

Best Practices in Legal Marketing

EDITED BY KATE CLIFTON



PUBLISHED BY **ark** IN ASSOCIATION WITH

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managing.com

Best Practices in Legal Marketing

is published by Ark Group



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ISBN hard copy: 978-1-908640-03-1

ISBN PDF: 978-1-908640-04-8

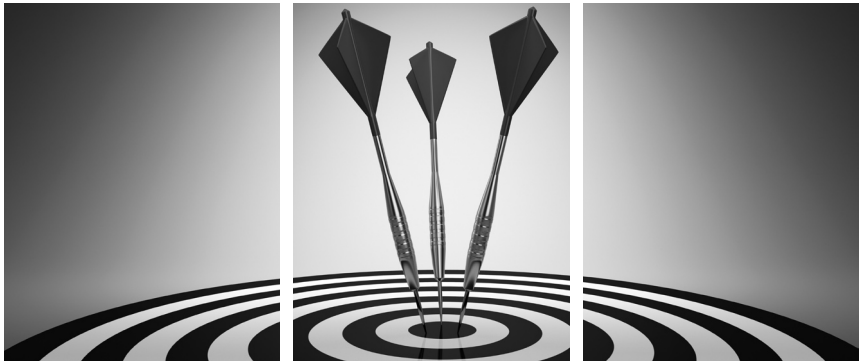
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ARK1881

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Executive summary

MARKETING AND business development professionals in law firms are no strangers to change.

The Clementi Review and introduction of the Legal Services Act in the UK forced many firms to reconsider their marketing behaviours and opened the door for a new wave of strategic marketing activities. This included higher visibility of (and partner engagement with) marketing within firms and an increasing focus on client relationship management and business development.

However, tried and tested methods are no longer enough, particularly as the legal services market continues to consolidate and clients demand cost effective and value-added services from their firms. Competition is high and rapidly evolving technology also affects how law firms promote their services.

This report examines some of the key trends affecting law firms and how marketing and business development professionals can respond and also take advantage of the opportunities available to them.

In the turbulent business environment faced by modern law firms it is imperative that any strategy is robust. Firms must be flexible enough to adapt rapidly to change and keep pace with market developments. In Chapter 1, Andrew Hedley discusses the advantages of scenario planning in responding to some of the key business drivers facing management teams. He also explains how such 'horizon gazing' can enable firms to take advantage of opportunities and mitigate risk.

Kim Tasso continues with an in-depth framework for a successful marketing and business development strategy, in Chapter 2. This includes advice on developing credibility, aligning marketing activities to business objectives and effective internal communications. Tasso argues that marketing professionals should be taking their seat at the 'strategy table' and should grasp every opportunity to get involved with the wider decision making around the business.

A key element of any strategy in the current market is effective client service. In Chapter 3, Andrew Hedley details why client satisfaction is now one of the biggest determinants of success. He goes on to discuss future relationship management challenges and provides a set of four areas in which firms should focus their efforts to improve client relationships and service delivery.

The ability to engage with existing and potential clients is examined further by Paula Black in Chapter 4, which focuses on return on investment, encompassing time and effort as well as pure financial investment. Black details the importance of taking advantage of referral sources, narrowing the firm's focus and 'being where your clients are'. Real life case studies provide examples of successful endeavours by lawyers.

While many firms will be allocating more money to their business development activities, not every firm will have a bottomless resource. Those firms with limited finances to spend on marketing will be looking to get the most from their marketing budget. In Chapter 5, Kim Tasso provides tips for marketing on a shoestring; including playing to the firm's existing strengths – for example, concentrating on niche practice areas, or enabling lawyers who are comfortable with social media to widen their networks with client or referral organisations.

As explored in Chapter 2, law firm marketing professionals need to become more involved in strategic decision making. However, due to the nature of the law firm business model, one of the biggest challenges they face is engaging the partnership. This issue is explored by Laurie Young in Chapter 6. He suggests ways in which marketers can win a voice with partners and concludes that there is an increasing opportunity for marketers (who are not necessarily from a legal background) to take roles at partner level and lead the group into more sophisticated and effective global marketing.

Andrew Hedley expands on this theory in Chapter 7. He suggests that while it may be self-evident that the law firm partner has a central role in the creation, development and implementation of a successful marketing and business development strategy, the nature of this role is less well articulated. This chapter considers the nature of the relationship between the individual partner, the business development department and the firm as a whole. In particular, Hedley examines the role of the partner in delivering a marketing strategy, drilling down into the expected behaviours and activities.

The final chapters of this report look at the progress of firms in the US. Bruce Marcus begins, in Chapter 8, with an overview of the key trends affecting the market for legal services in this jurisdiction. The main issues that firms must address are: the economy and the regulatory environment; changing client demands; the requirement for innovation in marketing and sales skills; new technology; changing attitudes and expectations among lawyers; and, the demands of increasing competition.

