# Scaling Up Services Episode 239 - Janet Falk www.scalingupservices.com/podcast/239-janet-falk

# Janet Falk, Chief Strategist, Falk Communications and Research

Janet Falk is a Communications professional with more than 30 years' experience in-house, as a consultant and at public relations agencies. As Chief Strategist of Falk Communications and Research, <u>www.JanetLFalk.com</u>, she manages pro-active media outreach and has secured placement of executives and events in local, national and international print and broadcast media. For example, articles in three hotel industry publications generated more than 800 phone calls from hotel industry CFOs inquiring about a client's services, a far more impactful and economical approach than buying a list of hotel executives for cold-calling. Attorneys, CPAs, business executives and consultants rely on her insight, strategy and analysis. Janet is a versatile writer who can prepare newsletters, speeches, articles, LinkedIn profiles, presentations and website copy, as well as marketing literature. She has a broad network of contacts among graphic designers, web developers, photographers and printers to meet related client needs. Speak with her for a complimentary Strategic Communication Session to assess your Communications activity and online presence. She guarantees TWO IDEAS.

www.linkedin.com/in/janetlfalk www.JanetLFalk.com Create and Monitor Your Marketing RBI

# EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

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## 0:02

You're listening to Scaling Up Services, where we speak with entrepreneurs, authors, business experts and thought leaders to give you the knowledge and insights you need to scale your service based business faster and easier. And now, here's your host, business coach Bruce Eckfeldt.

# 0:22

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# 0:57

Welcome everyone. This is scaling up services. I'm Bruce Eckfeldt. I'm your host, our guest today is Janet Falk. She is chief strategist at fault communications and research, we're going to talk about the world of how to really get your name out there and get awareness talking about but colorations about media and the work that she does with service companies to help them use various tools to get awareness to get leads, so they can really drive sales and grow companies. We're gonna talk about a model that she has to help companies really kind of figure out how to keep score. And I'll let her kind of give the details on that. But I think it's a great exercise are a great way to kind of think through how do you really turn this into a game with some metrics with some targets? How do you know if you're gonna win or not? So these are really interesting kind of parts to the whole process of developing leads, creating awareness, building your marketing strategy, excited for this conversation? So with all that, Janet, welcome to the program. Chris, I'm

# 1:52

so excited to be back and speaking with you again. Yes, it's

# 1:54

a it's a pleasure to have you back. Before we kind of dig into the model and what you're doing today with clients. Let's just kind of remind people background, how did you get into this? Why service companies why attorneys give us a little details and background?

# 2:07

Sure, I'm happy to do that. So I have a very eclectic background, Bruce, I'm sure you remember that the logo of my company is the shape of an octagon with an embedded F for my name Falk. And it's an octagon, because I'm not around peg. I'm not a square peg. I'm in octagonal peg. And by that, I mean, my background includes working in higher education, working in Wall Street, and with nonprofit organizations, and finally, with law firms. So you can see that that bridges guite a few different markets. And it means that I bring a wealth of experience to my client base, because I can help them figure out who really is on the other side of the table? And how is it that we can best pinpoint their needs and their pain points? And how can we show that we are the resource that's going to help them to solve their problems. So the way that I got into this business is originally I had a PhD in Spanish literature, and I taught at the college level for several years. But then I went to an intensive Executive MBA Program, where I studied finance and accounting and marketing. And I moved from there to Wall Street, I was in analyst talking with companies about how they were going to perform and how their stock was going to perform. And that struck me as teaching because I understood what was going on within the company. And I was explaining it to investors. So from there, I studied investor relations. And from there, I moved into public relations and marketing communications, working in a variety of markets. And my last formal job was at a public relations agency, whose principal client was one of the am law 51 of the largest law firms in the United States. And there I was introducing attorneys to reporters, so that they would be seen as sources who could talk about legal issues and operational issues that businesses need to have in mind. So when that ended in December 2008, very naturally, I thought that I should continue working with attorneys and

maintain my reporter context. Yeah. And I chose to work with small firms, firms that have fewer than 50 attorneys, because if they have 100 attorneys, they have a marketing professional, so small firms and solo practitioners. And I've been doing this now since 2009. And having a lot of fun with my clients.

