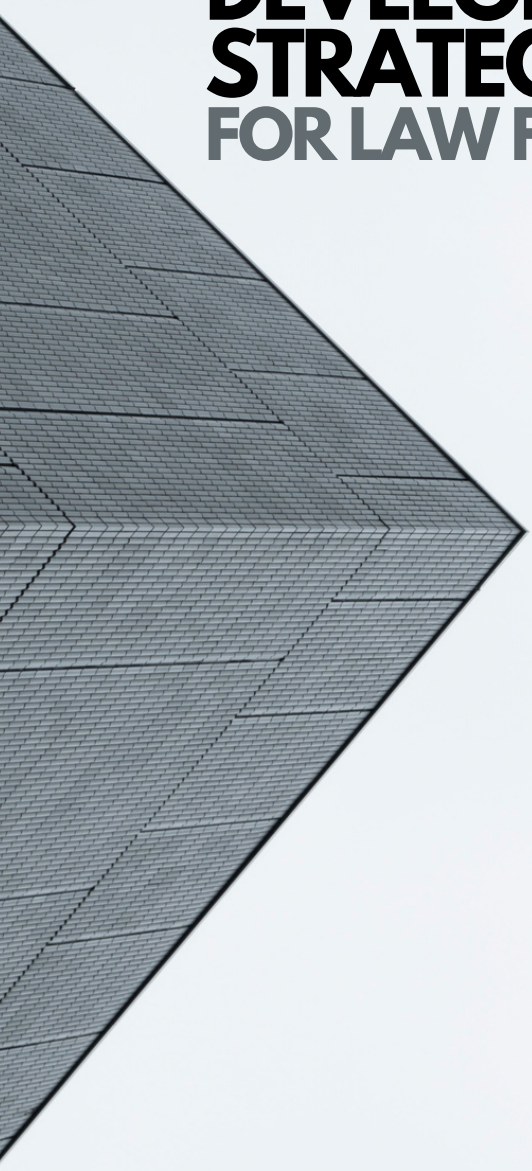
TOP MARKETING & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES FOR LAW FIRMS



- by John Grimley & Aman Abbas

Contents

Introduction	1
About the Authors	2
Building Your Firms Brand	3
Develop Complex Skills Necessary to Sell Your Legal Services	5
Law Firm Marketing	7
8 Ways to Combine Thought Leadership with Business Development to Win More Clients	9
Successful Legal Business Development Requires an Intentional Plan	13
Creating Conversations -The Next Step Of Story Telling	14
Relevance Secures Conversations with Prospective Clients	16
Social Media for Law Firms	18
Video Content Outreach	21
Are You Risk Ready, If You Are Not Communications Ready	23
Why Sophisticated Content Wins The Attention Of Law Firm Clients	25
Law Firms: Become A Thought Leader On Emerging Issues To Attract New Clients	27
To Build an International Client Base — Be a Gateway into Your Market	29

Introduction



This e-book contains a sampling of writings from two legal marketing and business development veterans — Aman Abbas and John Grimley. These articles provide a well-rounded overview of their recommendations about how you can effectively build your law practice through well-designed marketing and business development initiatives.

Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch with either of them.

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John Grimley specializes in the provision of writing and consulting services to the international corporate and professional services sectors. He also edits and publishes Asia Law Portal. For over 19 years, he has helped lawyers market their practices internationally. Most notably, he established and directed a European Union-focused business development initiative for US AmLaw 100 law firm, Patton Boggs LLP. At the inception of his career, he served as a writer to the President of the United States in the White House. A licensed American lawyer, he holds a Juris Doctor from the University of San Diego School of Law.

Aman Abbas
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Aman leads the strategy and planning for client campaigns at Commwiser. He has spent over two decades working with leading global brands. He is one of the pioneers in law firm marketing and Litigation PR and in India.His experience of working with organizations such as KPMG in India, Amarchand Mangaldas, and then Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas gives him a good understanding of working in regulated industries. He also worked extensively on strategy and brand transformation while the split took place at Amarchand Mangaldas. He has steered the communications for organizations during complex situations and is well-versed with the nuances of it.He has been in leadership roles in multiple PR agencies managing their key clients such as Google, Deloitte etc. and their P&Ls.He regularly writes for Indian and international publications on a variety of issues. He is the recipient of the Corporate Excellence Award by IPE and has been named as one of the top 100 influencers in the PR industry by exchange4media.

1. Building Your Firms Brand

- Aman Abbas

Legal services marketing as a discipline is mostly unheard of,at least in India. As marketers, we did not get the opportunity to learn this in any school. There are no specialized legal/professional services marketing firms that can provide a 360-degree view either.

Those who work in this field must know the business of law, policy environment and deal market in order to understand the dynamics that bring in work for law firms. Marketing is impactful only when it is in line with business goals. Public relations (PR) agencies carry out media relations, which is a small part of the whole mix.

The Indian legal profession is one of the last few sectors to remain closed to foreign players. Indian firms bill in US dollars for work that comes in through the "best friends" system, which consists of warm and reciprocal business ties with foreign counterparts. With newer firms growing bigger and expanding their reach globally, this will become tougher. Therefore, marketing professionals need to consider all the elements to create a robust strategy that focuses on below-the-line activities such as content marketing, social media marketing and PR.

Content Is King

For any professional services firm, content plays a major role in marketing efforts. Law firms generate a huge amount of content but the challenge is to make it more usable for clients. The legal marketing professional needs to make use of their business and legal knowledge to do this. Since a lot of high value work comes from overseas, activities must be chosen wisely in order to reach clients from different parts of the world in a more focused way.



