

Don't Let PR Cool Down in the Heat of Summer

The official start of summer in the United States is just a few days away. Those of us who work in legal marketing and public relations know that as temperatures heat up in most parts of the country, the appetite for intense, all-out reporting on just about everything — including legal news — cools down. The intensity of any PR effort is accordingly muted as nearly everyone, including lawyers, takes summer vacations and just generally enjoys a little more leisure time than during the busy cold weather months.

With that in mind, what's an earnest publicist to do to help ensure continued success for a media relations program when almost everyone else is taking a step back? Here are six suggestions for how PR professionals can continue to win the PR game during the upcoming summer season.

Oh, and this article will be purposely brief because you're probably itching to get outside, enjoy extended daylight, take a trip, sip a summer drink by the pool — anything other than read blogs or do work.



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Keep feeding the media beast

The slowing news cycle that typically accompanies summer is actually an opportunity. Reporters and editors are likely to be less bombarded with must-cover topics and the usual barrage of publicists' emails. That means the best advice is to keep pitching your news, especially ideas for longer-term stories. A (non-time-sensitive) email pitch about a fascinating side project for a firm or attorney, for example, is more likely to catch reporters' attention when they aren't on deadline for other stories.

Pitch for the future

Speaking of longer-lead pitching, if the flow of "pitchable" content slows to a drip and the availability for attorneys to serve as media sources starts to wane, now could be a good time to think about what reporters will want to cover in five to seven months. Consider crafting pitches now about year-end reviews of what's happened in high-profile industries or legal practice areas, and get those pitches in front of targeted media way in advance so yours will be the first sources reporters go to when they're ready to start interviewing and reporting.

Get them in the door

Further capitalizing on the fact that reporters may have a little more breathing room in the summer, it's a fine time to slap that "welcome" sign on the law firm door — now

is the time to invite reporters to visit law firm offices for face-to-face meetings with firm leadership or practice heads to help them recalibrate their thinking about what might make for some good stories to cover. PR and law firm marketing folks should get in on the act themselves and invite reporters out to a fun lunch spot, help them relax and get to know them on a more personal level. It's all about relationship-building, so you and your firm will be top of mind when reporters need to reach the PR pros quickly who will get them the sources and information they need when the deadline crunches resume.

Be more social

As we all know, attending to and investing heavily in social media can be a real time-suck. But isn't being more social what summer is all about? Take the opportunity this season to get your hands real dirty in the [social media sandbox](#). Just a few things to consider doing (or encouraging attorneys to do) with some extra summer downtime include [writing more posts for firm blogs](#) or as a guest contributor to other influencers' blogs, posting more to LinkedIn or commenting on articles posted there, and mining for more followers for your and your firm's Twitter and LinkedIn profiles.

Evaluate PR tactics and try something new

In the heat of battle during the busier months, it's often difficult to break from the mold of PR tactics that you know will get the job done. Sometimes, it's challenging just to find the time to take a step back and think about whether there's something you could be doing differently. Think of summer as a chance to break from routine. Maybe try pitching reporters via social media if you haven't yet invested time in that channel. Or spend some significant time researching which reporters and editors your competitor firms or lawyers are talking to, and what topics and types of interviews are getting those competitors mentioned in the media. Find ways to be a part of those stories and conversations. Imitation is a sincere form of flattery – isn't that what they say?

Invest in you!

Now is a great time to sign up for a webinar or two, take an in-person class, attend a conference or networking event, or read up on the latest industry best practices – all in the name of professional development and learning how to be better at law firm marketing and public relations.

And don't just think in the realm of legal marketing. The best ideas and practices can come from any industry and often can be applied to lawyers and law firms, sometimes in unique and exciting ways. Business development and PR via social media sure didn't start with lawyers. The next evolving marketing trend you learn about today could help set your firm's PR program apart from the pack in the days ahead.

Looking for some help with strategizing a successful PR campaign during the summer or the seasons ahead? Contact me, Randy Labuzinski, at rlabuzinski@jaffepr.com.