



This article has been selected as electronic course material for a Columbia Law School class on law firm marketing.

Lawyers, Is Your Brand Your BFF?

Tactics for building a brand and getting it working for you around the clock.

Business owners and entrepreneurs often will say, “I want to make money while I sleep.” Does that mean working around the clock? Productizing your services? Lowering rates and fees to potentially increase demand?

Take a leap with me. Consider that we all might have the same goal, but the tools we use to bring it to fruition are different. Just like in cooking, we may start with the same ingredients, but what distinguishes our dish from others is how we mix it up — how we combine our experiences, preferences, perspectives, values, goals and other qualities to make our meal unique.

Our brand is the meal we serve that showcases our talent and leaves people wanting more.

Taking Command of Your Brand

Building a brand doesn’t mean working around the clock. It boils down to being different and standing out while remaining authentic. You can choose how you want to stand out in this new world of work.

Others will brand you based on how they know you if you don’t pick up the reins and do it yourself. During these tenuous times, it is critical to command the strategies that control how you shape your career and show up for clients, connections and colleagues. You are the CEO and chief marketer of Me, Inc. — and now is the time to take charge.

To help define your brand, ask yourself:

- What are you known for?
- Does this dovetail with what you want to be known for?
- What distinguishes you and your practice?
- Is it specific?
- Is it relevant and memorable?
- What is your breakthrough value?
- Does it carry you into the future?

(continued on next page)

PERSONAL BRANDING

Are you the CEO of the brand, “Me, Inc.?”

Discovering what sets you apart is essential to the development of your personal brand.

You need to personify a brand that is memorable, enables you to stand out, establishes your uniqueness and resonates with your target audience. Every. Single. Time.

Are you attracting your ideal clients, future-proofing your practice for growth and success and earning the respect and recognition you deserve?

If not, let’s talk.



Building a Brand That's Recognizable and Real

Think about brands that have stood the test of time because they look, taste, feel and act the same with every encounter. [Nike](#). [Kleenex](#). [Coca-Cola](#). They make a promise and keep it every time. Be your own equivalent of the Nike swoosh.

Here are guideposts for building a brand that works for you around the clock, influencing current and potential clients, referral sources, connections and other thought leaders:

- **Determine what you want to be known for.** Ask yourself if it differentiates you enough to stand out and allows you to build trust.
- **Mind the consistency gaps.** Think about all the places and ways your brand shows up and examine whether it does so consistently at every touchpoint, every time. Your assessment should include your logo, print, online, audio, video, advertising and client feedback, as well as your personal presence, image and personality. These all exist in service to your brand. If there are gaps, take steps to remedy them.
- **Are you memorable?** Ask yourself what it is you want people to say and remember about you when you leave the room, and hold on tight to that answer.
- **Focus on relationships and forging emotional connections.**
- **Learn to tell meaningful stories about yourself that will resonate and communicate your values, strengths and goals.** Make sure your unique attributes shine through. Try to create relatable anecdotes that work in a variety of contexts. Review and practice them before meetings and networking situations.
- **Test your assumptions regularly.** Check in with clients and trusted advisors to ensure how they experience you aligns with your perceptions. Do you keep your brand promise? If not, tweak accordingly.

Above All, Make Friends With Your Brand

Your [brand](#) is your ambassador, your representative, your employee, your board of directors. Nurture it lovingly. Guard it closely. Burnish it continuously. It is out there working hard for you day and night. Brands never sleep.

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