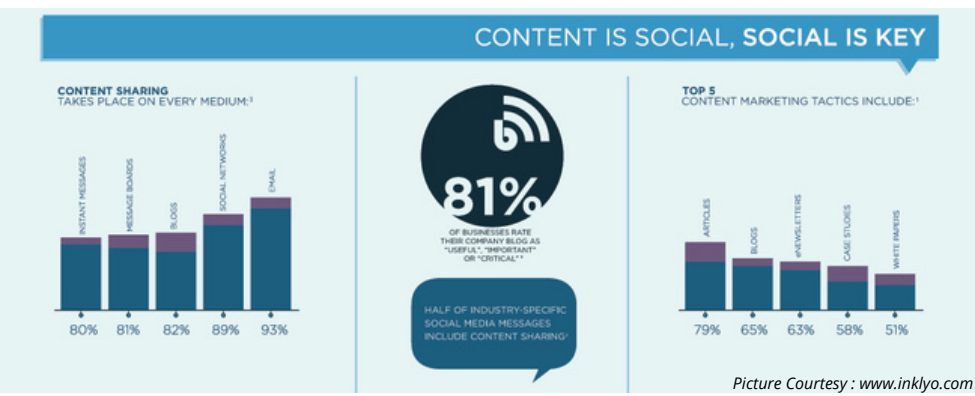
With intense competition among firms and almost no differentiators (as everyone claims to be a full service law firm), doing good work and collecting client testimonials is a great way to be remembered by prospective customers. Client referrals work wonders for business development and they help in improving your ranking and visibility in legal directories.

With a complex and evolving regulatory scenario, covering the legal angle is a growing need for business media, and provides a good opportunity for law firms to be visible to their target audience. Law firms must be quick to react to policy changes and be able to provide legal insights to media and their clients on a regular basis. Law firms should also be able to understand business challenges and provide clients with commercial solutions to legal problems.

Indian firms regardless of size need to focus on areas such as business intelligence technologies like their international counterparts. Activities regardless of firm size include tracking industry trends and financial markets. The commonly deployed tools to execute these tasks are customer relationship management, litigation tracking, news aggregators, and return on investment analytics. Among firms that outsource to external agencies, the objectives typically include online presence management and audio-visual content creation.

Big Disruptor

Social media are seen as a big disruptor with more than half the international firms increasing their digital marketing budgets in the next two years. It is an important aspect of an omni-channel approach to marketing and widely regarded as a game changer for lawyers who want to build relationships at a scale required to sustain their legal practice. Notably, law firm social media profiles are emerging as a valued digital asset for firms looking to go global.The focus on marketing and business development is essential and needs concerted efforts and professional support. There are already some good examples being set by global law firms and the "Big 4" consultancies that Indian law firms should take seriously if they want to build agility and resilience in what may soon become a hyper-competitive marketplace.



Picture Courtesy : www.inklyo.com



2. Develop the Complex Skills Necessary to Sell Your Legal Services

- John Grimley

To win more business, lawyers should seek to develop the complex skills necessary to effectively sell their services to clients.

Lawyers Are Well Prepared to Develop Skills Required to Effectively Sell Their Services

In an exceptional blogpost detailing how lawyers can develop the sales skills necessary to build a law practice, Mike O'Horo explains that:

> There are no natural marketers or salespeople, only disciplined, committed people who put forth concentrated effort — and sustain it." This is with certainty, true. And any lawyer who wishes to learn how to become a rainmaker — can do so.

The New Competitive Legal Market Requires Lawyers to Hone Their Sales Skills

O'Horo goes on to explain that "In the fiercely competitive market now referred to as "the new normal," selling is a complex matter requiring sophisticated skills. It now legitimately requires the kind of "deliberate practice, coaching, and time investment" that research defines as prerequisite for expert status and elite performance in any field."

He goes on to detail how the skill set required to make someone a successful lawyer, are also ideally suited to someone who would wish to sell complex professional services.

In a nutshell, it requires the ability to engage in complex conversations with prospective clients involving time frames and analysis — while at the same time, moving the process forward and gaining the client's trust that you are capable of delivering the sophisticated service they are seeking. Indeed, often explaining how the service will benefit them in very meaningful ways.

Lawyers Should Be Speaking with Clients Long before They Are Seeking to Buy Legal Services

But importantly, as O'Horo explains, if lawyers wait until clients are ready to purchase, it diminishes their ability to be retained among a sea of competitors, and their services often are relegated to being seen as fungible and task-based.

> Vitally, O'Horo explains: "Smart lawyers realize that demand now is less explicit, that the real selling conversation is about the business problem from which legal service demand emerges. That discussion occurs much earlier in the decision cycle, i.e., while the prospect is thinking through the problem, and it's continuously evolving."

Build Your Sales Skills with Your Already Existing Legal Skills

O'Horo concludes by wisely advising lawyers to utilize their already finely-honed lawyering skills, to learning the entire sales cycle associated with generating new legal business. Most importantly, learning how to identify early on what problems or issues clients might face in the future — and how your own services will help to solve those problems. Additionally — how best to explain how your services will help the client — all in the context of an organized and proactive business development process.

3.

Law Firm Marketing

- Aman Abbas



In the legal profession, traditionally a lot of business 'walked-in'based on the reputation of the Firm or due to equity created by some prominent lawyers in the firm. However, with intense competition among Firms that have similar kinds of talent pool and increased pricing pressure, a lot of marketing push is needed. It is an established fact that high growth Firms spend more on their BD and marketing compared to their peers with slow growth. However, spending more is not enough. Marketing works effectively when they are tied with the Firm's strategy and planned meticulously for the whole financial year as a part of long-term planning.

In your everyday life, as a senior partner, you are swamped with mails offering double spread profiling opportunities that would reach millions of your prospective customers. Or you are offered an event that gets all the 'decision-makers' to listen to your proposition. But mostly, all those opportunities are paid ones. You reject a few by your gut feeling but end up accepting some of them, often due to sheer persuasion of the sales guys. You end up spending your precious marketing dollars only to learn that you are going to reject 'this one' next year. And this gets repeated.

We need to look at marketing more strategically. In this competitive environment, it is important to understand why a client should Law Firm Marketing Making sense of puzzling propositions choose you among many offering the same kind of services. For that, you need to recognize yourself — who you are, what you stand for, what are your markets and why you.

The firms which excel would've invested in people, technology, processes and other touch points with their clients. In addition to the traditional 4 Ps of marketing — Product, Price, Place and Promotion, Booms and Bitner added another three elements particularly in the context of the service industry, which are — People, Process, and Physical Evidence.



