

# LAWYER MARKETING COLLECTION

**BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT  
MARCHING ORDERS GETTING THE  
FEE YOU DESERVE NINE QUESTIONS  
TO ASK ABOUT YOUR WEBSITE  
EMAIL SIGNATURES HOW CLIENTS  
CHOOSE LAWYERS WORKING  
WITH ADVERTISING AGENCIES  
LEVERAGING LINKEDIN  
HOLIDAY CARD PLANNER**



## From the Editors

### The Best of Marketing from Attorney at Work

**S**ometimes it seems the only business problem you really have is knowing how to get more clients. Sure, people talk about marketing plans, but exactly what plans should you be making? What's working for others? What should your next priorities be? Well, if you've been longing for someone to just tell you what to do ... here we are!

We've gathered the top Attorney at Work marketing articles from 2011—the ones readers told us helped them the most, and the ones that generated the most “clicks”—and assembled this handy guide. It may just be the starting point—or the kick in the butt—you've been needing. Take a read through them, share and discuss them with colleagues, and we guarantee you won't need anyone to tell you what belongs in those marketing plans. It will all come from you.

For a quick start, here are five baby steps to get you past any inertia and rolling in the right direction.

- 1.** Create a simple written piece that describes you and your practice to potential clients. Don't forget to describe what you can do for them instead of just bragging about your own amazing credentials. Want help? Read Teddy Snyder's “Features versus Benefits.”
- 2.** Make sure you have a good supply of business cards with you wherever you go. Give them to people. Don't forget to ask for their card at the same time. Check “Business Development Marching Orders” for more on business cards.
- 3.** Join the right type of organization. The right organization includes as members the kind of people who can hire and pay someone like you to do exactly the kind of legal work you want to do. Why this strategy? Read Larry Bodine's advice on “How Clients Really Hire Lawyers.”
- 4.** Commit to have lunch once a week with a person who could either hire you or introduce you to someone who could hire you. Now, while you're thinking about it, pick up the phone and schedule the first four lunches to put on your calendar. If you don't know who to invite, dive into Kristin Jaramillos' advice about “Nine Ways to Leverage LinkedIn.”
- 5.** Create a simple system for recording and accessing contact information from the business cards you collect. It could be as simple as a good old Rolodex or spreadsheet, or as sophisticated as any client relationship management software can be. You'll need this information in order to be systematic about the two-way connections described in “Six Steps to Single-Minded Marketing.”

Knowing what to do is the hard part. Actually doing it? Aww, piece of cake!

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# Six Steps to Single-Minded Marketing

BY MERRILYN ASTIN TARLTON | ATTORNEY AT WORK MARKETING COLLECTION

**A** person could very quickly lose his mind trying out this or that marketing idea *du jour*. Is social media really the ultimate answer it's chalked up to be? If you hire a public relations firm to toot your horn for you, can you avoid actually having to sell yourself ... yourself? If you've been blogging doggedly for ages, will you reap the rewards of the blogosphere—eventually? All the other lawyers are sponsoring public radio, so maybe that's the answer.

Well, any marketing expert worth her lengthy contact list will tell you there is no one answer. They will also tell you that the answer—a complex combination of multiple tactics—must necessarily be a unique construct for each practice. But there is a surefire, uncomplicated way of framing your marketing thinking so that you can create a plan that works—for you.

## It's Really Quite Simple

It starts with the fundamental question, “What kind of work do you want to do?”

**Step one.** Figure out what sort of legal work makes you happiest. Is it high net worth estate planning? Family law, particularly relationships between fathers and children? Perhaps you like complex real estate deals because of the leg up your pre-law school job gives you. Maybe it's as an outsourced general counsel for small businesses because you're hooked on being part of a team, or complex biofuels litigation because of the intellectual puzzle? Think long and hard about this. You don't want to make the mistake of marketing yourself to do work you dislike. Right?

**Step two.** Identify the category of people likely to be interested in hiring and paying people to do that sort of work for them. Small business? It's the owner. Fathers? Well, dads, right? Most likely divorced or divorcing ones. Biofuels? Probably in-house counsel, unless it's a company without one. Then it's their outside counsel or the company's CEO. Municipality? City manager. You see where this is going?