## 4:44

Yeah, I'm curious, just I mean, law firms, attorneys, you know, are certainly a service company, but they're also a little unique, or at least I find that they have some interesting kind of cultural aspects to them that from growing the business and scaling a business can be a little challenging. What's been your experience, you know, at a high level about attorneys and how are they sort of different than other potential professional services firms?

## 5:07

Yeah, I think it falls into the category of understanding who's on the other side of the table? And what is it that they need to understand about what you can do for them? Because my philosophy of doing businesses, that's so interesting, how will it help me as an individual, or as a business owner, or as a corporate executive, how will your insight help me to save time, save money or make more money? Now, attorneys have a very specific role in this, they have to help their clients stay out of trouble, stay out of trouble with the law, and stay out of trouble with the court system so that you know other people don't come after them. So attorneys very definitely help people to save time and money by showing that they have their back of their clients. And so the client can focus on making more money. Now you can apply this same paradigm of save time, save money, make more money to almost any professional service occupation, because they are taking the weight of the world off the back of their clients so that their clients can operate smoothly, and go ahead and make money knowing that they are following this very precise guidance that they have received from their professional service firm. Yeah, I hope that begins to answer the question,

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you know, does, and for, you know, for attorneys for firms, what are some of the challenges or challenges you find that they face in terms of being able to market and kind of that early stage of the funnel? get their name out there, get awareness have, you know, inbound leads or interests in conversations with them? Like, where do they struggle? Typically,

# 6:49

I think, you know, the problem with attorneys, and please don't misunderstand me, and I hope this doesn't offend anyone, but but they went to law school, and you didn't, yeah, okay. And so they have their own view of their own status in the marketplace and their knowledge of the world. And you know, I have a PhD, and I have my own view of my status in the marketplace and my view of the world. So I think that's one thing that can get in their way that they don't think about the other person who they're trying to reach, whether it's, you know, a potential client or a referral source, and they're thinking of themselves. Now, as you know, in marketing, it's not about me, it's about you. And I think that is a stumbling block, you know, not only for attorneys, but for many highly skilled and educated professionals, that they are not looking at who is on the other side, and what is it that they need to think about? And how can they, so to speak, get out of their own way? Yeah, in addressing the needs of their target market?

# 7:52

Yeah. And for the folks that you work with, that do this successfully, or that are successful in implementing some of these strategies, any particular you know, approaches that they use or mindset, like, what what do you find that's common amongst the folks that that do this well, and make this successful,

# 8:08

I think understanding that it's not one and done that just because you got your name in, you know, the New York Times The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, or, or, you know, Supermarket News or grocery headquarters, or you know, whatever publication your target market is looking at that it's not one and done, you have to merchandise, whatever it is, that you were able to achieve in getting that media mention. So you have to find ways of sharing it with the people around you. And we'll talk about that in a little minute. And you have to find ways of spreading the word so that people who didn't see that particular article or that particular interview on the news, or heard it on the radio, you have to make all that information available again, and again, because you never know when it's going to hit that target. And the beauty of our digital environment now is that nothing dies. Right? That if you get if you get quoted by a magazine, or by or by a newspaper, then that is going to live online, a little less so with TV and radio, because not everything that is presented, gets recorded and stored, digitally, a lot of things fall to the floor. But you have to consider that it's not one and done. And the people that understand that actively not only pursue that initial contact with the media, but also merchandise it in a variety of ways. And we can talk about that. Yeah.

# 9:40

And we I think oftentimes companies feel like they've got to go to PR, they want to get mentioned in the New York Times Wall Street Journal, and then you know, that's the only way to do it. That's the best way to do it. But give us a sense of some of the other strategies other things that companies can think about. You know, attorneys can think about our interns have other ways you can actually generate I'm interested or connect with your potential audiences?