Therefore, strategically speaking, when you think of marketing, you must think of all these elements in your advance marketing strategy. However, in this article, we would be discussing more fundamental issues.

> Recognizing yourself' is the first step in which senior management must do guided and dispassionate discussions on top of data points. Everyone is not everything. The biggest mistake we make is when we put our hands in many things, spend marketing dollars on several things and don't get the results. So we need to define what the firm stands for.

The discussion should be to figure out what worked well for the firm historically and therefore build further on it, which way the wind is blowing so invest in it, what are low hanging fruits, which must be immediately grabbed and what are the long-term objectives of the firm.

A well-articulated strategic direction that comes from the above discussion is the solid backbone of marketing planning. The planning needs to have three-year horizon with one year's activities defined along with budgets.

This needs to be mapped on the 'knowledge' of available marketing opportunities in relevant markets. For instance, if you are trying to make an impact in a market for a particular service, you ought to know where the target audience can be found and offer them the knowledge they care about. And this needs to be done repeatedly with follow-up actions already defined in the plan.

Another key element in achieving BD and marketing goals is to clearly define the roles of BD and Marketing teams. This is often the most neglected area of law firms in India, which must be addressed.

Proper marketing planning also flows in the roles and responsibilities of the BD and marketing team, makes their evaluation process scientific that helps both the team and the organization. When marketing is planned, the efforts are aligned with the firm's objectives and marketing spend is optimized to achieve the organizational goals.

4.

8 Ways to Combine Thought Leadership with Business Development to Win More Clients

- John Grimley

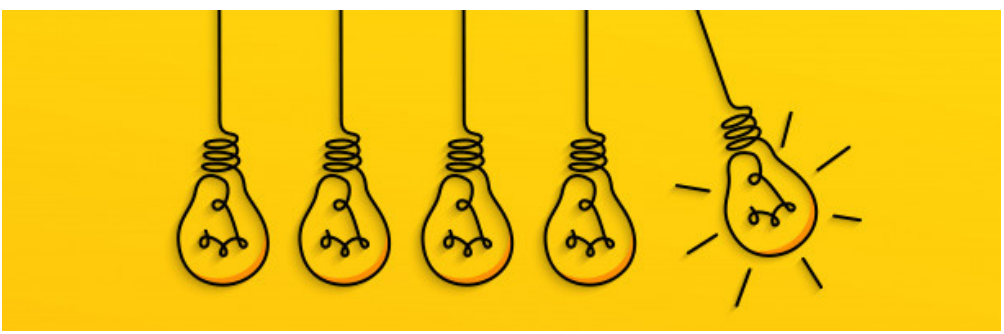
The internet has created an imperative for business development teams to utilize online thought leadership as a means by which to attract the attention of potential clients before, during, and after the business development sales cycle — in order to establish and maintain credibility and trustworthiness among potential clients. Gone are the days when business developers can rely on cold contacting prospective contacts without first establishing this credibility in advance.

In the past, a strong brand sometimes permitted business development cold contacting to produce results. But it no longer does.

Now, highly sophisticated thought leadership is required to provide support to business development initiatives for them to achieve higher return on investment from new client development, and the continued retention of existing clients.

Without sophisticated thought leadership, fewer doors will be open, fewer discussions will be had, and fewer new client signs will be secured.

This is a fact in the new communications world where information is readily available online about any subject, including those subjects of most importance to your key potential clients.



I know this from first-hand experience as both a long-time business developer focused on the international C-Suite, as well as a professional writer and editor with a specialism in thought leadership focused on the same audience. I have specific experience in creating targeted thought leadership focused on the international C-Suite as a means to gain their attention, then reaching out to them to discuss my writings, meeting with them to discuss their corporate objectives, and negotiating with them to successfully retain them on behalf of my clients for sophisticated advisory services in law, governmental relations, and financial services. My writings in this piece, therefore, are not produced in a thought leadership silo. They are the product of a multi-disciplinary career focused on both thought leadership and business development, often conducted in combination with one another.

New Edelman-LinkedIn Study: Good Thought Leadership Produces Business Development Success

A recent joint study by Edelman and LinkedIn (2020 B2B Thought Leadership Impact Study) details the link between good thought leadership and business development success. The study drew input from almost 4,000 business decision-makers in the US, Europe, and Asia. It details how businesses that produce timely, thought provoking thought leadership are "much more adept" than competitors at capturing the attention of customers — and these efforts produce more RFP invitations, new client signs, and new cross-selling opportunities and successes, while increasing business reputation.

Poor Thought Leadership Damages Business Credibility

Conversely, as the report details, poor thought leadership leads business decision-makers to remove potential vendors or partners from consideration.

88% of the business decision-makers surveyed believe thought leadership enhances their perceptions of an organization. But of those surveyed, only 17% believe the quality of most thought leadership to be very good or excellent. With 32% indicating they gained valuable insights from the thought leadership they consumed — a decrease from 39% from the 2018 version of the survey. 29% of decision-makers believe most of the thought leadership they read is "mediocre to very poor" — leading them to "not award business to the organization producing it."

Business Decision-Makers Award Work to Those Who Produce Good Thought Leadership

Notably, however, the business decision-makers polled indicated good thought leadership led to 39% of them issuing an RFP invitation, 49% awarding new business, and 51% purchasing services they hadn't previously considered. While 41% indicated they're more willing to pay premium fees to organizations that produce thought leadership than those who don't.

8 Steps to Help Maximize Thought Leadership-Business Development Synergy for Higher ROI

Based on my experience of conducting numerous of thought leadership-driven business development initiatives focused on the international C-Suite over the past two decades, I recommend the following be forefront in your mind when your organization seeks to harmonize these two disciplines:

1. Thought leadership writers should work in very close cooperation with business development colleagues to identify the issues of most concern to current and ideal prospective clients.

2. Thought leadership pieces focused on individual prospective clients should be produced with regular frequency, particularly for very high-value consulting and professional services offers.

3. Ensure calls to action exist wherever thought leadership is published — this allows business executives to readily reach out to key contacts within the organization producing the thought leadership — and any enquiry should result in a quick and thoughtful response to arrange a discussion.

