

Don't Overlook Radio and TV in Your Media Outreach

Legal marketers normally are accustomed to working with print and online legal and business publications, but not as much with broadcast media, especially television. The reasons are simple: Legal issues don't normally provide great visuals or involve breaking news that would be of interest to the general public. Also, many attorneys aren't comfortable with broadcast media. However, radio and television should not be overlooked as part of your law firm's public relations strategy.

Topics of Interest

News radio is interested in business stories, so there are more opportunities to offer attorneys as sources. The same is not true for television news programs, which, unless the firm is able to comment on a breaking news story, are more interested in soft news pieces.

There are certain practice areas that may be of interest to broadcast media and their audience such as family law issues like adoption and divorce. Also, a law firm should consider inviting television to cover any charity or office events the firm is hosting. For instance, one firm in Texas hosts an annual oratory competition for elementary school students to commemorate the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. Every year, this event receives considerable media coverage, including every local television network.

In another instance, the local professional baseball team had made the World Series, and staff and attorneys in a small firm, who were rabid fans of the hometown team, dressed up in costumes and team colors to show their support. The firm invited television reporters and was able to get coverage on a local news program.

Although these types of events may not reach the firm's target audience, they do enhance brand reputation and may help with recruitment by highlighting the firm's culture in a positive way.

Identifying Media Outlets

It is worthwhile to identify local radio news programs. Start by asking your attorneys what radio news programs they listen to. Chances are their clients listen to the same programs. For television, unless it's a breaking news story, morning and noon newscasts are more likely to cover soft news. Also, most FOX affiliates have "Good Day" programs that cover general topics of interest.



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Who to Contact

For radio, the best point of contact is the news producer. There is normally a separate news producer for the morning and afternoon news programs. Radio talk shows have their own individual producers.

The best point of contact for a local television news program is the assignment desk or assignment editor. For daytime shows like "Good Day," the best point of contact is the producer (or producers) for that show.

For both radio and television news programs, it's best to first email your story idea and then follow up a day later with a phone call to confirm the assignment editor or producer has received your submission.

What about National Media?

In some instances, you may have an attorney who is willing to comment on a topic of national interest, such as public policy issues or perhaps a high-profile criminal or civil matter. Outlets likely to be interested include National Public Radio, CNN or FOX Business News, or programs like the "Today Show." The best point of contact is the guest booker or producer.

It's important to remember that the success rate is much lower for national media, but the payoff is huge if you're able to secure an interview for one of your attorneys. (Check out my colleague Lisa Altman's [tips](#) on how to prepare for a broadcast interview.) The key is persistence and timing. If you keep your subject matter expert top of mind with guest bookers and producers, you will increase the chances they will remember your attorney when an opportunity arises.

While most attorneys seem to prefer television over radio, it should be noted that radio news programs usually have higher audience numbers than television. This is especially true of local media outlets. It may be due to the fact that more people listen to radio during their commutes to and from work, as well as during the workday, than watch daytime television at home.

Raising Your Profile

When planning your communications programs, it can be worthwhile to include broadcast media. It not only supplements your print coverage, but it also can provide good visuals and audio for the firm's website. Also, as mentioned above, broadcast coverage has a much broader audience than print, which is more targeted to business and specific industries. This makes broadcast a valuable tool in [enhancing your brand's profile](#) and defining your brand's reputation in the marketplace.

Are you interested in learning more about securing broadcast media opportunities for your attorneys? Contact me, [Carlos Arcos](mailto:carcos@jaffepr.com), at carcos@jaffepr.com.