

A Pairing for the Ages: PR + BD

How is your law firm emerging from COVID-19? Is it getting back to business, same as before? Or perhaps with a few adaptations to accommodate more work-from-home preferences? Was the pandemic a massive disruptor to the firm's revenue?

One thing we know for sure: Your law firm should not be the same now as it was before.

Our world certainly isn't. Costs have skyrocketed for lumber, cars, new homes, computer chips, air travel, restaurants, entertainment – the list goes on. These manufacturers, markets and service providers are your firm's clients, and they have all had to undergo massive changes. Maybe – ideally – many will settle back to "normal" in the coming years as the world shakes off COVID-19, but many won't.

What can and should your firm be doing to adapt in real time to our new world?

Deliberate and targeted strategies are more important now than ever. For legal marketers, our job is to help increase revenue. Whether it's bringing awareness to the firm, developing [business development plans](#) for practice teams and attorneys to [foster relationships](#), using media relations to raise profiles, or creating conversations on social media, the bottom line is – the bottom line.

Have you changed your sales strategy?

As law firm marketers, we need to be both reactive and proactive in everything we do. How are you helping your firm respond to market changes, while forecasting what may still come?

Client-Focused BD 2021 = RD 2021

Successful business development is all about relationships, not direct selling.

We all have witnessed one positive transformation in our country over the past 18 months: the emphasis on putting people first. Helping others. Giving empathy a seat at the table. Is your firm prepared to continue [building and nurturing relationships](#)? (And no, we don't mean having more Zoom happy hours!)

The name of the game now should be "relationship development." What are your clients' new and pressing needs, and how have their markets changed since the pandemic? Stay hyper-tuned to their expectations and demands.

In the past, developing a solid business development plan for the firm, its practice groups and individuals would often include overall goals and objectives; target audience demographics; unique selling propositions; and an action plan to build the brand, develop a network and identify leads, and cross-sell internally. How many of you are including a



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PR plan in your BD plan? A winning strategy starts with a collaboration of ways to raise awareness while building and fostering relationships.

Remember: *Clients build relationships with attorneys and legal teams* — not the firm.

Law Firm PR 2021: Validation Station

Buyers of legal services want to have confidence that they're making a good decision when they hire outside counsel. PR can do exactly that. The most-successful PR campaigns include a mix of media relations, bylined articles, social media, rankings and lists, blogging, podcasts, videos, and speaking at events.

Incorporating [PR in the business development strategy](#) effectively raises awareness of your firm in a way that can create relationships. Your clients or prospects will feel validated for choosing your firm, and your revenues will increase.

By understanding that public relations is a critical element of the sales funnel, and just as important an income generator as relationship development, we can recognize more opportunities for integration:

- Identify audiences, whether by sector, region or industry, to collaborate on efforts for both PR and BD initiatives that align with each other.
- Establish credibility while raising awareness and validating thought leadership by getting quoted in news articles and publishing bylined articles in the business and trade press.
- Leverage those placements in your firm's social media campaigns to reach the firm's audiences with perspectives about a trend, legislative or regulatory decisions, or other current news event important to your clients.
- [Secure speaking engagements that reach a target audience](#). Remember that a small audience does not mean it's not the right audience. Increase engagement and new business opportunities by setting up meetings with contacts who are in the city of the event or use LinkedIn to ask for introductions to other event attendees.
- Post results of media placements to the firm's website and attorney bios and share them in internal or external marketing email messages to your audiences.
- [Establish a podcast](#) or blog about a subject that sets the firm, practice or attorneys apart from others. Find a niche area not already served.

Apply multiple channels to get your content in front of clients and prospects to support their decision that your firm or attorney is the right choice for their needs.

Better Together

The sales process is ever-present and ongoing. It is happening silently while you are offline or asleep, when you are attending conferences or social events, and even during the weekends and on holidays (especially if your firm has global reach). Before you are aware of their interest or have a chance to engage with anyone directly, potential purchasers have done their research and determined who you are and what you bring to the table.

These prospects are actively looking for information about your firm's and attorneys'

solutions, experience, values and culture. They are learning about your firm from word of mouth, from media mentions and profiles, from search results online, in courtroom trials, and on social media platforms, to list a few outlets.

Every aspect of your marketing, PR, and business development plays a key role in the ultimate decision a legal buyer will make, so ensure consistency in your messaging. Share on multiple channels. Look for opportunities by collaborating with your team members. These tactics work better together.

Chocolate is wonderful and peanut butter is great – but together, they are out of this world! That's what we're talking about: the power of integrating two things to create a better result.

One More Thing

You may be thinking that your law firm already does a good job in some of these areas, but in most cases, there is room for improvement or shifting priorities. If you don't have intentional and strategic thinking to help align public relations and business development efforts to support the firm's revenue, you might not even be aware of opportunities that are being missed.

What is one more thing you can change or add to your plan?

Does your firm need help with assessing your current practices, identifying gaps and discrepancies across tactics, and developing and implementing a strategic plan to integrate public relations more effectively with business development? Contact [Vivian Hood](mailto:vhood@jaffepr.com), Owner/CEO, Public Relations, at vhood@jaffepr.com, or [Terry M. Isner](mailto:tisner@jaffepr.com), Owner/CEO, Marketing & Branding, at tisner@jaffepr.com.