local and national television programs,” according to Petersmarck.

No matter what the budget, he adds “a marketing plan can literally make the difference between the success and failure of a financial advisory practice.”