4. There should be a constant analysis of the market which identifies existing or potential business issues for the C-Suite potential client, including the identification of new potential clients during this process. This will produce a steady stream of topics ideal for thought leadership creation, where business development teams can then utilize this thought leadership to more effectively open doors to discussion. Importantly, it will also expand the scope of your prospective client lead-list.

5. Ensure your business development team works hand-in-glove with your thought leadership writers in order to brainstorm and agree new thought leadership pieces on a consistent and frequent basis.

6. Maintain a strict editorial calendar which guarantees the production of high quality, high relevance content on a regular basis. Too often, organizations fail to produce consistent thought leadership and therefore lose or never gain the attention of key prospective clients, who then are likely turning to your competitors for unique insights.

7. Work with a thought leadership writer who understands business development and has worked as a business developer. This will help you more effectively identify potential clients, topics tailored to those audiences, and create more well-written content with those audiences in mind. A good thought leadership writer will understand their role in the sales pipeline, and help your organization maximize the efforts of all those involved in that pipeline.

8. Work with a thought leadership writer who understands inbound marketing and digital publishing, and can work with web developers and other experts on inbound marketing to maximize the number of inbound leads from your thought leadership initiatives — which your business development team will then utilize for their outbound efforts.

Looking Forward

Sophisticated thought leadership has become an essential element of successful business development initiatives. However, it must be produced to the highest standards or it will risk damaging your brand, instead of increasing your market reputation. Properly produced and utilized, excellent thought leadership will result in more awareness among specific key audiences, more meetings with those prospective clients, and more client signs. The recent Edelman-LinkedIn study confirms this. Without thought leadership, your organization will be at a decided disadvantage vis-à-vis your competitors, who are online and producing compelling insights for those same audiences you are seeking to communicate with.



5.

Successful Legal Business Development Requires an Intentional Plan

- John Grimley

Lawyers that take an outdated or ad hoc approach to winning new business will struggle to grow their practices, as Mark Haddad of Thomson Reuters details in Legal Executive Institute.

Business Development Essential to Law Firm Growth

Haddad explains that the development of new business is "an absolutely essential component to a successful law practice", but also notes that many lawyers say they don't really understand it or don't have time to learn it. While referrals and repeat business constitute important revenue streams — they are not sufficient to support sustained growth for your law practice, he adds.

Create the Building Blocks for Success

To implement an effective business development plan, Haddad explains that it's important to identify your goals and then dedicate time and resources to achieve those goals. A first step includes assessing your current business development posture, then focusing on what you'd like to achieve and the steps necessary to move you toward the goals you've set. Importantly, he notes that the business development of today for law firms isn't what it was a few years ago. Noting that a good online presence is important, among other essentials.

Look to "Megatrends"

His most important advice I believe is for lawyers to look to "megatrends" which will "influence the market [your firm serves] years down the road, such as changes in the law or regulatory environment, that can create opportunities for future advice and counsel. Understanding these megatrends can give you an idea of how to position yourself to meet future opportunities." I could not agree more with Haddad here — and have previously written about this subject in more detail.

Take an Incremental Approach

Haddad concludes by noting that business development may seem a daunting task to take on — but he encourages lawyers to take an incremental approach and build with small steps, well designed to lead you to your ultimate goals. I wholeheartedly agree with this approach and often counsel my client lawyers to do the same.

6.

Creating Conversations -The Next Step Of Story Telling

- Aman Abbas

Imagine you are being chauffeur driven in an Audi A6 at a price of a Maruti Alto? Won't you talk about it among your family or friends? When Uber came to India, it did one of the most innovative marketing to create fantastic conversations. First, they offered all luxury cars at prices even the local taxi stand guy with most shoddy cars couldn't offer. And then, the referral scheme that made people jump with joy. Almost everyone sent their referral codes to everyone they knew. And the awareness skyrocketed.

And then reality struck that we can consume what we can afford. The main factor of taking app-based cabs is convenience and competitive pricing.But right at the beginning, brand awareness got created like wildfire which resulted in a tremendous amount of trials

.

Consumers of PR would ask where is PR here? Well, the case above is a fantastic PR story. PR is just not restricted to what media writes about you but how it creates stories around you irrespective of the medium. It's much more nuanced and works at a strategic level if understood correctly.

There is nothing like our age-old 'word of mouth' publicity. Just that those mouths have become fingers and conversations have moved on to social platforms. Very often, we see people discussing brands as in how good or bad they are; or how they are impacting affecting the society. Positive conversations among like-minded people is arguably one of the best reputation drivers and one of the most potent tools for the marketers if they are able to tap this well.

PR, as it is popularly called these days, is about 'storytelling'. However, the story needs to create a response. When the response is in the form of a (positive) 'conversation', it leads to action. The action could be the creation of a positive impression in the minds of stakeholders or even sales in some cases.

And positive conversations could be for any brand or a cause.



Use Selfie-Camera

Very often, we look at our audience and create 'key messages' around each of the audience set. Now let's take a 'selfie camera' approach and think about how our audience views us. While we think, for instance, a brand's big, global stature would create awe among the audience, they may, on the contrary, get intimidated. If
a brand has got big budgets for marketing, chances are that they would have gotten this through customer insights.
So, the key messages may see 'corrections' based on these insights. In the case of smaller organisations, the approach is inside out, which at times makes campaigns go horribly wrong.

In the new 'conversation' age of PR, we will have to create desired conversations. And those desired conversations should be led by stakeholders among the homogenous group of stakeholders. That will help brands move the needle.

But remember, these conversations must be genuine conversations unlike many 'customer stories' or 'case studies' sponsored by big brands that look fake.

Businesses will need to work hard towards creating those genuine customer experiences that are making a real impact on customers' lives. For a professional services firm, its transparency, client servicing and sincere advice are prerequisites. For a consumer brand, maintenance-free products and good pre and post-sales customer service is a necessity.

PR can play the role of enablers to elicit a positive response from different stakeholders or customer groups.