# 10:02

Well, I think now we're going to walk into what I thought would be, you know, that part of our conversation, which is my approach of five activities that people can monitor and use in order to promote themselves. So are we ready to do that? Perfect? Yeah, go ahead. Okay. So my approach is called Create and monitor your marketing RBI. And we're now in the heart of baseball season. And I'm sure everybody knows that runs batted in, is what RBI means. And the reason that I chose baseball as a theme here is because I wanted to focus on activity, productivity, and profitability. So that all of these are activities that I'm going to delineate that one can engage in, that one can be very productive in turning around results, and, you know, gaining more contacts and visibility, and ultimately, by merchandising them, as I mentioned, then you will get more business and it will be more profitable. So let's start with the very first, which I call get on base. And that is networking. We all know about networking, and the people that we know that we know, in a variety of circles, whether because they're clients, or people that we know, socially, or people that we went to school with or something on that order. And a lot of people think about networking in terms of walking into a room where they hardly know anybody else. And they're really terrified of, you know, why do I have to do this? And is this really going to be a positive outcome for me, and I have a whole approach to this walking into a room where you don't know anyone, and we can get into that later if there's time. But I want to think about networking in a different way, which is, you know, who are the people that you know, and how can you potentially introduce one of them to another one whose interests are aligned, this is what I call networking squared. So I once had a conversation with someone who had a white collar crime practice and and then I remembered that there was somebody else

I knew, who worked in a sort of similar area. So I asked Tom, if he was interested in speaking with Debbie. And I asked Debbie, if she was interested in speaking with Tom. And I arranged for the three of us to get together and have a conversation. So not only did the two of them become better acquainted, but I got the lowdown on real details about what each of them was focused on. So there was a benefit for all three of us to get together, because they got to know each other. But I also got a more in depth understanding of what Tom and Debby each did in their practices. So think about networking squared, where you introduce the two parties to each other, and then you get up to date with what's happening for each of them. Now, I'm sure that many of your listeners will agree that their best clients come from referrals. And so the flip side of referrals is networking. Right, yeah. Because referrals come from your network. And we probably don't think about it in this same way. But that is a truism that should be taken to heart. Now I belong to a couple of online groups, whether they're Google Groups, or listservs, or Facebook groups. And you know, what goes on in those groups? Both people are always saying, Do you know someone who does x, right? And then the person who does writes into the group and presumably also directly to the person and says, Yes, I know, someone who does x, and you know, provides their contact information, and so on. And so now you're getting a reliable source, or referral from someone who presumably knows you and who knows the person that's being introduced. And that's a great way of thinking about your network is, you know, how you can be contributing to the online discussion, but ever online group you belong to, or whatever listserv you belong to. And, you know, and I want to tell a story, and this is about someone named Bruce, when I went to a networking event for consultants, who advised nonprofit organizations, because that was part of my practice a few years ago. And of course, I was a member of the host organization. So I knew a lot of the people in the room, but I struck up a conversation with someone and this is Rachel and she said she had just graduated and gotten her degree in public administration, and she was interested in social impact and social enterprise real Lee, I said, Come with me. And we walked across the floor. And I introduced her to Bruce. And I said, Bruce, this is Rachel. She just told me how she's interested in social enterprise and social impact. I thought you might like to meet her. And so they had a conversation. I excused myself. And two weeks later, I found out, Bruce hired Rachel. Now, was he expecting to hire someone, I don't know if he had that on the horizon or not, she was looking for a job, but who knew that I would be the catalyst that would create that relationship? Yeah. So let's think about networking in terms of your physical presence at an event where you're meeting new people and introducing people to each other, and finding out who might be a helpful resource to someone else. And let's think about the virtual networking that we do, where we share information, and resources with other people in Google Groups, and listservs, Facebook groups, LinkedIn groups, and so on. And let's think about the smaller networking networking squared, where you bring two people together. And so that's why I call this get on base networking in a variety of ways. So that you can be expanding your circle of contacts, and introducing people to each other. You never know who stands in someone else's circle. And it could be someone.