**Step three.** Discover where those people get their information about which professionals can serve them in this field. Is it through connections they make at an American Medical Association conference? Speakers they hear at Chamber of Commerce luncheons? (Hint: Think small businesses.) The lawyer they hear won a big case for their competitor? A trade publication like Plumbing Standards for sanitary engineers or a website like HOWdesign.com for graphic designers? (Now there's small business!) Yes, there are random opportunities—your kid's soccer game, for example—but your time is best spent in a space, actual or virtual, where the folks from step two hang out.

**Step four.** Be there. And be visible. In a good way. In other words, there's no point in becoming a National Allied Individual Member of the American Institute of Architecture unless you get active. That means write, speak, contribute and participate—in a positive and visible way. And you don't always have to be demonstrating your lawyerly chops. Showing how you conduct an effective meeting and get difficult stuff done communicates a unique capability that will draw clients to you as well.

**Step five.** Connect with those people in a two-way fashion. Make friends. Join working groups and identify decision-makers. Write for an online publication and then ask for comments. Better yet, interview people you'd like to have as clients for your article. Get business cards. Encourage followers if one of your venues is Twitter. You know ... identify the people you want to know you and get to know them.

**Step six.** Help these new friends and connections find solutions to their problems. Yep. The best kept sales secret is this: It's not about telling and telling them about yourself, or convincing them you are so wonderful they can't afford not to hire you. (Yucky concept, right?) It's about listening and listening until you find out what's making them itch (maybe asking a question or two to draw them out), and then helping them find the solution. You might be the best solution. Or maybe not. Maybe their problem is getting an introduction to the new mayor. You can help with that, too. Perhaps they are looking for a new school for their 12-year-old, or a contractor that specializes in sustainable design. Connect them with someone who can help them. It's impressive when you are the source of solutions and you demonstrate that you care. And it's wonderful when they hire you.

### **Final Step? Succeed**

Okay. It may not be quite that simple. But it's pretty darn close if you just think it through. After all, that is what they trained you to do in law school: Think. And once you've thought things through in this way, you will no longer need be a victim of the next ad salesman, lawyer directory marketer or today's headline story. You'll know what you want—and how to get at it.

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# How Clients Choose Lawyers

BY LARRY BODINE | ATTORNEY AT WORK MARKETING COLLECTION

**T**o attract new clients, you need to set yourself apart from other lawyers—and that takes a lot more work than updating your LinkedIn profile. How to do it? Legal marketing wizard Larry Bodine says there are three big truths you need to understand about how clients really choose lawyers. Believe them and make them your own—and open the door!

## 1. Clients Want Experts, Not Generalists

You don't want to be known as a generalist because, frankly, clients don't want generalists. I illustrate this with a story about the time I was riding my bicycle out in the deserts of Arizona. I hit a rock, went over the handle bars and broke my collarbone. Even though I was in screaming pain, I knew at that very moment that when I got to the hospital I did not want a generalist who was good at setting bones. No, I wanted a sports medicine doctor to put me back together so that I could get back on my bicycle again. And that is how clients shop for lawyers. The idea here is to become an industry expert. Start by looking over your list of clients and sorting them into *lines of business*—not by practice group. There's no need to be precise about this. It can be as broad as "food and beverage" or "manufacturing industry." Now, whatever industry most of your clients are in, that's the industry you need to become an expert in.

- Join that trade association.
- Be seen and visible at that trade association. Go to that association's meetings and events so people know they can expect to find you there.
- Demonstrate your expertise—get on the board of directors, become the newsletter editor or become the program director of the business organization.

## 2. Clients Give Work to People They Know and Like

Rainmakers become rainmakers because they have more business relationships than other attorneys—and they know how to maintain them. You want to learn from and behave like a rainmaker. Rainmakers visit clients. They schedule quarterly meetings where the topic of discussion is "how's business?" Rainmakers want to find out what obstacles the business is encountering, or what plans it has to grow. At these meetings, they're not talking about current matters, they are looking ahead for the next matter. The thing to remember is that clients are just like everyone else. They're not going to give any work to that West Virginia lawyer who had never met any of his clients. They're not going to give work to someone whose only contact with them is a FedEx shipment. And they're not going to give work to someone with whom they have an e-mail relationship. They are going to give it to people they know. You need to get better at building good business relationships.