For one of our clients in the education sector, one of the issues were of teacher retention. The economics of the business did not allow them to give extra-ordinary salaries, which was one of the major drivers for the teachers to switch-over. So, we instead created a programme that made them feel valued. Based on positive feedback from the parents, we profiled teachers by capturing affinity showed by children and parents. And then these videos were circulated in the pan-India network, which created positive conversations among teachers as well as parents.

The conversational approach requires one to think beyond key messages and map out what is the desired conversation among a group of stakeholders that would inspire them to the desired action.

So, conversations leading to word of mouth that really influences.

Life comes to a full circle ... hasn't it?



7. Relevance Secures Conversations with Prospective Clients

- John Grimley

When lawyers are seeking to establish contact with prospective clients — relevance is essential as a means by which to do so. Mike O'Horo details in Attorney at Work that "many lawyers struggle to generate relevant welcomed conversation with clients and prospects" - and therefore "the conversation you dangle as your hook to earn a calendar slot has to be relevant to the person's role, situation, company — and the industry within which all that operates."

Understand the Business of Your Prospective Client

O'Horo explains that if lawyers make a commitment to understanding the business of their prospective client before making contact, they'll solve the challenge of access to discussions with that prospective client.

Simple Emails Are Sufficient to Establish First Contact and Request a Discussion

He notes that the issue you can use as the basis to establish a focus of a conversation should be simple, and this works whether you might know or don't know the prospective client. Emails detailing the reason for a discussion are fine and should be utilized as a means by which to open discussions.Relevance Secures Conversations with Prospective Clients

This is one of the prime means by which I established contact with many prospective clients on behalf of my law firm clients. I always based my emails on actionable commercial opportunities for prospective clients, where the legal services of my clients were an essential component of realizing those commercial objectives

.

Business Leaders Are Usually Interested in Hearing About Commercial Opportunities

It's important for lawyers to remember that business leaders are usually open to hearing about opportunities for expansion of the business or other opportunities for revenue and profit. And legal services are an integral component of realizing those opportunities. If a lawyer or firm can harness their unique knowledge of their local markets as a means by which to help clients access those markets — this is a highly effective means by which to build a client base outside the typical panels conducted by in-house counsel.

Ensure You Do Your Research before Reaching Out

Before reaching out to a prospective client — ensure you do your research and determine what opportunities you may be able to assist them with, to establish high relevance of the conversation for the prospective client. Lead with one or more of those opportunities in an introductory email requesting a conversation.

At the end of the day — if lawyers can learn how to think like the business professionals they are seeking to represent — they'll understand how to develop business in a way which their ideal clients will very much appreciate, as they seek to build their own businesses.

8.

Social Media For Law Firms

- Aman Abbas



Lawyers are always busy practicing law, and servicing their clients is their top priority. Out of the overall business development strategy, it almost always boils down to pursuing 'must-dos.'

Social media is now considered a thing to do for the law firms, albeit in a very 'unsure' way. One of the primary reasons is the question in their mind — does it really attract new clients?
The answer is a very firm 'yes', provided, it's done in the right way.



Let's examine how it is done in most of the cases. Our lawyers go for an event, let's make a post. We got an award, let's make a post. We got covered in media, let's make a post.

But all this is very reactive!

Any marketing efforts must be in sync with business strategy and planning. And therefore, any communication on social media should be a part of the planned outreach.

There are some interesting results that came out of American Bar Association's TECHREPORT 2018 on Social Media. It found that '35% of lawyers who use social media professionally have been able to gain new clients either directly or through referral.'

The report added, that Lawyers who have relevant, valuable, meaningful content available not only about themselves and their firms, but about their clients and their clients' problems challenges, and industries are much more likely to get the attention of the potential clients.

India is the second-largest user of LinkedIn globally with a whopping 59 million users, only second to the US. This usage can be turned into a great opportunity for client development.

Some of the tips for law firms to effectively use social media:

Know What You Want to Convey

The firms need to think as to which practices and sectors will be the main source of their business in the next 2-3 years horizon.
Secondly, from a talent acquisition point of view, how should the organization be projected? The areas to consider include culture, learning, and development.
The social media content strategy needs to be in sync with these business goals. The showcase of expertise around these areas will help firms to attract the relevant audience in more direct ways than others.

Making It Work

With clarity on the above, some of the following strategies can be adopted by the firms:

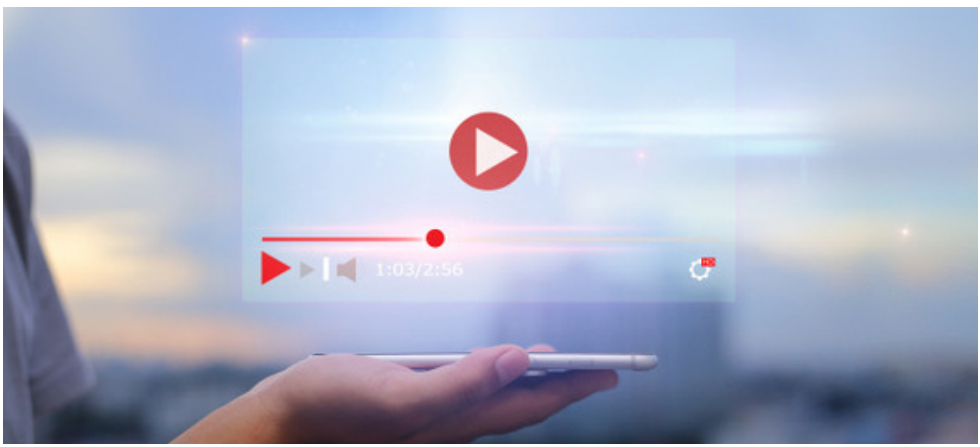
Appoint Content Champions for Target Practices

A junior partner from each of the practices may be assigned as a content champion. Their job is to identify the areas within their practices around which content should be developed. There should be a monthly huddle with the BD team to generate fresh thoughts and ideas.
Some of the things to be considered include:

- Is it topical and do clients care about the topic? — Social media listening plays an important role here.
- Do your clients require a broader understanding of this area? - It will determine whether you need a short bulletin or a larger thought leadership piece around this.
- Do you have expertise in this area?