## 16:30

I'm curious what some questions are, like, I'm just thinking about the the actual, you know, either going to the physic physical events or participating in these virtual events. And I think some of the challenges people have in terms of how do I use it? What are some questions I can ask people to get at some of those opportunities? And, and how do I answer some of these questions for folks such that they see they understand what I'm looking for, and can make introductions? Are there some strategies there that you have?

## 16:55

Yeah, yeah. So the first thing I do is, if I'm going to an organization that's holding a networking event, and I don't know anybody who's going to be there, or maybe only one or two people, I look up the organization on their website, and I find out who is the president, the vice president, the membership chair, and the Program

Chair, and I get in touch with all these people in advance. And I say, in the subject line, will we meet at the May 29 networking event. And then I say your name came to my attention as an officer of the such and such group. And I'm interested in attending this event, because I have clients who work in this industry, or I want to learn more about this industry. I'm thinking of joining the organization. And I hope I get to meet you at the networking event. Now, Bruce, let's say you're the membership chair. Okay. And you get this email from Janet at Janet eckfeldt.com. You don't know who I am, but you are the membership chair. And the person says, Will we speak at the May 29? event? And what are your thoughts?

# 17:59

Well, I'm certainly going to respond. I mean, it's directed to me, this is an event and if you're going to be attending, I'm definitely going to at least reply and and find out more about you.

## 18:07

Exactly, you're going to think I got a hot one here. Yeah, this is someone coming to our event, and I want to meet this person. So now I'm going to write back to you and say, Bruce, I'm even more excited to attend the event because I know we're going to be in touch there. And by the way, I'm going to wear a distinctive article of clothing. So so as a woman, I can wear a colored blazer as a man, maybe I can't, but I can wear a green tie, or have a yellow pocket square, something that will stand out. Now I show up at the event. And I go to the registration table, and I get my name tech, and I say, is Bruce here, I'm supposed to meet him. And they say, oh, yeah, that's Bruce over there. And they point to you, and I say, Bruce, I'm Janet. We had an email correspondence. I'm so excited to be here. And I asked you questions about the organization. How did you get involved? What are your goals of membership chair? You know, what do you say as a way that I could contribute to the organization as a public relations, marketing communications professional, and we have this great organization, then I say, Bruce, you know, I've really enjoyed speaking with you. But I'd also like to meet Barbara, she's the president of the organization. Will you introduce me? Will you introduce me, Bruce?

# 19:21

I like it. Yeah, sure. Absolutely.

## 19:23

Right, right. So so now I go over to Barbara and I say, Barbara, I just had this great conversation with Bruce and he told me all about his ideas to increase membership in the organization. And Barbara thinks, well, that Bruce, he's on the ball. He's bringing in new members. And Bruce think that John at Fox, she just made me look brilliant in front of Barbara, the president of the organization. Yeah. I love it. I love it. Okay, so so that's where a way that you can what I call, do pre event marketing, and what you do is you contact the leaders of the organization and you build a welcome Meeting committee so that when you walk into the room, there are people who want to meet you, there are people who are courting you, because they think that you will bring value to the organization and they want you to become a member. Yeah. So that's a way that you can warm up the room, so to speak. And since you're not going to talk about yourself, you're going to be asking you about the organization, and what they do, and what was the greatest event they held and how you can get involved, then you don't have to worry about the questions, because you will be asking the people to talk about themselves, and why they got involved in the organization, because after all, they're leaders of the organization, and they're committed to its success. And I have a lot of other strategies about this. I have an e book on my website, which people can download. It's about, you know, three tips for success and networking, something something on that order.

