

Marketing Innovative Law Firms

"Business has only two functions – marketing and innovation." ~ Milan Kundera

Law firms today are increasingly looking at innovation to help distinguish their practice offerings, strategy, and leadership, and need inspiring marketing to develop meaningful campaigns that resonate with their audiences.

Chris Cartrett, Executive Vice President of technology solutions provider Aderant, wrote in his article about [big ideas in law firm innovation](#): "The firms that are most successful at adopting new ways of doing things are those with leaders that take innovation seriously. Change and innovation must come from the top with leaders that are actively involved."

Baker Donelson and Harrity & Harrity are two examples of how firm leaders are spurring innovative legal practices and law firms while using creative marketing that is changing the future of these progressive firms.

Baker Donelson has offered [innovation services](#) for nearly 20 years that focus on efficiency, flexibility, and better communication and collaboration with its clients. This long-term dedication has earned the firm recognition for its comprehensive suite of services.

With firm clients increasingly asking for and needing legal project management, alternative fees, and more from the firm, firm management tasked the marketing department two years ago with developing a comprehensive strategy to increase awareness of and market the suite as a cohesive service offering.

To display their thought leadership, the firm utilized a variety of means to increase visibility and provide awareness to key audiences, including clients, prospects and recruits, as well as the entire firm. A website page was created that describes the various offerings, client benefits, and case studies. It showcases more than a dozen short videos with firm attorneys giving voice to various topics, many news articles that mention the firm's innovative practices and quote attorneys, published articles and webinars.

Key messages were developed and are used with consistency across all the channels delivering information about the variety of the innovative services.

The firm's social media platforms give further exposure to the developed content. Additionally, brochures and other marketing and proposal materials were created, as well as attorney emails that were sent firmwide to help educate and inform the entire firm about the suite of services.

Public relations also served an important role in the strategic campaign, leveraging created content and placing firm attorneys in news stories about innovative legal services and increasing visibility of the firm's services.



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"Our strategy and the execution of our plan has created a strong foundation for ongoing success. We wanted to use innovation to sell innovation!" says Adam Severson, Baker Donelson's Chief Marketing and Business Development Officer. "Focusing on the clients' goals and how our solutions help them meet their goals is a key element of our communications strategy."

"Without change there is no innovation, creativity, or incentive for improvement. Those who initiate change will have a better opportunity to manage the change that is inevitable." ~ William Pollard

While many large law firms like Baker Donelson have innovation partners, including Orrick and Hogan Lovells, big ideas come in smaller firms, too.

Patent law firm Harrity & Harrity has consistently developed cutting-edge new approaches that distinguish this IP boutique. The firm's meaningful actions start with its bold leaders, two patent attorney brothers who formed the firm 20 years ago. They have pioneered several initiatives that raise the bar, push boundaries and set new standards as a law firm.

Big data is the basis of Harrity Patent Analytics, which adds value to companies by helping them better understand their patent portfolios, the patent portfolios of their competitors, and patent office trends around the world. After four years, the analytics business has grown 550% as IP counsel purchase customized reports to learn more about their company's patent portfolio, gain insights to help make strategic decisions, compare how their companies stack up against the competition, and identify areas for improvement. The firm also developed Patentprufer.com, the world's first community-based, decision-making tool for patent prosecution and the Patent 300[®], an annual list of the top 300 companies, organizations, and universities in the patent field, based on the quantity of U.S. patents issued each year.

Firm culture has played a significant role in the firm's innovative thinking. The firm's pay-for-performance model and flexible work arrangements allow hard-working young attorneys to receive substantially more income than their peers in large law firms.

Diversity remains a significant challenge among law firms, and even more so in the patent field. To combat the lack of diverse patent attorneys, Harrity & Harrity has been committed since 2016 to a number of diversity initiatives, including interviewing a female or minority candidate for every male, non-minority candidate the firm interviews for any position at the firm. This has resulted in a leap of diverse patent attorneys at the firm from 8% prior to 2016, to 23% today.

Harrity & Harrity's most recent major innovation is the September 2019 launch of its [Minority Firm Incubator](#) program, established to help train, cultivate, and launch minority-owned patent law firms, and increase the diversity of lawyers in the patent field. Starting in 2020, selected candidates will be trained, and paid a competitive salary, during a comprehensive four-year program that ultimately prepares them to successfully establish and manage their own minority-owned patent firms. Program participants will also develop corporate relationships with partner companies that are supporting the program as mentors.

"I have had the pleasure of working on some very innovative projects in my career, and Harrity's Minority Firm Incubator is at the top of my list. Tackling diversity and inclusion within law firms alone is an upstream battle, let alone increasing diverse law firm leadership," says Terry Isner, CEO/Owner, Marketing & Branding at Jaffe. "The Minority Firm Incubator is too unique to only take traditional marketing and PR routes. We launched a multi-prong campaign that incorporates PR, direct mail, social media, cool Syfy videos, and actors dressed as astronauts to walk the conference areas of their upcoming events, all calling for applicants to apply. The success of this initiative is critical to improving diversity in law firm management."

Public relations and media outreach has already secured interviews, including profiles about the program and mentions in key trade and business media.

Many firms are championing novel efforts to develop out-of-the-box solutions to their clients' needs that go further, look beyond and try something new. Developing creative marketing strategies sets these firms apart, speaks to their firm's culture and attracts new business.

"Innovation comes down to an attitude, which for a business, like a law firm, means it's cultural," says Cartrett.

"Culture is still eating strategy for breakfast and those professional services firms that are focused on creating a culture of caring are finding a seat at the breakfast table with some of the most socially responsible businesses who are looking to align with other businesses with similar values. Congrats to these firms that care about bettering our world and businesses by doing good business," says Isner.

"Ultimately, progress and innovation win." ~ Travis Kalanick

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