

3 Ways to Indirectly Nab Stellar Ranking References

The legal rankings process can be extremely frustrating. Even when you do everything right – e.g., follow the guidelines, provide stellar references, etc. – there are times when your firm’s/attorney’s ranking falls short of where you believe they should be. I’m often asked why that happens? “We know we’re better than firm XYZ; we’ve worked on bigger, more-compelling cases. Why are we not ranked where they are?” While there can be a number of reasons, the answer is often simply that the researchers did not receive enough positive feedback from the industry and your peers to warrant ranking you higher.

Just as you cannot build a solid house without first laying a strong foundation, you cannot expect high rankings without a solid foundation. As a legal marketer, you can create a comprehensive submission, backed by a solid track record and a strong story for why you think your attorney should be included, but if industry opinion does not support your nominee, then you probably will not attain the ranking you are hoping for.

Being recognized requires months of work on both the attorney’s and legal marketer’s parts. The responsibility of the attorney is to provide solid creative solutions with a positive outcome for their clients, while the responsibility of the legal marketer is to develop a positive perception of the attorneys. The submission packet is the end result of this work.

How do you do this?

Identify Whom to Nominate

Identify who you will be nominating early in the year. This could be key attorneys or a practice group. Identifying the nominees early allows you to establish a marketing plan to increase industry awareness and generate positive perception of that attorney or group. Including this team or attorney in your marketing plans helps to focus the marketing team’s efforts and also to ensure everyone in the firm is on the same page.

Establish Thought Leadership

Make sure the attorney is getting her share of the press. Placing articles in key publications, both legal and in the industry where they practice, will set them apart. Another way to differentiate them is through speaking engagements. Identifying industry groups where they can speak and solidifying opportunities to do so validates their thought leadership. There is a lot of competition for speaking roles, so identifying viable opportunities is crucial to success.



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Set Business Development Goals

When hammering out business development goals and strategies for the year, keep in mind the kinds of opportunities that could be worthy of submission. While a business development plan should not be constructed solely to win awards, legal marketers should be spearheading the process of qualifying new matters as “ranking-worthy.”

Watch last month’s webinar on [how to handle *Chambers* submissions](#) or, for more information and [tips to improve your *Chambers* submission process](#) or [writing a winning nomination](#), contact me, Susan Holmes, at sholmes@jaffepr.com.