## 3. Clients Give Work to Trusted Personal Counselors

It's lonely at the top. CEOs can't go to the board of directors and complain how hard their job is. They can't go to their direct reports and talk about how difficult their job is, either. They need somebody to talk to. Who better than a lawyer to offer a shoulder to cry on? You want clients to turn to you as a lawyer as someone who listens, someone who can offer business advice, and someone who they can talk with about their problems. And of course, in the process of them talking about their problems, you will be offering legal solutions.

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# Demographic Business Development

BY JORDAN FURLONG | ATTORNEY AT WORK MARKETING COLLECTION

**W**hen the financial crisis hit, it seemed like all the conversations in the legal space about generational change suddenly went silent. And as the recession wore on, some senior lawyers failed to disguise their schadenfreude over the millennial associates who one day were pushing “work-life balance” and the next day were pushing resumés across desks.

That cloud seems to be lifting a little, because I’m again starting to see articles about inter-generational relations in law firms. But for today’s idea, I’d like you to think less about the demographics of lawyers and more about the demographics of clients.

## A Fresh Eye on Generations

Successful law practices identify specific client groups and focus their business development efforts there. But, being lawyers, we tend to classify clients according to their legal needs (family law, insolvency law, estates law, etc.) rather than by criteria that are far more relevant to clients: location, income, marital status and especially age. Generational change is real, so you should think about adjusting your business development efforts demographically.

**Boomers.** Earlier this year, Carolyn Elefant wrote a great post [on My Shingle] pointing out that although the massive boomer market is waiting to be served, lawyers trip themselves up by calling their offerings to this group “elder” or “senior” law—terms that few boomers are eager to embrace. She provides tips on how to market your services to this generation.

**Millenials.** At the other end of the scale are the Millennials, whose business and professional lives are just getting underway. Check out the law practice of California solo Rachel Rodgers, whose firm carries the brilliant tagline: “Innovative Legal Counsel for the Generation Y Entrepreneur.” This is a business law practice geared specifically to a large and emerging demographic unit, and more lawyers should emulate it.

**Gen Xers.** In between these two huge cohorts are folks like me, Generation Xers. I’m on the slightly older side of this group, but my friends and classmates and I have young families (kids aged anywhere from 2 to 16). We think about taxes, mortgages, child care, estate planning and an uncertain economy more than we’d like. But I’ve yet to see a single law practice specifically geared towards Gen-Xers.

Obviously, you don’t want to tackle an entire national demographic class—but you can break down a generation along criteria like state or province, city or community, business or consumer and so forth. Marketing and business development need to be just as client-centric as the rest of your practice.

Look at your clients with fresh eyes, and think about their lives from their generational vantage point. Chances are, you’ll see opportunities emerging as well.

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## Feature versus Benefit

BY **THEDA C. SNYDER** | ATTORNEY AT WORK MARKETING COLLECTION

**K**nowing the difference between a feature and a benefit when describing your practice can help you improve your marketing success. There's a simple way to understand it. Think of a typical pencil. Features would include that it's yellow and has six sides, a graphite core and a rubber tip. Benefits might be that it's easily seen in a drawer, it doesn't roll off the desk, you can write while holding it at any angle, and you can quickly erase what you have written.

In describing their practices, lawyers tend to dwell on the features without emphasizing the benefits of those features to the listener. It's the difference between saying what you are versus what you do. For example:

- "I am a civil litigator" vs. "I help protect your rights in court."
- "I'm a corporate lawyer" vs. "I help companies comply with and take advantage of state and federal legal rules."

Putting emphasis on the benefit is important in forming your message, however it is communicated. That includes everything from the elevator speech you use to introduce yourself, to the keywords you choose for search engine optimization on your website.

Consider what you do to help people in your daily practice and concentrate on communicating that benefit.

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# Get the Most from Your Law Firm's Ad Agency

BY **KEN HARDISON** | ATTORNEY AT WORK MARKETING COLLECTION

**W**hy does a lawyer need an advertising agency? Well, most lawyers don't have the knowledge and expertise to create a marketing campaign for their services unaided. You may be knowledgeable about every aspect of your practice, but when it comes to marketing, advertising and promoting your services to the public, you need expert help. And while advertising professionals may be the ultimate marketing gurus, they need your help understanding who you are and what your goals and objectives are.

## It's Got to be a Partnership

The key for getting the most out of your advertising agency is for it to truly be a partnership. While every relationship is different, there are some basic things every agency is going to need from you in order to give you maximum effort and return on your investment. Here's a list to get you started.

