

# Get the Most Out of Being the Best

Attorneys can't bill for marketing, but you can't win business if no one knows who you are. Making money requires hustle. One way to stand out from the crowd is by advertising a shiny award.

Best Lawyers, Super Lawyers, Chambers USA, the Legal 500, Law360, Crain's or Business Journal's attorney of the year or top woman lawyer – there's a staggering array of legitimate and not-so-legitimate rankings, recognitions and awards to pursue. It seems like any mid-tier attorney can slap a super-duper turbo-star lawyer badge on their website. Is it really worth the time to pursue [rankings](#)?

Jaffe's Senior Vice President for Marketing and Business Development and Manager of RankingsForLawyers<sup>®</sup> Evyan O'Keefe sat down with Content Writer Ada Kase to discuss why a honed legal rankings strategy returns dividends, and how to get the most juice for the ranking squeeze.

## Preparing to Win

**Ada:** I see you have some notes there, Evyan. Did you prepare for this interview? Wink wink.

**Evyan:** You have to set a good example. Strategy and planning are key to [maximizing the benefits of rankings](#). When I start working with lawyers and marketers, the first thing I try to do is educate them about how a rankings strategy will pay off in the long term. Doing leg work in the beginning will make it successful, not just in winning awards for attorneys, but in developing an integrated marketing plan.

**Ada:** In "The Art of War," Sun Tzu said, "He will win who, prepared himself, waits to take the enemy unprepared."

**Evyan:** Integrating rankings into your marketing strategy will always beat out the others who have little or no strategy at all.

**Ada:** From a marketing standpoint, what are the benefits of an overall [rankings strategy for law firms and lawyers](#)?

**Evyan:** It starts with getting in the right mindset. You want to set yourself up for success, starting with determining your priorities and setting your focus. Obviously, a prestigious ranking is good to showcase on an attorney's bio, on requests for proposals, practice group pages, and pitches to clients. But the process of submitting for a ranking or award, even if you don't win, generates content that can be used on your law firm's website, socials, RFPs and other rankings.

**Ada:** When you and I work on a really detailed submission, like Chambers, we produce a



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wealth of content that we repurpose for other submissions.

**Evyann:** Exactly. The interviews we do with the lawyers produce case summaries that they can use on other channels, and sometimes gives them a better understanding about how to describe their practices to potential clients.

## Methods for Securing Victory

**Ada:** What are the practical steps for generating a solid rankings strategy?

**Evyann:** It starts with the goal in mind. Which lawyers and what practices are priority focus areas? Where has there been success? Where are opportunities for growth?

Then get buy-in from key decision-makers in the practice and the firm for pursuing rankings so there are no surprises down the road. Nothing slows momentum like someone who thinks a ranking opportunity is a waste of time.

**Ada:** Agreed. Everyone needs to be on board. Having to explain why we're doing a ranking for 10 minutes in an interview is a waste of time. Once everyone is on board, what should the attorneys be doing to execute the plan?

**Evyann:** Start with matter tracking. Have attorneys take 15 minutes at the close of each case to write up summaries and any major developments or victories that happened. It can be formal or informal, it doesn't matter, but you can send them to the marketing team or stored for reference later.

**Ada:** Going back to preparedness beating the enemy, when we work on awards, preparation helps beat out the competition. When I conduct interviews and write submissions for our clients, the least successful attorneys waste time trying to remember things, digging around computers and emails for information. The ones who get the most out of unbillable time come prepared with outlines of their cases, case documents and notes about specific achievements in each matter.

**Evyann:** Every moment you spend on something non-billable should be focused on maximizing your time and energy for maximum results, to make every step of the process as easy, efficient and successful as possible. It's a game changer on a macro level, too. The best use of your time and resources is to understand the work you and your law firm are doing, and your place in the market.

## Pick Your Battles

**Ada:** Now that we have a goal and our matter summaries, how do we pick which legal rankings opportunities to go after?

**Evyann:** The representative matters are useful to home in on what rankings you should pursue. For example, if you have one significant victory in a year, a national recognition that requests five work highlights won't be the first fit. And you'll weed out opportunities that aren't legitimate. A Top 100 attorneys in your state email coming to a fifth-year associate who never led a matter? That's a [red flag](#).

I like to think through the lens of investing non-billable time to create the most value. What ranking can be repurposed for other opportunities?

**Ada:** The other important point to consider is understanding the rankings themselves. There's no point pursuing a ranking for, say, most influential women in Delaware if a significant focus is community service and the attorney doesn't have any at all.

**Evyan:** That's something we at Jaffe try to do – understanding our clients, their firm, the attorneys and their practice areas, and curating opportunities. We want to set you up for success. Submitting for the sake of submitting does not benefit anyone. Part of my job is to serve as a guide and give useful feedback and advice on awards and make recommendations on whether or not to submit, and the potential for success. Obviously, we can't guarantee a win, but we can help to put your best foot forward to evaluate whether or not to pursue.

**Ada:** The other thing I appreciate about you, Evyan, is how you manage it all. What's the final word for the law firm marketing departments out there for managing and executing the strategy?

**Evyan:** Remember that some opportunities are longer plays. They might involve lengthy write-ups and documentation. Know the submission process, deadlines and time commitments for the submissions you're going for. Understand that some of the most prestigious ones, such as the legal directories like [Chambers USA](#), the Legal 500 or Benchmark Litigation, could involve a multi-year strategy, because they recognize attorneys year-over-year based on a career of consistent results.

Need help developing and managing a rankings strategy? Reach out to Evyan O'Keefe at [eokeefe@jaffepr.com](mailto:eokeefe@jaffepr.com).