Branding and Differentiation: Creating a Unique Message for Your Firm

Presented by
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Branding and Differentiation: Creating a Unique Message for your Firm.

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DESCRIBE THIS FIRM
Is this firm...

- Creative
- Fun
- Powerful
- Dynamic
- Smart
- Nice, friendly
- "A" quality

- Average
- Typical
- Dull, boring
- Conservative
- Cold
- Lethargic
- Nothing special
- B/C+ quality
Rate the Firm

A. 1-10 for “Quality of litigation skills”
   - 1 = Mediocre
   - 10 = High-quality skills

DESCRIBE THIS FIRM
Rate the Firm

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Which looks more unique?

WHY MARKET “THE FIRM?”
Why market “The Firm?”

I don’t know you.
I don’t know your law firm.
I don’t know your firm’s services.
I don’t know what your firm stands for.
I don’t know your clients.
I don’t know your reputation.
NOW...
What was it you wanted to sell me?

“Do you have a personal hero? Someone you try to emulate?”

Joe Flom,
Managing Partner Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom

“Richard Branson, chairman of Virgin Group. From him I learned the value of a brand. Skadden Arps has borrowed from Branson and has 15 full-time marketing professionals in New York keeping the Skadden name out there in a high-quality context.”
Firm News:

Coming soon.

**Smith & Jones:**  
"Just as good. But cheaper.™"

Our firm is big and old. We offer the technical skills of a large firm and the collegial culture of a small firm. We work as a team; we are efficient, service oriented, and partner with our clients.

Our firm offers excellent, creative, timely, value-added, results-driven legal skills and business solutions. We are diverse, community oriented, and green.

We represent **everyone**, from individuals to large companies. Our more than 53 lawyers have 67 specialties, practicing in every area from ADR to Zoning; we are best at every single one of them.

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**What’s your firm’s message?**
What’s your firm’s message?

The slides won’t match perfectly
Websites

Websites have a limited life

- 1-2 years old
- 3 years old
- 4 years old
- 5+ years old
At Hoogendoorn & Talbot LLP, we focus on helping individuals, families, businesses, and charities resolve their legal issues.

Contact Us

Hoogendoorn and Talbot LLP
Websites
Websites

Tell your story

– What do you want them to know about you?
– How are you different? How can you help them?
– It is not:
  • “As skilled as the big firms, in a nicer environment.”
  • “Smart, skilled, service oriented, we care.”
  • “Used to work at a big firm.”
Finding your message

• Who is your audience?
  – Age, demographics, interests
• What do they need?
  – Challenges, fears, frustrations
• Where’s the pain?
  – Speed, responsiveness, service, trust, budgets, price, risk
  – How can you become the alternative?
• Who is your competition?
  – Identify / describe them. Be different.

What’s your message?

• Creating a message is hard.
• What’s your strategy?
• Must be appropriate
  – For who you are
  – For who you want to become
  – For your target clients
  – Connect to history
• Effective implementation
  – Appropriate, interesting
  – Powerful, eye-catching
### What do clients want?

- Speed
- Toughness
- Understanding
- Responsiveness
- Communication
- Timeliness
- Partnering
- Creativity
- Expertise
- Diversity
- Price
- Value
- Prestige
- Practical
- Winners
- Specialized knowledge
- Industry expertise
- Caring
- Service
- Efficiency
- Low price / fees
- Alternative fees
- Understandable bills
- No surprises
- Good reputation
- Chemistry
- *What else?*

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**FINDING YOUR MESSAGE.**

**WHAT DO YOU ASK?**
What should you ask?

• Tell me about your practice.
• Tell me about the firm.
• Who are your competitors?
• Who are your targets?
• Give me three adjectives to describe the firm.
• If the firm were a car, what would you be?
  – What would you like to be?
• What would you like the firm to be known for?
• Where would you like the firm to be in 5 years?
• What are the best marketing opportunities?

What is your message? Pick ONE.

• Case studies
• Creative
• Cutting-edge work
• Efficient
• Experienced
• Fast moving
• Friendly
• Full-service
• Good listeners
• High-end boutique
• Inexpensive
• Problem solvers
• Responsive
• Right size for you
• Service oriented
• Smart
• Tough
• Understand your business
• Value/efficiency

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More creative is cheaper.
The Howard Law Group takes on the toughest, most sophisticated cases for companies like AIG Claims Services, JC Penney and Cottrell, Inc., and we win. In fact, we haven’t lost a big trial in over a decade. Our team doesn’t mess around, we get to work, get to the heart of the matter and get results. When everything is on the line, give us a call.

The toughest cases. The most dire circumstances. We take them all on and win. And how.

At the Howard Law Group, we handle the ugliest, hairiest, and most-complex disputes and cases. We’re the go-to trial lawyers for some of the nation’s largest corporations, in industries like

Why? For starters, we’ve handled over 300 significant trials over the past decade. That’s three hundred. And we won 98% of them.

When you can’t afford to lose -- or simply don’t want to -- call the Howard Law Group.

WHEN EVERYTHING IS ON THE LINE.
YOU GOTTA GET BUY-IN
Who’s ever said:

“My lawyers...