## 20:56

Yeah. Do you recommend at all, I mean, I've seen this happen a couple of times, I think I've probably have had it happen to me once or twice, you know, going to an event where another attendee reaches out to me prior to the event and say, Hey, I see you're attending such and such event. You know, I'd love to find some time to chat a little bit while you're there. You know, I like though some of the work that you do, RSC, we both know so and so what do you think about reaching out to people that you know, are going to be there that you don't know yet, and sort of pre introducing yourself,

## 21:23

I think that's a very good idea, I would point out something that I learned the other day, which is that everyone in a networking conversation wishes that it ended a little sooner. So you know, if you are planning to meet someone there, and you're planning to tag team so that each of you can have their eye out on someone else that might be interesting for you know, the partner, then I think that's, that's a good approach. And remember, you know, keep it short, and keep in touch with the person, you know, exchange business cards, you know, offer to follow up with them at some future date, so that you can continue to work the room the way that you want to, even as you have met your obligation with this person who I think very cleverly introduce themselves in advance.

## 22:09

Yeah, yeah, I always say that the goal of the events themselves is to kind of make some kind of contact and figure out some possible next step and then move on, right? You don't want to waste your time and an event where you have lots of people to meet, having, you know, long detailed conversations with just one person, right? I was always like, hey, let's follow up on this. Like, I'll call you next week, or I'll send you an email, we'll schedule some time, just because you've got that opportunity to really interact with lots of people. Well, yeah. Excellent. So I kind of lost track where we are on the diamond.

### 22:39

Oh, here we are. Okay, so the next step, this is the second step, I call, here's the pitch. And that's about speaking opportunities. So here we are, we're having a podcast, right. And you can also be presenting to the groups of which you are a member, you can be organizing panel discussions, you can be introducing yourself to new groups where you'd like to become a member or where your target market is. And you can be speaking to local chambers of commerce, you can be speaking to local incubators, you know, college classes, graduate school classes, law school classes, and so on. So think about networking. And think about speaking, as I say, here's the pitch. Now moving on, the next one is called keep the box score. Now, you know, the box score is when you write down everything that happened at the at bat. Yep, so for the box score and writing, I think about newsletters. I think every business should have a newsletter, mine is monthly, someone else might do it guarterly because there isn't that much news or they don't have that much staff to produce it. And you can also think about articles, articles, not only in your industry publication or your professional membership organization, but articles in the places that your target market is looking for more ideas, insights, best practices, how to how to not do and, and so on. You can also think about guest blogging, I guess blog from time to time for some digital marketing agencies. And that's another opportunity for me to take advantage of their audience without, you know, having to go out and market to these people and get them interested in hearing from me. So networking, speaking writing, now we come to Root for the Home Team. This is something that I've alluded to already, and that is be active in the trade association of your target market. Yeah. So when I mentioned, you know, pre event marketing, figuring out who are the officers of the host organization, I'm involved in a couple of groups that focus on attorneys. One of them is women owned law, which is women who are partners at a law

