

Whom to Choose? 5 tips to selecting attorney ranking candidates

RankingsForLawyers®

It's August and, while many are squeezing out the last moments of summertime fun, the calendar is filling up with law firm rankings and awards deadlines for the coming months. With so many opportunities, how do you select the right candidates to nominate? Here are five tips to ensure you are putting your best attorneys forward to benefit your law firm's public reputation.

- 1. Study the questions and know the publication:** Before you get started, carefully review the ranking submission process and make sure that you understand what is required and when. Scheduling a timeline is helpful to keep you on track. If possible, review the list of winners from previous years. See if you can identify any trends in whom they selected. It may vary from year to year, but this will give you a sense and help you identify the best candidates in your law firm. It will also help you figure out how steep the competition is.
- 2. Select an attorney who fits the requirements:** Make sure you select an attorney who has a story to tell that fits what the publication wants to know. If the attorney's experience is not relevant to the specific award, find someone else. You also want to ensure that you are representing attorneys and/or practice groups that fit the strategic goals of the firm. Attorney rankings are time-consuming, and not making the proper decisions early on can lead to a lot of wasted time, frustration and disappointment.
- 3. Select an attorney who has cases that can be discussed on the record:** Many rankings submissions require that candidates list representative experience, often within a certain timeframe. Make sure that the candidate has casework that can be listed on the record. A couple of confidential matters are OK, but the majority should be publishable. Otherwise, it is hard for the publication to get a true sense of the candidate—and nearly impossible to profile a candidate who wins. Also, many attorney rankings require that candidates list references. While this can be tricky, it is important to select clients who are comfortable being on the record on the firm's behalf. If you aren't sure, call and find out ahead of time or find someone else. Never list someone if you aren't confident that they will come through.
- 4. Look to previous submissions for material:** As my colleague outlined in a recent [blog post](#), there is a silver lining to consistently submitting nominations on the firm's behalf. An archive of previous submissions gives you a deeper understanding of the attorneys



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and practice groups in your firm, a sense of the matters they are working on, and whether they can be listed on the record. It is often helpful to have approved language that can be repurposed in other submissions.

5. ***Pro bono never hurts.*** Nominations frequently ask for the attorney's *pro bono* or charity work. While it is not always relevant to the actual topic of the nomination, a candidate who has a strong record of *pro bono* work, or is dedicated to volunteering, can often stand apart from the crowd. Even if the question isn't asked directly, weaving this information into the summary portion of the nomination is usually a good idea.

Thinking through these steps before you select an attorney to nominate will help ensure your best chance for selection. But even if your attorney is not chosen, the exercise will still give you deeper insight into the firm and perhaps uncover more opportunities to market it.

To discuss attorney rankings submissions and other issues related to law firm media relations, email Stephanie Holtzman at sholtzman@jaffepr.com.