

3 Things to Include in Your Law Firm Website's 'About' Section

When it comes to marketing a law firm, how do you differentiate your firm's identity from others in the market? It's not your full-service scope. Countless law firms claim to have all the practice areas a client could ever need. It's not the quality of the attorneys. No firm would boast that their lawyers are the second-best in their region or area of practice.

What truly separates a law firm from the pack is its brand. The brand itself is a composite of a number of intangibles, including the firm's mission, its values, its unspoken promise to clients, its key differentiators and its core competencies. The brand is reflected in a number of ways, most notably through visuals, such as its logo and website imagery. It also is reflected in the tone and voice of the site's content, such as the use of humor or the inclusion of specific words and phrases in its text.

Prospective clients who visit your law firm's website are not likely to click around with the explicit intent of discovering your brand. But ultimately, that is exactly what they are doing when they visit your website. After all, one of the top questions they will inevitably ask themselves is "What makes this law firm different?"

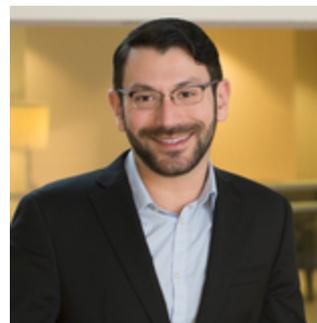
To aid visitors in their exploration of your firm's brand, it is critical to have a fleshed-out "About" section on your website. (Whether you call it "About" is up to your firm.) Too often, law firms neglect this section, which they consider superfluous content, and instead concentrate on practice area descriptions and attorney bios. While those are certainly important parts of a law firm website, they don't provide the opportunity to convey the law firm's brand that an "About" section does.

This post provides some tips for what a law firm's "About" section should include.

The Origin Story

The origin story is my favorite piece of content on a law firm's website. It provides the opportunity for the firm to craft a narrative that tells the story of its genesis, and in doing so, convey its mission and values in a compelling manner without necessarily explicitly stating the mission and values. Basically, it's the principle of "show, don't tell."

A law firm origin story should name the firm's founders and provide some relevant biographical information about them. For example, maybe one of your founders grew up in a farming community where they learned the value of a hard day's work. Maybe your founder was the first member of their family to go to college, which represents determination. The story should convey the motivation for creating the firm. Maybe the founders wanted to find a better, more-efficient way to provide legal services to clients. Maybe the founders saw an unserved need in the marketplace and wanted to fill it. Maybe



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the founders prioritize diversity and wanted to start a firm that embraces this value. Whatever the motivation may be, you can see how it creates a foundation for the firm's brand.

Mission and Values

While the origin story is an effective way to subtly convey a firm's mission and values, I recommend that an "About" section also include a subpage devoted to explicitly stating a firm's mission and values. This gives the website visitor an opportunity to read about what the firm stands for in its own words.

I'm of the mindset that when it comes to copy, less is more (although considerations do have to be made for SEO purposes in some cases, such as practice pages). The firm's mission and values statements should be concise. The mission should be a few sentences at most. The values often work well as a list with some brief, supportive text that provides a little more detail about why each particular value is important to the firm.

I also think that video is a useful tool for conveying a firm's mission and values. Having firm leadership speak directly to the visitor can have a greater impact than mere text alone. That's because video provides the opportunity to convey sincerity through tone, voice and body language. Too often, mission and values statements are lip service. Visible sincerity can go a long way.

The Elevator Pitch

The last subpage of an "About" section that is an essential element of any law firm website is what I call the "Why us?" section. It's basically the elevator pitch for the law firm to succinctly sell itself to prospects.

This section should broadcast the firm's key strengths and differentiators. For example, if the firm is a boutique, it should use this section to define its niche and what makes it a better firm than one that is more full-service in scope. Or perhaps the firm uses some form of proprietary technology as a value-add to clients. If so, this is a great place to mention it.

Note that it's important to recognize what actually is a differentiator. As mentioned above, being full-service or having "really great attorneys" doesn't say much. Instead, identify specific attributes that separate your firm from the pack. Does your firm have some sort of focused practice that other firms lack? Does your firm have a more-diverse roster of attorneys than most? Does the firm participate in or lead any unique community engagement activities? When conceptualizing this section, devote some time to assessing your firm in depth for an honest look at how it compares to your competition.

If you need help strategizing the content on your law firm website, contact me, Keith Ecker, SVP, Marketing & Branding, at kecker@jaffepr.com.