**What do you do?** Explain the kind of legal services you want to sell.

**Who is your ideal client for these services?** How old are they? Are they men or women? What is their average income? What are their education levels? What are their occupations? You know this better than anybody. The key is to lay out the ideal client you want by providing the information and then letting the ad agency zero in on those demographics.

**What are these clients like?** What are the psychographics of your client? Do you know what their lifestyles are? What habits do they have? What are their hobbies and their interests? What are their political views? The more information you can give the agency about exactly who it is that will want your services, the better the agency can target your advertising to reach those people without wasting your ad dollars.

**What about timing?** Is there any seasonality to your services? Are there certain months of the year when you need to boost your advertising efforts and other months when you need no advertising at all? I have found, for example, that more worker's compensation claims are filed in the summer when construction is heavy, and more automobile accidents happen in the winter when the weather is bad. Be sure to share these kinds of observations with your agency.

**What have you done in the past?** What kind of marketing have you done in the past and what did and did not work for you.

**What is your market's geographic area?** Are you covering just one county, are you in a whole TV market, or are you covering the whole state?

**What are your marketing goals and objectives?** Clearly outlining what you are trying to do will aid the agency in directing your campaign.

**What are your advertising objectives and goals?** Is your advertising objective to strengthen brand awareness? Build brand loyalty? Create top of mind awareness? Increase inbound telephone calls?

**How much are you prepared to spend?** What is your advertising budget? While you may not like to provide a budget when dealing with a vendor, I think it is essential that your

**Put someone in charge.** You should have a single person in your law firm deal with ad agencies. You can have six people ride in the car, but only one can be the driver. Have only one driver in charge of your marketing. Give them control, back them up and if they cannot get the job done with the agency, replace them with another. Don't try to manage the agency relationships with a committee! Committees slow everything down because everyone has their own opinion on every imaginable topic. Trying to get three or four lawyers to agree on any one thing is like trying to herd cats. It is just not possible.

### **Listen to the Agency's Advice**

Do you like it when your client tells you how to practice law? Trust is important.

Good communication between you and the ad agency is crucial to the success of any campaign. For example, often lawyers want everything done yesterday, yet they don't get back to the ad agencies when presented with ads and other materials to be approved before they can go forward. Later on, invariably, the lawyer blames the ad agency for slow progress when it was really their own fault for sitting on the materials way too long. To get where you need to go, you must work hard to achieve the highest level of communication possible.

Getting the most out of your ad agency is all about building a trusting relationship, a partnership that helps grow your practice. For this to happen, everyone has to pull their weight.

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# Getting the Fee You Deserve

BY **BOB DENNEY** | ATTORNEY AT WORK MARKETING COLLECTION

It happens to every lawyer—although hopefully not too often. You propose or quote a fee to a client or prospective client and are greeted with a response such as “I can’t afford it” or “How can you have the nerve to charge that?” When that happens, don’t get angry, or defensive, or cry. It’s all part of a game. Here is how you play it.

There are basically four types of fees: fixed, hourly, contingency or “piece of the deal.” The latter two can have various arrangements, which may involve complex negotiations before the fee is established. Most fee challenges occur with either fixed or hourly arrangements, so let’s focus on them.

## Define the Desired Result

Whether you’re writing an extensive proposal or just verbally quoting the fee, there is a process you should follow that will either avoid a challenge to the projected fee or equip you to respond to a challenge. The first step is to sit down with the client to define what he or she wants to accomplish as the result of retaining you. Preparing an estate plan? Drafting an employment agreement? Purchasing a property? Defending a suit for damages?

This discussion will also enable you to determine if the client’s desired result is realistic, legal and ethical. Suing a neighbor for \$30,000 because his 10-year-old son tossed a TV into a pond certainly isn’t realistic, or deliberately failing to disclose that a building sits on contaminated ground certainly isn’t legal. So defining what the client wants may do more than just avoid fee challenges later on. It may also reveal that this is a client you don’t want.

## Determine the Fee Expectations

At this point it is often wise to ask the clients what they expect the fee could be or what their budget is—it might also save you wasted time. This is desirable whether it’s your Uncle George, who has rarely if ever retained a lawyer, or the general counsel of a major corporation. If the client expects to pay \$800 for a contested divorce or has only budgeted \$13,000 to defend a patent infringement suit, you should stop right there and educate them otherwise.

