

# Your Roadmap to Attorney Bio Revisions in 2 Trips

It's summertime, a season defined by slowing down a bit and taking a few road trips. Summer can also be the perfect time to finish a lingering biography revision project, and we're here to help you do just that!

## How to Get Law Firm Leadership on Board

Have marketing meetings gone by without action on the biography writing project agenda item – the project that shows up again and again on agendas? For whatever reason, a bio revision project brings up all sorts of excuses, so that even in the dog days of summer, when you ask a marketing partner "Can we do this now?" the responses are: No, we're too busy, and it's summertime - we don't need a big project. No, because our attorneys already know to send edits to marketing to update their bios. No, because really, who even pays attention to our bios?

Here's the rationale for getting to "yes:"

- There will never be a "slower"/better time to get this work done.
- Bios are essential. The marketing team works on [RFP responses](#), [speaking engagement submissions](#), [ranking nominations](#) and bylined articles all the time. These items all require current content about the lawyers involved. The content has to be up to date so marketing can meet submission deadlines and easily pull what is needed off the website without bothering the attorneys at every turn.
- Things change. Some bios may not reflect attorneys' current practice areas. Maybe some attorneys come across as generalists but now have a niche practice. Maybe some associate bios haven't been updated since they arrived, and they now have real experience to highlight. Some attorneys might have received awards or published material that deserves to be shown.
- We have a solution. Call it two road trips.
- Our plan will make this very easy. -lsh.

Start by saying to leadership, "Here's how we're going to get this done. We aren't going to do any website design changes. We will keep the overall format and sidebar categories as is. We will go group by group. We will set reachable and realistic deadlines: three months."

Now you're ready for our road trips. The first route is about getting everyone to "yes." The second route is about completing the project.



**Liz Bard Lindley**

Senior Vice President  
Public Relations &  
Marketing  
917.455.1798  
llindley@jaffepr.com

## Route 1 – Destination: Presentation Place

To get high-quality content on your website, you need everyone to be on board – enthusiastically. Your first job is to sell this project to the attorneys. Here's your roadmap to compiling a presentation that will have everyone ready for this trip.

### *First Stop: BDIQâ€œ Boulevard*

Don't get stuck at Resistance Road. Jaffe developed BDIQâ€œ to examine an attorney's business development (BD) mindset, understand why there is resistance to starting or completing a BD task, and then find a personalized method to change that mindset and accomplish the tasks.

When an attorney responds to a bio update request with "I can't do my bio now," their actual mindset may be any of these views:

- My bio is up to date; there's nothing new to add.
- I am so active in my target industries that everyone knows who I am.
- I don't get clients or referrals from my website bio.
- Bio pages are not well-visited; nobody reads bios.
- The only profile that matters is on [LinkedIn](#).

The role of a legal marketer, as a trusted advisor, is to address these reasons, or myths, and provide the rationale for the project.

### *Next Stop: Search Valley via Data Drive*

Explain that it's all about the search.

For example, when they need to find something – a new dentist or a soccer program for the kids – they are likely to turn to Google for suggestions. That's what happens when a prospect or in-house legal counsel starts a search for a lawyer, and the search results will show bios.

We know that attorney bios are the second-most influential factor in a prospect's decision-making process, right after personal recommendations. Hiring decisions have to start somewhere, and that is why **attorney bios are the most visited pages on a law firm's website**. That factoid is worth putting into your presentation, and you can show Google Analytics data to back it up. In-house counsel rely on attorney bios when choosing their teams; it's simple *due diligence*. Most lawyers can relate to this kind of appraisal or investigation.

Consider including a quote from a client about having found and chosen a firm attorney because of their bio on the firm's website.

### *Next Stop: Answers Avenue*

Lawyers look to marketing teams for guidance, and that includes what a bio should be and what a bio should do. Our viewpoint is that a bio should anticipate and answer a prospect's questions. Presenting these questions to attorneys could be a meaningful

exercise. Imagine a prospect reading the bio and thinking:

- Can you handle my problem?
- Have you done this before?
- Have you been successful in this area?
- Are you well-known for this type of work?
- Will I like working with you?
- Do we have common interests?
- When was the last time you helped someone like me?
- What kind of client service will you provide?

### ***Last Stop: Presentation Place***

Okay, marketers, you're ready to put your ideas into a presentation. With consideration to your attorneys' time and availability, what type of meeting will yield the most attendance? Whether it's Bagels and Bios, or Lunch and Learn, definitely offer a virtual log-in and record the meeting.

Explain that the meeting will be brief to address the myths and realities of biographies, and the process and timing for the revision project.

We recommend copying the bios into individual Word documents, to accompany each meeting invitation, so that each attorney receives their current narrative, along with all of the categories as well, so they get the full picture. But be clear that this project is primarily about the narrative.

## **Route 2 – Destination: Applause Avenue**

You've given the presentation, attorneys have their current bios in a Word document, and they are eager, even excited, to start the revision process. #ThinkPositive

### ***First Stop: Assessment Annex***

Here is where the attorneys review their own bios objectively and assess the content, without stopping to make any changes. This can happen during a meeting, if you'd like to give everyone 20 minutes to focus on that task. Direct them to read these elements of their bios from a prospect's viewpoint and to highlight, without rewriting:

- The type of work they do
- The clients they work for
- Their experience in specific area(s), industries, etc.
- Their approach to client service
- Their accolades/education
- Their previous achievements
- Their current matters
- Their ability to provide solutions

### ***Second Stop: Revision Road***

Via email or in a meeting, the attorney can work with the marketing team on improving the

narrative to give the bio more purpose and to make it resonate more with the reader. This is where editing should begin.

We always prefer to see a document with tracked changes, no matter how messy that might look. Speak to your attorneys about how they want to provide changes, and accommodate when you can to keep the process moving forward. Consider providing both the Track Changes version and a clean version with the changes accepted to make it easier for the attorney to review.

Some prompts you can include are:

- Address your client base by focusing on keywords relevant to their business or industry.
- Look to the firm's practice group/industry group descriptions for keywords.
- Define the type of work you do for clients, and the problems you solve.
- Offer language about what differentiates you.
- Allow your personality, team approach or client service philosophy to come across.

### ***Third Stop: Wordsmith Way***

Wordsmithing is guided by the firm's own style guide (whether partner is written as Partner, the use of first names or last names, and so forth), and is often based on AP style. Prose can be finessed by a skilled editor who can modify the content to improve clarity, readability and tone.

You can give lawyers these additional tips:

- Remove duplicate information that appears in the narrative and in a sidebar, such as education, rankings or bar admission.
- Vary the paragraph and sentence structure; start sentences with different words, and not only He/She/They.
- Use headings/categories in the narrative for emphasis and clarity; consider what type of configuration will make the most sense to the reader.
- Try using bullet points, especially if the attorney has multiple areas of focus.

Be mindful of your state's [attorney advertising rules of professional conduct](#) and [any compliance standards](#) for how a lawyer's skills and achievements are presented in a biography.

### ***Last Stop: Applause Avenue***

Update the firm about the success of this project and how long it took. Maybe you can even obtain and share a testimonial from one of the lawyers about how great it feels to have a new bio – and any new work that has already come in and can be attributed to the update. Give yourself a pat on the back, too, for starting at Resistance Road and finishing at Applause Avenue! Then take a real road trip of your own to celebrate a project well-done!

Any attorney bio project will have ups and downs, successes and frustrations. Reach out to me, Liz Lindley, at [llindley@jaffepr.com](mailto:llindley@jaffepr.com) to talk through your ideas for updating biographies. Over the years, I have probably written or edited several hundred lawyer bios,

so maybe I can help.