

Why Do Law Firm Rankings Matter?

RankingsForLawyers™

I had the wonderful opportunity to attend the 2016 [LMA annual conference](#) in Austin. This year's conference had a record-breaking number of attendees from 46 states and more than a dozen countries.

As a publicist for Jaffe, I often assist clients with drafting and submitting awards submissions. As most of us in legal marketing know, the number of annual award and ranking opportunities is staggering – and it can be extremely time-consuming to prepare these submissions. Therefore, I took the opportunity to attend an LMA session entitled “Qualifying and Driving the ROI in Legal Directories and Awards Submissions.”

Although the session didn't provide any magical answer that will make these submissions any easier, the presenters did provide some interesting statistics on legal awards and rankings and recommended formulating a sound strategy with which to approach submissions.

Allocating Resources

It seems many firms will continue to commit significant resources to submissions.

According to a survey conducted by a joint project between the LMA/LFMP and BTI, 80 percent of law firms plan to maintain or increase their use of submissions. Although many large law firms have a person, or even a team, dedicated to submissions, many smaller and midsize firms must rely on the marketing or communications manager/director or the office administrator to handle this task. The survey found only 18 percent of law firms have a dedicated staff to manage submissions. (It should be noted that this percentage was likely near zero a mere decade ago.)

Cost of Submissions

The survey found that the average cost to develop a submission is \$2,550. Now this number may be high or it may be low, but assuming it's in the ballpark, the reality is that many firms are committing significant resources to submissions, especially on an annual basis.

Understanding Your Goals

The survey also asked participants about their primary goal for submissions. Attorneys



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said the primary goal is to enhance firm recruitment and make existing clients feel better. Legal marketers indicated the primary goal was to improve morale internally and make existing clients feel better. These goals do help build and enhance the firm's brand, which is important. But what about generating new business? Surprisingly, this didn't rank very high in the survey.

The presenters noted that this may not be a bad thing since the ROI on submissions would be difficult to calculate. Therefore, they advised law firms to develop a strategy when choosing which rankings and awards to submit to. Instead of complaining about the process of preparing submissions, as many of us do, it's beneficial to take a step back and audit your process for submissions.

Here are some questions to ask yourself and your attorneys when selecting which opportunities to respond to:

1. What are you or the attorney looking to achieve?
2. Is there a better tool to achieve the objective?
3. How does this recognition help the attorney or the firm?
4. Has a client discussed this recognition with you?

It's also important to establish a budget and make sure you have the support of at least one attorney for any submission. As the presenters noted, when it comes to submissions, "It's about the journey, not the destination."

Are you interested in learning more about [law firm rankings](#)? Contact me, Carlos Arcos, at carcos@jaffepr.com.