## Quote the Fee

After listing all the steps or tasks in a written proposal or in a verbal discussion with the client, state the fee. If it’s a fixed or flat fee, do not include hourly rates, whether yours or anyone else’s who would be involved. When the fee is fixed, most clients don’t care about hourly rates. The total fee is all they are interested in. If you are quoting on an hourly basis, consider giving a range, i.e., \$8,000 to \$8,700. Then give the hourly rates of yourself and any others who may work on the matter.

## If Challenged, Never Cut the Fee!

If the client challenges the fee, you do two things. First, reconfirm the result the client wants or the “product” you will deliver, i.e., an estate plan or employment agreement. Then go down each of the steps you have listed to accomplish the result or produce the product. What you’re doing at this point is, in effect, saying to the client, “Look at everything that I (or we) must do to give you what you want.” To put it another way, “You get all of this for only that [small] amount.”

If the client still balks at the fee, decide if you really want this client—or if you desperately need the fee income. If neither condition exists, politely say that you'd love to serve them but this is what the fee would be. Don't argue or say something like "My fees are fair and reasonable" or "You obviously don't know what a good lawyer like me costs."

**If you do want the client or need the fee income, never cut the fee. Instead, requote it!**

There are two ways to do this:

If you quoted on an hourly basis and included a range, as suggested above, offer to cap the fee at or below the higher amount and add, "Regardless of the amount of time required." More often than you might expect, clients will accept this because they now know what the maximum will be.

If you proposed either a fixed or hourly fee, go back over all the steps you listed (now you know why you listed everything) and say, "If you could do this or would accept that, we can eliminate certain steps and the fee would then be x (lower than your initial quote)."

Remember, it's a game. Learn how to play it and you'll be a winner.

***Bob Denney** is President of [Robert Denney Associates](#). He and his firm have been providing management and marketing counsel to law firms throughout the United States and parts of Canada for over 30 years.*

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# New Lawyers: Your Business Development Marching Orders

BY MERRILYN ASTIN TARLTON | ATTORNEY AT WORK MARKETING COLLECTION

**S**o you passed the bar. Congratulations! Now you are a real lawyer. After the pain and torment of law school and the nerve-jangling business of studying for the bar, you'd think this would be a good time to relax and regroup—and ease slowly into your new career. Yes, that would be nice. But it's not recommended. Because once you have that job (and aren't you lucky)—whether as an associate in a sizable firm, as the new guy at the three-lawyer practice over on Main, or as a solo practitioner—there are things to be done now to lay the groundwork for a successful practice later on. Marketing things.

## It's Time to Put a Few Marketing Things in Place

You know by now—or you should—that the ability to get and keep good clients is one of the more important arrows in a lawyer's quiver. If you're in a firm, you won't make partner without it. And the days are long gone when you could wait until you'd been practicing for five or six years before troubling yourself about finding your own clients. If you're a solo or part of an eat-what-you-kill smaller practice, well, it's obvious, right?

So here's the checklist. Set each one of these gears in motion and you will have started up the client-getting machinery that will sustain your whole successful career.

- **Business card.** It seems trivial but it isn't. The card is still your key to connecting with the rest of the business—and client—world. Clean, legible and professional looking without being scary is what we're going for here. If you have a say in the design, ask for plenty of “white space” in addition to your name, phone number, email address and URL. The open space on the card gives you a chance to write something personal as you hand it to someone. (Maybe your Twitter name or home phone number?) Makes a nice impression.
- **Biography.** Get yourself online and read the descriptions of lawyers you admire. Now spend some really good and thoughtful time writing your personal description for your online biography. Spending a lot of time, by the way, doesn't mean writing a lot. It means writing well. If you have trouble in that department—you're not writing a brief here—then get help. Tone is important. And don't overlook all your experience outside of law. If, for example, you worked your way through college as executive assistant to a big real estate developer, your clients may find this useful information.
- **Social network.** Yes, you do want to be found on LinkedIn, Facebook, Google+ and Twitter. Make certain your profile is up to date and includes only information you want a potential client (or employer) to see. (Here's where all that time you spent honing your biography comes in handy.) Do include a photo (but it better not be you at the frat party winning at Beer Pong, regardless of how charming and approachable you think it makes you look). Post frequently and thoughtfully. You know the drill.
- **Directory listing.** You know which ones. And if you don't, do the research. But do not fool yourself into thinking buying advertising space is the answer to your marketing quandary. Just make sure you are listed.
- **Elevator speech.** Learn to answer the following question in 25 comfortable words or less: “What do you do for a living?” Simply saying “I'm a lawyer” doesn't pass the test. Explain what you do and who you do it for. Something like: “I'm a creditors' bankruptcy lawyer. I represent

groups of businesses who are owed significant amounts of money in big bankruptcy proceedings.” (That’s 21 words!) If you are so brand-new you don’t know what you do, figure it out. If you can’t tell someone what you do, they most certainly won’t be interested in paying you money to do it for them.