firm have their own firm or have a solo practice. And I have got involved in this group in several ways, which relate directly to what I just said, I have spoken to the group on several webinars. And I have presented my ideas on, you know, ethical ways of talking to reporters, and how to speak to a reporter when you get a surprise call, and you know, so on. And I'm also an editor of the monthly newsletter, where I solicit articles from members of the organization, and then I edit them. And sometimes I contribute my own writing. And I also am active in another group called deliberate solos, which is attorneys mostly in New York, who have a solo practice or a small firm, and I do similar things for them. So even if you are have, you know, a different background, you bring a particular body of knowledge to your organization. So if you're dealing with a client organization, then you can bring a certain level of understanding to that organization that would be useful to everyone. You can serve on a committee, you can organize programs, you can write for them, you can speak to them, and so on. And, you know, I would encourage your audience to think about how they can get involved with an aligned organization and Root for the Home Team get involved with your target markets Association. Yeah. So now networking, speaking, writing, being involved in the target markets Association, now we're going to wrap it up and cover all the bases. So we are going to extend your presence online, before you do anything, you are going to figure out how you can reach other people in the online atmosphere. So you can post on LinkedIn, you can post on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, wherever it is that you think your target market is looking for more information. So if you're going to a networking event, you can say, looking forward to attending the networking event held by x organization. And then you would put the ad symbol in front of the name of the organization on LinkedIn, it would pop up, and then people will who are connected to that organization will learn your name, we'll see what's going on there. And you can even tag the people that you're hoping to meet, you know, the President, the Vice President, membership chair, the Program Chair, and, and so on. So even before you show up at the event, you are building an awareness that you support the organization. And you can share any articles that you've published, or any newsletters that you've published, or any interviews that you've been quoted in, all of this can be shared in the digital sphere. And there's one thing that I think people really overlook, where they could be doing more promotion, and that is, in their email signature, you send 100 emails every day. And you can be including links to everything that you're doing a training event, speaking at events, publishing, being quoted, put that in your email signature, because you never know when it's going to hit someone in just that moment. So these are the five components of your marketing, RBI, networking, speaking, writing, participating in your target markets Association, and extending your presence online. And I think that they're all relatively easy to do. Some may be a little out of someone's comfort zone. And that's okay. You don't have to do all of them. But you should at least attempt to do most of them. Because you never know who stands in someone's circle. And you never know when this is going to hit that person. And I've had, you know, so many examples of this happening to me, in my career, where people have come back to me and suddenly become interested in talking with me, even though we haven't had any contact for a period of time. But they read my newsletter, and now they're ready to talk business

## 29:08

now. And how does someone kind of start or sort of assess themselves and kind of how they're doing on these and figure out kind of what the first step is, I think sometimes it can be a little overwhelming for folks, when looking at all these kinds of things that have to do, give them some thoughts on on where to get started,

## 29:23

I think you should do an inventory of where you are with these five activities. What you have done recently, where you'll feel most comfortable and where you're seeing the return on the time and effort you've invested in participating in any of these activities. And it could be that your target market or your referral sources are not active in a certain area mean you know, you could be dealing with international clients and so networking,

physically networking could be a stretch, you know So in that way, it could be that there's only one annual conference a year. And maybe you'll go this year, maybe you won't. So if you're dealing with international clients, then physical networking might be difficult. On the other hand, the people who are involved in that industry might have, you know, their own virtual networks, you know, list serves, and you know, online groups, and so on. So that's a different way of participating in networking. So I think the first step is to look at these five activities as categories and see where you stand in any of them or all of them. And then figure out you know, where you're seeing the most activity and where you're seeing the most return in terms of, you know, growth of your business and your referral sources.

## 30:47

Jim, this has been a pleasure. If people want to find out more about you about the work that you do, what's the best way to get that information?

## 30:53

Sure. My website is Janet, Jan et al, as love Falk, F, A LK, Janet I falk.com. And I have a lot of resources available for free. On my website, all my newsletters, which are written monthly are on my website. So people can subscribe to my newsletter and keep up with me that way. I'm also active on LinkedIn, so they can find me there and connect with me there. And there's more details regarding how you can create and monitor your marketing RBI. In an ebook that I have available for purchase. It's only 999. And I can see, you know, it would spark an interest for you, Bruce, and I'm sure other people would find it helpful as well.

### 31:43

Excellent. I'll make sure that the links on everything are on the show notes here so people can get that. Janet, thank you so much for taking the time today. It's been a pleasure.

### 31:49

I've really enjoyed it, Chris, thank you for inviting me.

### 31:52

Thank you for tuning into today's episode. Be sure to subscribe using your favorite podcast app so you don't miss our future episodes. See you next time.

### 32:02

You've been listening to scaling up services with business coach Bruce Eckfeldt. To find a full list of podcast episodes, download the tools and worksheets and access other great content, visit the website at scaling up services.com And don't forget to sign up for the free newsletter at scaling up services.com/newsletter

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