

A case for promoting pro bono for business development

A new global [Nielsen survey](#) released this month finds that 50 percent of consumers surveyed are willing to pay more for goods and services from companies that give back to society. That's up 5 points from 2011. What does this have to do with law firms and law firm marketing?

Look at it through the prism of pro bono work. Law firm clients also care about social responsibility. I recall a comprehensive client survey I conducted for a law firm a few years ago. A majority of that firm's clients said that, all other things being equal, they would prefer to work with a firm that actively supports social causes and invests in pro bono work. It appears more law firms are becoming hip to this business development connection, since law firm pro bono activities are on the uptick. And let's not forget that it's also great news for the millions of Americans who can't afford legal services.

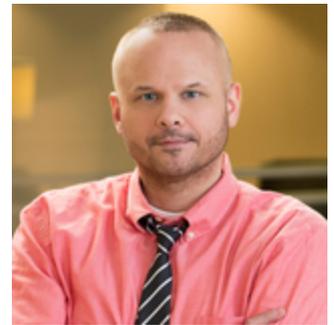
So, is it OK to market a firm's pro bono activities? The answer is *yes*. Doing good for good's sake is enough in itself, and most lawyers are doing pro bono work because they care. But why not let your audiences, including clients and prospects, know about it? Publicizing pro bono work through [law firm PR](#), especially a big case win or a major community project, helps [law firm branding](#) and enhances the firm's reputation in the same way that publicizing any paid-client matter raises visibility. From a tactical standpoint, you can treat a firm's pro bono work much like other firm news, perhaps with some added sensitivity to language.

A few suggestions include:

- Distribute press releases and media pitches to share the news about pro bono work with media. Focus on the facts and who benefits from the work.
- Highlight the work on the firm's website in a section devoted to pro bono, but also on practice area pages and on attorney profile pages. Anyone casually navigating a website should be able to easily pick up on pro bono activities.
- Don't forget social media. Tweet about the great work and post items on LinkedIn, Facebook or wherever else the firm has a social media presence.
- Announce the work and successes internally. Good deeds are a morale boost for the entire firm.

Traditional law firm marketing also can work for drawing positive attention for pro bono projects, with tools that include newsletters, brochures, advertising, videos and reports.

The important [business development](#) takeaway is that law firm pro bono work can make a real difference for corporate decision-makers as well as for recipients of your firm's



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