

How Legal Marketers Can Anticipate Their Attorneys' Needs

Before joining Jaffe, I worked in-house at an AmLaw 200 firm for nearly nine years. One thing I always used to say was, "Develop your psychic tendencies." I would often be met with quizzical looks, but the premise was if you can anticipate what your clients need and want before they tell you, it builds your credibility and makes you a valuable member of the team. Or in the words of Mavericks owner Mark Cuban, "It is so much easier to be nice, to be respectful, to put yourself in your customers' shoes and try to understand how you might help them before they ask for help, than it is to try to mend a broken customer relationship."

When you are working in-house as a legal marketer, your client is the lawyer. When you are a consultant, your client is your marketing or communications team contact *and* the lawyer. Each group has different goals, and you need to understand both so you can meet their needs.

What does this look like in legal or professional services marketing? Your clients have clients of their own. Their job is to provide a service to their clients, and while they want to build their firm, practice and individual brands, there are only so many hours in a day. These tips are just some ways you can help make business development and marketing easier for your attorneys.

Content Is King

Lawyers have lots of great content. It could be a white paper, article or even advice to a client. These materials are an excellent way for lawyers to demonstrate their experience. Dig for existing content, and think about how you can **reuse** it for another effort or in a different outlet.

If you do have a lawyer writing something, brainstorm about where else you can use the material. You want to make sure you capitalize on this non-billable time. With a little editing and customization, a presentation for a speaking engagement can become a byline article, blog post, podcast and client alert.

Recognize Patterns

Does the same lawyer ask the same questions each time you present a PR opportunity? Some people keep lists of the preferences of different lawyers they work with. Do whatever works for you, but keep track so you can answer questions before the attorneys ask. Be their partner rather than a cog in the wheel.



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Make Them Look Good

Who doesn't want to look good? Make sure anything you are doing on behalf of your client makes them look good. Ask the lawyer what their wish list is for media placements, and work hard on that list. If your client is the in-house communications team, make sure you are bringing their attorneys great opportunities that make it clear that choosing you was the right call. You don't want lawyers wondering why their in-house team picked you. Instead, make sure you look like a great selection and investment.

Cut Out Surprises

Surprises are good for your birthday, but that is about it. When it comes to work, no one likes surprises. If you anticipate a thorny issue, let your client know as soon as possible. It is better to look ahead and [plan a response](#) than to cover up a possible issue and then try to pedal quickly to respond if it does come to pass. Even if the issue doesn't come to pass, your client will respect you for being upfront and honest.

Make Life Easy

It is the little things in life ... Does your attorney have to fill out a licensing agreement to have an article published? Fill out as much of it for them as you can. It will only take a few minutes of your time, but what it says to your client is that you value their time.

It doesn't matter if you are an in-house legal marketer or a consultant: Understanding your client and their needs, wants and pain points make you a trusted advisor. This should always be your ultimate goal.

What one thing do you do to make life easier for your client? Let me know your tips. Reach out to me, Michelle McCormick, at mmccormick@jaffepr.com.