- **Join in.** Join some sort of organization (preferably one frequented by the kinds of people likely to hire someone who does what you do) and get actively involved. Merely having your name on the membership roster does exactly nothing for you. But attending meetings, volunteering for committees and taking initiative on the business of the group gives people an opportunity to know you through your good and effective work. “Oh, her,” they will say, “she was really effective on the by-laws committee. There is no way we could have waded through all the crap without her. I’d sure hire her to be MY lawyer!”

There. You are launched. But absolutely do not expect that new clients will begin to stumble over each other on their way to your door. Remember, this is groundwork. It’s only the beginning of a lifetime of building connections and helping your clients.

***Merrilyn Astin Tarlton** has been helping lawyers and law firms think differently about the business of practicing law since 1984. She was a founding member of the Legal Marketing Association, President of the College of Law Practice Management and an LMA Hall of Fame inductee. She is cofounder/catalyst at Attorney at Work and she blogs about innovation at [www.astintarlton.com](http://www.astintarlton.com).*

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# Nine Ways to Leverage LinkedIn

BY KRISTINA JARAMILLO | ATTORNEY AT WORK MARKETING COLLECTION

**L**inkedIn is reportedly the most popular business social networking site used by lawyers. A recent [BTI Consulting report](#) shows that nearly 70 percent of corporate counsel use LinkedIn, and that 38 percent of them rely on LinkedIn for activities specifically tied to selecting and hiring attorneys. What's more, executives from every Fortune 500 company are using it.

So, how can your firm attract and retain more clients using LinkedIn? Here are nine different ways.

- 1. Build relationships with potential clients.** If you deal with corporate business, small business or real estate issues, you can use LinkedIn to network with potential clients—and educate them so they will want to come to you with their problems.
- 2. Identify and connect with potential referral sources.** A lawyer who specializes in social security law can network with lawyers at general practice firms. Business lawyers can network with accountants and business advisors. Lawyers who work in the real estate industry can connect with realtors who can refer business to them. Elder care attorneys can network with professionals from assisted living homes and care giving service providers, and so on.
- 3. Create a community of like-minded professionals.** A real estate attorney can share information with group of real estate agents who may refer business when their clients need advice. Within this group, you could have conversations and link prospects, referral sources and the media back to your blog or website where they can get even more information. Your LinkedIn group is part of the lead generation funnel.
- 4. Build relationships with the media.** More media professionals are on LinkedIn—92 percent—than on any other social networking site. That means editors, journalists and reporters of local, regional and national publications and other media types are available to you on LinkedIn. Reach out and invite them to your group so they can see the type of information you offer their readers, listeners or viewers.
- 5. Spread your content and prove you're a thought leader.** Placing your content—and expertise—in front of targeted prospects is the absolute best way to attract new clients and referral sources. That's why you need to join the groups your prospects are going to for information. That is where you can provide and engage in conversations.
- 6. Nurture relationships with existing clients.** Your marketing and relationship-building efforts should not stop once someone becomes a client. Consider creating a LinkedIn group specifically to provide exclusive content and information just for clients. This can help you with client retention.
- 7. Conduct market research then promote it (and yourself) via articles and press releases.** Recently, a client who is a workplace communication expert used LinkedIn to conduct a study of CEOs, presidents, vice presidents and managers. From his research he found that 44 percent of the executives surveyed were unhappy with their employees' performance and their

own communication style. Through survey questions he was also able to uncover the specific problems they were encountering. With this knowledge he then created:

- A report that showcased the results
- A Press release to reveal the results and position him as a thought leader
- Webinars to discuss solutions to the problems his audience were encountering
- Articles and LinkedIn discussions to promote the study, the report and the event
- A complete marketing and public relations plan based on the study

**8. Stay in touch with what's happening in your specialty.** Join groups that your peers, colleagues and competitors belong to. It will help you stay current on trends, problems, concerns and even specific cases. You will be able to see what others are talking about and what they have to share. And you can use this as an idea bank for articles and press releases you can write to promote your own firm.