– Don’t get it!
– Reject everything!
– Don’t respect me!
– Won’t let me do anything good!
– Water down all my ideas!
– Think they know everything!
– Nitpick the details, miss the big picture!”

History

I have a GREAT idea!
No law firm has ever done this before!
It will significantly increase revenue and profits!
Ross’s First Rule of Lawyer Buy-In:

Lawyers aren’t stupid. They just haven’t had the class.

MARKETERS VS. LAWYERS
“To boldly go where no one has gone before.”

"Insufficient facts always invite danger, Captain."

Communication styles

**Lawyer brains**
- Intellectual
- Analytical
- Skeptical
- Insecure
- Defensive
- Risk-averse

**Marketer brains**
- Open
- Creative
- Like new ideas
- Comfortable with change
- Strategic
- Risk takers
Lawyers vs. Marketers

• Lawyers like to chew on things, pick them apart, find mistakes and problems, obsess over details
  – Love analyzing
  – Hate deciding
• Marketers like to explore new ideas, try new things
  – We like to do things
  – We’re comfortable with innovation, novelty
  – “Let’s do a pilot and try it out!”
• “Here’s why that won’t work.” vs. “Let’s try it!”

HOW SHOULD YOU PITCH TO LAWYERS?
What are all of their possible concerns?

- What could they **POSSIBLY** object to?
  - No objection is too remote or ridiculous
  - Identify *every* possibility
  - Button-up every contingency

- Address and defuse the issues **before** they object
  - Don’t let them even *think* about it being a problem
  - Provide the data **before** they start to worry
    - Bullets, data, surveys, studies, examples, visuals...

What’s the formula?

- Create **need**
  - Identify the problem you want to solve
- Determine **all** potential obstacles, objections
  - Personal, professional, emotional, economic
- Be prepared to address *each* of them in detail, **in order**
  - Defuse their anxieties, defenses
- Build your case, step by step
  - Create detailed PPT
  - Show examples from law firms they respect, aspire
  - If none exist, show accounting, other industries
What’s the formula?

- **Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse**
  - **Out loud**, identify the gaps, pacing, speed
  - Find a smart, crabby friend to poke holes
- Call Special Purpose Meeting. *Your* meeting
- **YOU are the expert**
  - **YOU** are in charge
- **Bookend the meeting with supporters**
- Read the room
- Create **urgency**

You are the Expert

- **You** control the agenda
- **You know marketing, they don’t**
- **You** know the material best
- **You** have the PPT
  - **You** decide the structure, flow
  - **You** select the examples

- **Teach** them to the answer you want
Must Have a Logical Process

• Lawyers need a process
  – Show them you’ve considered all contingencies
  – Reduced risk
  – Logical result
• Distrustful of educated guesses
  – No rough drafts
• Recommendation must be perfect
  – Inevitable inviolable conclusion

Selling Innovation

• Step by step by step...
  – Show all the bullet points
• Prove that it works
  – Make fun of bad work, clichés
    • Help them see that it’s ineffective, invisible
  – Contrast bad work with good work
    • Show it’s OK — top firms do innovate
      – Don’t tell them, show them.
    • Lots of examples
    • (But not too many, they hate repetition)
Selling Innovation

• Prove that it works
  – Reduce their perceived risk of failure
  – Contrast existing materials to great work
    • “What grabs your attention?”
    • Embarrass them, they’ll demand better
    • Let them draw their own conclusions

• Compare big upside to limited downside

• For example . . .

WHAT DID I DO EARLIER?
So let’s look at what I did

• My goals were:
  – Eschew clichés
  – Be more creative

• Set it up, then knock it down
• Help them do the math in their heads
• **Don’t force-feed them, pull them along**
  – They must draw their own conclusions
• (Ensure they’re the conclusions you want!)

I *didn’t* say:

• “We need a new website.”
• “We need a bold new brand.”
• “We can’t use skylines and columns.”
What did I do?

- Create the need
- Lay out the case
  - Prove every point
- Remove the risk
  - Bullets
  - Show other examples
    - Visuals
    - Surveys, studies
    - Other firms they respect, admire, aspire to become
    - Other industries

Lawyers will never “take your word for it.”

- “But I’m the expert!”
  - Yeah.
  - Tough.

- Get over it.
They’re skeptical, but they can be led

- They like learning
- They value a good education
- They don’t really want to push you around
  - They don’t respect weakness or Yes-Men (and -Women)
- Stand your ground
  - Politely
  - They’re not being jerks, they’re learning
- Be the expert

Books for sale by Ross Fishman

ASSOCIATE MARKETING

Ultimate Law Firm Associate’s Marketing Checklist:
- The Renowned Step-By-Step, Year-By-Year Process For Lawyers Who Want To Develop Clients.

$25 retail
$10 today

Buy it at Amazon:
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STRATEGY AND BRANDING

We’re Smart. We’re Old. And We’re the Best at Everything.
- The world’s first no-BS guide to legal marketing and branding.”

$25 retail
$15 today

Buy it at Amazon:
goo.gl/svDLXF
Hang on.
Let me think.

ALA wanted me to remind you to do something.

Fill out an evaluation form, maybe?