

It's Chambers Submission Season: Heaven Help Us All!

Well, it's that time of year again. Here in the Northeast, the flowering trees are blooming, the grass is getting greener, and *Chambers USA* has released their rankings and submission deadlines. And so it begins.

Merely mentioning *Chambers* rankings can cause legal marketers' blood pressure to rise. This year, *Chambers* released their legal rankings at the end of April – which is great because it gives us time to analyze the 2019 rankings before we are knee-deep in this year's submissions. These rankings, coupled with your past editorial submissions and referee documents, provide a great place to start planning for a practice group's 2020 submission. If the 2019 rankings are not what was expected, review the group's previous submission and referee documents to make sure you covered all your bases.

When reviewing these documents, consider who was featured and whether there were adequate referees for attorneys you were looking to help move up in the rankings. Client feedback remains the largest determinate the researchers use.

How many times have you put forth this attorney? Achieving or improving a *Chambers* ranking is a multi-year endeavor. The *Chambers'* editorial staff is looking for consistent, high-quality legal work from the attorneys they rank. We live in a society that clamors for instant gratification, which makes it frustrating to wait years for a coveted *Chambers* ranking.

Once you have completed this review, look at what's new for the 2020 research process. Along with the release of the 2020 research schedule, Toby Eccleshall, *Chambers USA* editor, sat down for a Q&A and provided some [guidance for drafting a great submission](#), what's new this year and new/updated sections for 2020.

Law Firm Interviews

Chambers is placing a greater emphasis on talking to women and younger attorneys. They want to provide a clearer picture of the legal landscape in the USA. This means talking to a more-diverse set of attorneys at the firms they interview. When requesting firm interviews, they may ask to speak to women, young partners and senior associates.

While this may be politically challenging for the firm, it is important to the research process. However, if the firm does not feel these are the best people for the researcher to speak with, they may suggest alternates and that will not be held against them.

Regardless of whom the researcher speaks to, it is important that she/he is prepared to speak about the matters submitted, jurisdiction where they practice, and the firm.



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Client Interviews

This key piece for *Chambers USA* research has not changed: **They heavily weight client feedback.** It is imperative that firms back up what they put in the submission with referee feedback. The researchers need to hear it from the client in addition to reading about the matter in the editorial submission.

Identifying the best referees is not easy. It is tempting to submit a GC as a reference. I know it sounds impressive, but if she/he does not have the time to talk to the researcher, then it is a lost opportunity. Consideration should also be given to the body of work and which attorneys the referee will be able to provide information about. And don't forget to get their permission before you submit their information. Let them know that *Chambers* might be in touch and ask if they can make the time to respond fully.

Submission Documents

Chambers does not require firms to use its [submission](#) template, but doing so ensures you provide the information they are looking for in a way they are accustomed to receiving it. The researchers read hundreds of submissions each year; using the template ensures they can easily find the information needed to properly vet your firm.

You also should complete all sections of the template. *Chambers* does not interview every firm in every jurisdiction, so this document is your opportunity to highlight the firm and attorneys' strengths.

One area that is often tricky for legal marketers is feedback on *Chambers'* coverage. While it is never okay to bash your competitors, providing constructive, compelling feedback can be useful to the researcher.

Many firms also find it difficult to decide how much information to submit. *Chambers* requests that a firm stick to one page per work highlight. This is understandable, since firms may submit up to 20 matters. While it is tempting to write long, detailed summaries, keeping each summary to one page will help the researcher glean the importance of the matter and easily digest the information.

It is fine to change the mix of publishable and confidential matters as long as you only submit a total of 20 matters. In a nutshell, you want to submit clearly and concisely written information that highlights the work of the attorneys you are nominating. You want to provide information that will help the researchers understand what happened, why it is important and what was the outcome. The final rule when it comes to writing submissions is if you assert something, make sure you can back it up with facts.

Chambers Submission Deadlines

Submission deadlines can be found here: <https://chambers.com/research/research-schedule> – the first round of submissions is due on June 13, 2019. Note that for 2020, extensions will not be granted and firms should prioritize referee submissions over editorial submissions. If you will not complete the submission by the deadline, there is no

need to alert the researcher or editors. They are notified when a submission is uploaded, but do not want to know that one is not going to arrive.

Opportunities to be ranked have increased – submissions are being accepted in a number of new practice areas, both nationally and regionally. That information can be found [here](#).

Confidentiality and Data Security

Trusting how *Chambers* will handle confidentiality has always been a concern. However, since Mark Wyatt and his financial backers, Inflexion, acquired Chambers and Partners in 2018, these concerns have grown. Many legal marketers have voiced concerns about the security of their data and how the information is being used. *Chambers* realizes the seriousness of this and vigorously protects the information that law firms submit. They know that the strength of their product is based on their ability to vet law firms and attorneys properly, and that they cannot do this without firms providing the information. Rest assured, the submitted information is used internally and only by the research staff. *Chambers* has never had a data breach and is working to further enhance the security of their systems and to obtain the highest level of security certification.

If you'd like more tips on managing your *Chambers* submissions, watch our webinar about [how to handle Chambers submissions](#) or, for more information and [tips to improve your Chambers submission process](#) or [writing a winning nomination](#), contact me, Susan Holmes, at sholmes@jaffepr.com.