

Legal Marketing: Using Personal Branding to Build Law Firm Credibility and Attract More Customers in 2021

In the age of COVID-19, carving out space within the crowded legal industry has become more important than ever for law firms seeking to attract new clients and consistently grow. Successfully creating that space largely depends on a law firm's ability to properly brand itself in a distinct way. Whether known for high-dollar results, personalized service, or 24/7 availability, law firms need to distinguish themselves from the rest when building firm credibility and bringing more clients through the door.

Identifying Your Brand

While branding may seem like an easy task, it requires a considerable amount of consideration and strategizing. Moving forward without a plan in place can leave a law practice without a distinguishable brand – or worst – with a negative brand that hinders business instead of promoting it.

Take time for valuable introspection so you can define yourself and your professional mission statement. Some attorneys may find this easy, while others may find discomfort in critically analyzing their strengths and weaknesses. Here are some questions that lawyers should ask themselves when identifying the desired branding strategy:

- What is your area of specialty?
- What does your firm stand for?
- What skills do you want to be known for?
- Who is your ideal client?

- What is your ideal client looking for?
- What sets your practice apart from other law firms?
- What do you hope to achieve from your branding efforts?

The answers to these questions help establish clear objectives for a law firm brand. They will provide a vision of the image you want to ultimately portray, which will prove helpful in your efforts to stand out among other law firms. You should walk away from this introspection with a strong foundation for creating your law firm brand. If you're having trouble answering these questions honestly, consider requesting feedback from colleagues, family, or friends.

Supporting Your Brand

A successful brand does not start and stop with advertising. To truly establish your firm's reputation, you need to ensure that interactions with clients and other legal professionals support your brand and exemplify why you have earned your reputation. Law firms must continuously hold themselves up to the standards they communicate within their branding.

For example, if client service that goes above and beyond is the thing that sets your firm apart, then interactions with clients should routinely reflect that value. Positive attorney-client relationships are built on trust and experiences. Use client interactions to demonstrate the firm qualities that you champion in your branding.

Attorney Branding and Online Reputations

We live in a society where personal and professional reputations often overlap, especially in the age of social media. Even though your personal life is technically separate from your work as an attorney, they can quickly become entangled. When crafting a brand for your law firm, it is wise to also consider whether your personal online presence falls in step with the brand.

Let's say your personal political views tend to differ greatly from those of your average clients. It may not be wise to vocalize about politics on your personal platform because, in reality, many clients will search for and analyze your personal social media accounts. On the opposite end of the spectrum, if you run a law office that is very deliberate about taking stances on political or social issues, then showcasing those opinions on your personal social media platforms may ultimately prove useful in strengthening your law firm brand.

The Benefits of Personal Branding

Branding is not only a law firm strategy. Individuals attorneys can also benefit from establishing their individual brands. Even if you are already a member of a law firm with a strong brand identity, you should at least consider what you want your personal brand to exemplify. After all, being well-regarded within your firm does not guarantee your visibility outside of the practice, especially in front of potential clients and individuals with business opportunities. Firms want rainmakers and establishing your own brand can be key to establishing your spot as a rainmaker within the firm.

Personal branding involves identifying your individual strengths and showcasing them so that potential clients and other legal stakeholders can easily see who you are and what you represent. For example, two criminal defence lawyers are equally successful and sought after in their geographic area. While one is known for their ability to negotiate with state prosecutors and law enforcement, the other is known for their more aggressive approach within the courtroom. Though both are successful within the same space, they serve their clients differently, which shapes their individual personal brands.

Tools for Brand Building

Building a successful brand takes time and effort. Recognize that it must become an ongoing process that you work on consistently. There are numerous marketing tools that you can use to promote your law firm's

brand. Your law firm website offers numerous branding opportunities – from your attorney bio to your content wording and firm descriptions. Other brand building options include:

- Online services like Legal Match, Avvo, and Martindale Hubbell
- Public Speaking Appearances
- Service on Community Boards
- Program Sponsorships
- Videos, podcasts, and blog posts

Even services like Yelp and Google ratings offer opportunities for law firms to further their branding efforts. Encourage happy clients to leave positive ratings for your firm. Even if you receive negative comments, use it as an opportunity to provide constructive feedback that promotes your firm's mission.

Build Law Firm Credibility and Attract More Customers in 2021 with a Strong Brand

An effective law firm brand helps lawyers expand their networks for greater exposure to potential clients and the achievement of other professional goals. In a crowded profession where reputation matters so heavily, a clearly defined brand can help law firms stand out as they move into 2021.