Dr Silvia Hodges rounds off with coverage of innovation in marketing, including the use of social media, mobile tagging and quick response codes. She also details the shift from business development to sales and the use of business intelligence for competitive advantage. Working examples of successful marketing programmes are included. Hodges concludes that for many firms, ensuring that lawyers make the step from tried and tested methods to innovative marketing behaviours may be the biggest challenge – but will prove successful for those firms which are willing to make the leap.

About the contributors



PAULA BLACK is a legal branding expert, author, consultant and coach. She has advised law firms around the globe on everything from powerful and innovative design to marketing strategy and business development.

She drew on that experience to write *The Little Black Book on Law Firm Branding & Positioning*, which the Independent Publisher Book Awards recognised as the 2006 Business Breakthrough Book of the Year, as well as one of the Ten Outstanding Books of The Year. Paula followed that success with a second book, *The Little Black Book on Law Firm Marketing & Business Development*, and most recently the Amazon bestseller, *The Little Black Book: A Lawyer's Guide To Creating A Marketing Habit in 21 Days*. She is also the force behind 'In Black & White' (inblackandwhiteblog.com), a blog dedicated to clear, straightforward advice and open discussion of legal business development issues.

Paula has helped firms of all sizes – from one attorney to 1,000 – to separate themselves from their competitors and achieve the growth they desire. Those experiences, coupled with her invaluable marketing knowledge across a wide range of industries, enable Paula to deliver rich, results-driven business development solutions.

Paula is a frequent speaker at legal conferences and meeting and is on the faculty at The Managing Partner Forum, a law firm leadership conference, and TAGLaw, the worldwide law firm network.

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ANDREW HEDLEY helps the leaders of law firms to create mould-breaking strategies, develop strong brands, forge robust client relationships and design compelling propositions. His work is characterised by intellectual rigour, a focus on change dynamics and an action-orientation in developing strategy that is both stretching and achievable.

In addition to his strategic project advice, Andrew is much sought after as a strategy group guide, partner retreat speaker, workshop facilitator and moderator.

He is a respected contributor to specialist marketing and management publications and a regular keynote conference speaker.

Andrew is the author of *Developing Strategic Client Relationships* (2008) and *Client Strategy in a Changing Legal Market* (2011).

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DR SILVIA Hodges teaches marketing and management at Fordham Law School in New York. As a speaker and researcher, she focuses on law firm marketing and management issues; in particular on how clients buy legal services, and cross-cultural and international challenges faced by law firms.

Silvia earned her PhD at Nottingham Law School (UK) with Professor Stephen Mayson. She also holds a masters degree in business from Universität Bayreuth (Germany) and Warwick Business School (UK).

Silvia has conducted a number of studies on international buying behaviour, including Europe (Germany, UK, France, Italy), Latin America (Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Venezuela, Colombia, Chile, Peru) and the US. She is currently working on a study on the influence of purchasing managers on the buying of legal services. Her lecture at Harvard Law School scheduled for 6 December 2011.

Prior to joining academia, Silvia worked as a marketing manager to law firms in Europe. She has authored *Winning Legal Business from Medium-*

Sized Companies (Ark 2011) and a book on legal marketing in Italian for WoltersKluwer (2007). She was a columnist on law firm marketing in an Italian business newspaper and frequently lectures and publishes on international law firm marketing and management.

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BRUCE MARCUS is a pioneer in professional services marketing. His career began in 1951, at then Big Eight accounting firm, Peat Marwick Mitchell. He introduced the firm to marketing practices, such as seminars and article writing, which did not violate the ethics code prohibiting promotional activities.

He is the author of *Professional Services Marketing 3.0* (2011) and 'The Professional Services 3.0 blog' – a view of the history of professional services marketing, how it has helped create the modern law and accounting firm and how it affects its future. He is co-author of *Client at the Core* (2010).

He has served as a public relations and marketing executive or consultant to most of the international accounting firms, and many large and small law firms.

His book, *Competing For Clients* (1986) was one of the first on professional services marketing, followed by several sequels. His newsletter, *The Marcus Report* (1986), was followed by the award-winning *The Marcus Letter*.

Bruce is on the editorial boards and a contributor to several leading professional services publications. He lectures frequently at the Fordham University law School. He holds a degree in economics and philosophy.

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LAURIE YOUNG is one of the few independent advisers to the professions who has himself been a partner in a leading firm, as global marketing partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers. Laurie's career has also included senior positions with BT and Unisys. He also founded, built and sold his own consultancy company.

Laurie now divides his time between consultancy work, public speaking and writing. As an adviser to senior executives and marketing professionals, he provides guidance with the resolution of strategic marketing issues, brand strategy, new service design and client care programmes. He has chaired Fujitsu's Customer Experience Management panel and is on Allen & Overy's Innovation Board. Over the years his clients have also included Russell Reynolds Associates, Deloitte, Phillips, Lucent, Clifford Chance, Ericsson, Ingersoll Rand, Microsoft, the BBC, Cable & Wireless, American Express, Nokia and BDO Stoy Hayward.

A popular presenter, Laurie speaks at a range of events every year, from in-company seminars to larger international conferences. He also enjoys writing and, in addition to contributed articles and expert comment in the national press, Laurie has had over 100 articles on service marketing published in various trade journals.

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