Create More Video Content

More than 70% of the content consumption is now in video format. However, this must be short and crisp, and now in 'silent' video format. This would require significant expertise as video content needs to be well structured since it is the very foundation of creating effective videos.



Create 'True' Networking on Social Network

The ultimate objective of all the effort is to showcase your expertise to your clients and other relevant stakeholders. But if you do a quick analysis of your followers, there is a very rare possibility of finding any of your clients or prospects among your followers. So, what's the point of doing this exercise?

Platforms such as LinkedIn offer you the option of doing targeted campaigns that can help you reach your clients. However, with little more effort, you can create beautiful organic campaigns that are credible and create 'endorsed' visibility. This would require the collective efforts of lawyers in the firm.

Some of the tips include:

- Sensitization exercise in the firm to create a better understanding of social media among lawyers.
- Ensure every lawyer in the firm is connected with existing clients and prospective clients.
- Ask all the firm members to follow the firm's social pages and interact with them. Once they interact, their connections get to see the content of the page.
- Share and tag relevant stakeholders.

Listen to What is Being Said About Your Brand

It is important to know how your brand is being talked about. You can conduct keyword searches on social media to know the content and conversations around your firm by the audience. This is a great way to understand what people are saying about you, and how they might be feeling about you.

You can spot conversations where you can evaluate and demonstrate expertise, such as finding news and discussions about topics that are most relevant to your firm's specializations.If there are controversies going on in the legal space, which is quite likely, being aware of social conversations can also help you avoid being caught off-guard or getting negative PR.

In a Nutshell

Use social media strategically, and in a planned way. The content needs to have some value for the audience. One of the most important parts is to have a discipline for content creation, since your audience would expect something regularly from your page.At the same time, it is a good way to keep the recall of your brand.So, get set and started on the journey since it does attract potential clients.



9.
Video Content Outreach
- Aman Abbas

Video marketing, one of the most effective strategies for Businesses — the idea isn't new. The point is the consumption of video content has increased by 54%, and the current usage for content consumption in video format is 70%. Video is the new domination of the social media era, especially to your outreach, and attracting clients, hence generating business.

A photo or graphics were the leading way of consuming the content, but due to less information provided, people shifted to communicate through a video — where you can express your services and products with amplification.

Video marketing dominates because it has demonstrated great results. In 2020, 1 billion hours of YouTube video content were watched on a daily basis. While traditional approaches like print, word-of-mouth referrals, or direct email might work for your law firm to some extent — but it is very important to grow your business digitally, to get the best result and cope up in the current market.

Firms have started investing time and resources in this modern approach to create life-long digital footprints, and attain a sustainable solution. Video content outreach gives your firm an identity that helps you to attain and generate business with trust among your current and potential clients.

Video Content Outreach

Some market statistics for legal businesses:

- Over 80% of clients are searching for lawyers online.
- 96% of legal advice seekers seeking legal help online.
- Law firms that utilize video content outreach in their marketing strategy get more traffic and more outreach.

'Since most content consumption now is on digital platforms, it's the quality of content that wins the 'visibility war.' Therefore, we encourage lawyers to create quality content that will attract visibility.

Video establishes that 'connection' with the viewer — and with good post-production — it's also easier to comprehend even the complex matters when explained through infographics within the video. It's also easier to establish the 'expertise' of a lawyer through videos — therefore it naturally makes the lawyer a 'go-to-person' for clients.

Types of Video Content Outreach

Creating and strategizing video marketing has never been easy, we need to make sure, we choose the right type of video marketing to reach out to our potential customers/clients.

- Demo videos: This helps in giving the best teaser about your services.
- Brand videos: This helps in larger campaigns to showcase your mission, vision, and services.
- Event videos: If you would like to host webinars, online
- Interviews, panel discussions, and presentations, the event videos are the best way to communicate your episode.
- How-to videos: If you are in a noble profession like law enforcement, teaching, or you are a legal professional, and garner more clientele through knowledge sharing "How to Guides" are the leading way to increase your outreach and discoverability.

It is very important for every business or service provider, like law firms and legal professionals, to opt for the best possible type of video content outreach to get visibility and garner clients.

For every law firm, the core needs are:

- More visibility and outreach
- Value addition
- Generate business

Video content outreach, helps the professionals and firms to get life-long digital footprints, and helps in attaining long-term sustainable solutions.

Benefits of video content outreach:

- Helps you to connect with your specific target group and larger audience.
- SEO Gold Mine helps with ranking on Google, which in turn helps in attaining life-long digital footprints.
- Higher Retention Rate, customers visualising the necessary information, they tend to retain the content/information by 65%.
- Higher Traffic, videos garner 74% f a;;l online traffic, hence more visitors and prospects to generate business.
- Email subject lines that include the word "video" see a 19% increase in open rates, and a 65% boost in click-throughs.
- People tend to watch a video rather than reading long written content.
- 64%-85% prospects reach you more after watching a video.

Video content outreach is the right term and the best fit according to me to make sure the selling is smooth and in no manner, we are violating the rules and regulations mentioned under the Advocates Act 1961. Marketing can be a wrong expression while dealing with law firms and legal professionals.



10.

Are You Risk Ready, If You Are Not Communications Ready

- Aman Abbas

The script of app-based cabs is no less than that of a Bollywood thriller. In one stroke of innovation that gave birth to app based cab services, daily commuting became a breeze. Drivers of cabs have never had it so good. It was a win-win situation for both. However, the growth based model that investors backed till yesterday got replaced with profitability based model. And that changed everything. The proposition ceased to be lucrative for the drivers who once saw the good times with attractive incentives.What happened after that is known to everyone.

There are many more examples like that that tell us that in the modern world, business is fraught with risk from variety of factors. Changes in regulations have never been so quick. The markets are volatile. Political activities have intensified the world over. Greed of the employees is costing companies billions of dollars. And internal and external perpetrators show the companies very often just what they don't know about cyber security.

These factors have the potential to cause severe damage to profitability or even shut downs.

Being Risk Ready Is the Only Choice

> One of the Deloitte surveys (Risk Sensing) indicate that reputation risk remains among the top three risks when it comes to any crisis situation. As per another survey conducted among the board members, 70% board members think that corporate reputation takes more than a year to recover from past crisis.

Risk readiness or assessment aims to detect upcoming risks so that organisations are prepared to take those situations head-on to minimise potential damage. Most big organisations have developed the capabilities in terms of right people, technology and other tools. Some of the risks are around compliance, financial, operational or strategic areas.

However, crisis preparedness from communications view point is often missing even in those organisations, which supposedly have strong communication plans.

The three Ps of crisis preparedness and communications come handy - Pre-empt, Prevent, and Protect.

Pre-Empt: Organisations are exposed to risks from multiple channels. And in many cases, we can pre-empt those. While business risk assessments throw up many possible scenarios that may be fed to communications strategists for possible response mechanism creation, there are many communications risks as well.

With proper study and planning, an audit of communication channels and all its vulnerability may be assessed. For instance,
in an organisation which is into public dealing, if a journalist or a customer approaches the front desk, this very first touch point could prove to be a potential threat point. What if in a hospital, an accident victim is turned down, one tweet to the minister may turn out to be a big potential crisis.

The audit is done often in real-life situation when it catches the vulnerabilities unaware. And this throws up very interesting scenarios for which the organisations need to prepare.

Prevent: The first step of pre-empting helps ascertaining the scenarios. Prevention part is about studying these scenarios,preparing possible responses, training of all related stakeholders and testing it.

In the case of app based cab services, the turn of events was not like a bolt from the blue. Protests were held before in various cities, unions communicated to companies about their grievance and therefore, what happened was known to companies beforehand. While the communication between the companies and drivers is not known, commuters woke-up to exorbitantly high surge prices without any warning.

This is a perfect example when one can pre-empt the upcoming crisis. And with the help of proper reparation, prevent erosion in reputation which is created with great difficulty. In this case particularly, even though the first few days must be nerve wrecking but at the end, the companies managed the situation well. The communication went out, a fair deal (at least from the companies' viewpoint) was struck and its business as usual.

Protect: And while what happened has happened, at the time of crisis the role of communications is to protect the reputation. In this stage, not communicating could prove disastrous.

In case of Maggi ban, Nestlé continued to communicate to its customers about their doubts. So much so that they launched an FAQs page on their website to answer all the doubts raised by the media so that the audience knows the official version of the theories floating around.

Maggi won back the top spot in the market with sustained recovery of its market share.

Organisations which realise that the communications strategy needs to be discussed in the boardrooms are often the most successful ones in the market. And these organisations understand that the more you sweat in peace, the less you bleed in war.

11.

Why Sophisticated Content Wins The Attention Of Law Firm Clients

- John Grimley

An article by Jennifer Smith in the Wall Street Journal Law Blog outlines advice for law firms from Gregory B. Jordan, former global managing partner of Reed Smith LLP and now general counsel of PNC Financial Services Group Inc. — on how best to go about attracting the attention of the General Counsel. Here are some excerpts from Mr. Jordan's advice:

- Quick, timely updates on regulatory shifts ... are useful ... Reams of glossy marketing material, not so much."
- "Accounting firms such as PricewaterhouseCoopers are "eating law firms' lunch" when it comes to briefing clients on upcoming challenges — including regulatory and legal shifts. "They have armies of brilliant people who are focused on the business in the way that law firms, even the best ones, just aren't."
- "Specific expertise is crucial. Don't bury clients in a blizzard of press releases about one-off hires in various offices — instead explain why your lawyers are best-suited to handle a particular matter or issue."
- "Bone up on your client's industry, and make sure your partners do too, so you can advise them on what hurdles are lurking around the corner. If you can tell a chief executive how spending $500,000 now will save them from making a $2 million mistake later, "that's value.""
- "Watch out for the Wall Street law firms, which in recent years have 'really raised their game.' Instead of just kicking back and counting their millions, elite firms are increasingly offering valuable expert insight — 'for no charge' — and also putting in shoe leather work."
- "Anticipate needs [clients] may not know they have yet."

Why Sophisticated Content Works

Mr. Jordan's advice should be read carefully by every lawyer in the world who would seek to serve as outside legal counsel to not only large corporations, but international NGO's, governmental entities, private equity groups, and others. Based on his advice, it's clear that those law firms who seek to know their potential clients' needs and anticipate those needs — then go about creating highly sophisticated, actionable intelligence of high value (i.e., sophisticated content) to address those needs — will be best placed to win new business from the General Counsel.

Are Blogposts Enough?

Many law firms now utilize blogging to attract the attention of clients. But are blogposts enough? Yes, in some cases they are. However, specialized briefs on narrowly focused topics of exclusive interest to and use by a specific individual or select group of general counsel (and hence, something which in some cases you won't be publishing but rather sharing directly with a client or prospective client offline) — may go even further in helping your firm build strong ties with clients. When producing content for clients, the wholly unique needs of each should be at the forefront when considering the length, depth, and method by which the content is developed and delivered. Therefore, blogposts, memorandums, white papers, even timely emails, can all be utilized as a means to provide as much useful information as possible — to a current or prospective client.

Distinguish Your Firm in a Crowded Legal Market



In seeking to secure the attention of the general counsel among a sea of competitors — it would be wise to heed the advice of Mr. Jordan and develop a strategy of providing industry-leading, well-researched information to clients and prospective clients on a regular basis. It appears clear that the creation of sophisticated content with high relevance to the general counsel — may stand not only a good chance of winning their attention, but also an invitation to present those findings in person as well.

12.

Law Firms: Become A Thought Leader On Emerging Issues To Attract New Clients

- John Grimley



An article by James Bliwas details how law firms can attract the attention of clients with strategic publishing efforts. The concepts Bliwas details can and should be applied to law firms operating in specific regions to more carefully tailor messages to clients. This article will detail what law firms might do to publish to generate new client engagements, and some examples of what in the Asia-Pacific region might be of interest to clients. Law firms can then take this information, apply it to their existing efforts, and build a publishing effort more finely tailored to the needs of their clients.

Strikingly, Bliwas's article details how law firm blogs are being read by only 7% of clients, according to a recent study published by Robert Denney — which analyzed the efforts of US and Canadian law firms. Why is readership of law firm blogs so low, according to the study? Bliwas details some of the comments by general counsel and other client readers, which boil down to 5 key takeaways. They are:

Don't provide strategic analysis. Law firm blogs often regurgitate what the law says, but don't analyze the implications of the law in ways useful to helping clients with strategic decision-making. Bliwas noted that an ideal law blog will help clients understand what strategic options they might have to adjust to new laws. Law Firms:

Reactive, not proactive. L aw fi rm b logs were found to often be repeating what the news say about legal or business issues of importance to clients — and don't contain an analysis of those issues in ways that might weave in how a client might react to that news and how, it flows naturally, the firm authoring the blog might help that client achieve his or her strategic objectives.

Not covering emerging issues. "I need my lawyers telling me what I should be doing tomorrow, not what I should have done yesterday", was what one CEO told surveyors compiling information for the Denney study according to Bliwas. Clients, as Bliwas explained, want content "created by law firms to pay more attention [to] business issues with a law connotation." Law firm blogs, therefore, should cover what clients might do "over the next six months to a year."

Aren't giving readers something to think about. Clients want the law firm blogs they read to not only identify business trends, but also provide unique insight and opinions from the law firm's perspective. One corporate vice-president observed: "I know the facts ... I want to be provoked, something lawyers hate doing."

Are poorly written. "Many blogs make for painful reading because they're littered with 'lawyer speak'", as Bliwas details. "A blog's purpose isn't to impress a reader with how much a lawyer knows about the law, or a specific case; it's to convey useful information in a concise, easy-to-read way", he explains. Bliwas recommends law firms work with professional writers to help make their blogposts more readable and more interesting.

Writing to Attract Law Firm Clients in the Asia-Pacific Region

Much has been written in the past few years about the economic growth and opportunity the Asia-Pacific region represents to clients and law firms alike. Emerging issues in intellectual property, the increase in arbitration attendant to economic growth and economic convergence in the ASEAN region, China's Belt and Road infrastructure investment opportunities, Japan's robust inward and outward foreign investment, opportunities for foreign ownership in state-owned enterprises in Vietnam's fast growing economy, the rise of the internet economy in Indonesia, venture funding to India's startups via Singapore, Hong Kong as a hub for China-related IPO's, and the growth of crowdfunding in Malaysia — are just a few of the numerous tangible business issues with legal implications — that firms in the Asia-Pacific region might engage clients with, creatively. via strategic online publishing. It would be wise to heed the advice of clients which Bliwas details about and create thoughtful, well written, analytical blog posts which provide clients with unique insights and strategic analysis, however.

Notably, Legal Futures recently cited a study by Passle which detailed that elite London law firms doubled their thought leadership marketing efforts between 2014 and 2018. These efforts are also frequently combined with distribution of and engagement about that content on LinkedIn and Twitter. This trend should be noted by Asia-Pacific region's law firms who can make themselves a must-read source of local information and analysis for clients — with a carefully planned and consistently executed strategic publishing initiative.



13.

To Build an International Client Base — Be a Gateway into Your Market

- John Grimley

Lawyers and law firms seeking to attract clients in international markets should seek to be a gateway into their market. This strategy aligns with what law firm clients are seeking when it comes to what they want from their law firms — knowing their business.

> When lawyers seek to be a gateway to their market — it means they are seeking to be a voice of information and opportunity about what commercial opportunities exist in their market. If done correctly, a law firm can become a widely recognized voice about their market to an international audience. These efforts, most importantly, help law firms and lawyers closely position themselves as conduits to commercial opportunities for their clients and prospective clients.

Global Trade and Investment Provide More Opportunities for Law Firms

As Melissa Davis details in Law Practice Today — "The growth in global trade (and particularly interest in such jurisdictions) has created fresh opportunities" for law firms globally. She cites as one example the Baker & McKenzie Peru office (few international firms maintain offices in Peru) — which directly appeals to energy sector and related clients as there is an expected investment of $131 billion in copper mining in Chile and Peru by the end of 2020. The presence of this office provides international companies and investors with a local resource to help them navigate this opportunity.

Utilize a Combination of Strategic Initiatives

But an office alone is insufficient to attract clients. One must also engage in robust inbound thought leadership initiatives, utilizing social media to expand the reach of these messages — as well as proactive outbound business development to identify, pursue, and capture new clients around these opportunities. As Davis explains, social media "is so very effective in boosting profile and providing a way to demonstrate expertise to a wide pool of 'listeners,' as well as its cost-effective nature, and the inescapable reality that it's now a key part of a competitive marketing strategy."

Another example of a law firm taking a unique and effective step to make themselves a gateway to their market is King & Wood Mallesons (KWM) establishment of a Belt & Road Center of International Cooperation and Facilitation (BRCICF). As the firm detailed to clients when they established the Center: "As a leading international law firm deeply rooted in China, we are able to leverage our international diversification advantages and innovative model in legal services, and build a comprehensive professional service platform combining legal services, think tank researches, consultation services, and international cooperation. BRCICF aims at connecting the government and enterprises, and providing high-level professional services to both Chinese and foreign participants who want to explore the opportunities brought by the BRI."

Emulate the Efforts of Governments to Attract Foreign Investment

These efforts are akin to what some countries do to attract foreign direct investment. A recently successful example of which was the efforts by the French government at the 2020 Davos Forum in Versailles. Writing in Textmaster, Ludivine Chotard explained how "[a]head of the [2020] Davos Forum ... in Versailles, the "Choose France Summit" took place. This was an opportunity for French president Emmanuel Macron to meet the heads of various multinationals and promote "Made in France". A well-proven and marketed operation; #ChooseFrance quickly became very popular on Twitter during the day of the summit, and more than 3.5 billion euros of investments were announced by companies such as Toyota, Facebook, SAP, Manpower, Google, and others."

Combine Inbound Marketing and Outbound Business Development

Ultimately, every law firm or lawyer would need to create a highly customized plan for their practice around prime commercial opportunities which exist in your jurisdiction. And as I mentioned before, they would include a combination of initiatives including inbound marketing and outbound business development, to be fully effective.

Thank you for reading this!

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