**9. Showcase the abilities of every lawyer in your firm.** Every attorney in your practice should have a LinkedIn profile, and there should be a link to each LinkedIn profile on the individual lawyer bio pages your firm website. This enables clients or prospects to reach out to your practice in another way and on a more personal level. It is often easier –and less expensive–to keep your LinkedIn profile updated than it is to update your own website biography.

LinkedIn is the most popular business social networking site used by lawyers. In fact, a LinkedIn search for the keyword “legal” returns more than one million results. But only a small percentage of the attorneys who use LinkedIn use to its fullest potential for bringing in more clients, referrals and publicity.

So here's my question: Why aren't you leveraging LinkedIn to market your law practice? Get on it!

*[Kristina Jaramillo](#) creates online marketplace opportunities for lawyers and law firms who want to attract more clients. You can uncover the LinkedIn marketing mistakes you are making and opportunities your firm may be missing by grabbing Kristina's free special report at [www.Free14LinkedInMistakesReport.com](http://www.Free14LinkedInMistakesReport.com).*

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# Nine Questions to Ask About Your Firm's Website

BY **DEBORAH McMURRAY** | ATTORNEY AT WORK MARKETING COLLECTION

**L**aw firms are investing more in the design and development of their Web sites than ever. But are your visitors any happier? No matter your law firm's size or budget, visitors expect the same intuitive experience that they have with CNN.com, Southwest.com or Opentable.com. And your site is being judged by the same criteria: (1) Is it easy to navigate and search—meaning do I quickly find what I want and need, and (2) does it answer my question or solve my problem.

If you have marketing or business development expectations of your law firm website, then you must view this medium and investment very differently.

## Nine Key Questions to Help You Get More from Your Firm's Online Presence

**1. Start at the Beginning: Is Your Strategy Clear?** The reason so many law firm websites are poor is because too few firms pay attention to firm vision and goals, understand their target markets or develop a website strategy. Firm strategy, key messages and points of differentiation should shape every decision that's made in creating design, determining functionality and developing content. Your firm strategy should be clear when a visitor comes to your site. You have one chance to make the right impression—and you have about five seconds to make it before your visitors make a “stay/leave” decision. Don't risk making the wrong impression by not spending time on this critical step.

Two examples of strong strategy statements: [Gruber Hurst Johansen Hail Shank](#) and [Dilworth Paxson](#).

**2. Do You Know Why Your Visitors Are There?** Business-to-business buyers of legal services want to know three things: (1) what you've done, (2) for whom you've done it and (3) what you can do for them. If you don't answer these questions, they'll leave your site and won't come back.

The first time a visitor pulls up or links to your site, it's likely that a colleague or friend referred you or your firm to them. These visitors are validating the referral. What do you want them to know about you? What will sell them on you?

Feed your experience into your bios and practice and industry descriptions. For example, take a look at [Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck's case studies and experience lists](#)—even the home page features client stories.

**3. How Sound Is Your Site's Architecture?** Focus on site architecture. Builders don't start pouring building foundations without a comprehensive architectural schematic. Your site strategy will dictate your functionality, features and navigation. Each major section of your website (everything in your top level or global navigation) should have its own architectural drawing that defines exactly what will appear. These site diagrams define the entire scope of your website. With these, you define and lock in your budget. Without them, count on “budget creep.”

**4. Now, Focus on YOU: Is Your Biography Effective?** Write your resume as copy, not content. Your resume should reflect the best you've done, not everything you've done. Lawyer website bios are more varied than anything else on the Internet, ranging from no more than a Martindale-

style listing to voluminous reports of every thing a lawyer has achieved. Neither is effective. Your bio should answer the questions in number two, above. List client names if the state bar rules allow it—but always get client permission first. Don't boast, but don't undersell your strengths and capabilities, either.

Two examples of excellent bios: [Miller & Chevalier](#) and [Cox Smith](#).

**5. Is Your Bio SEO-Friendly?** What does this mean? Look at the first two to three sentences of your bio. Then conduct a Google search on your name. If your website bio link comes up in the search results (it's trouble if it doesn't surface on page one), look at the first 200 characters of the Google result—it likely repeats the first 200 characters of your bio. Bingo! Make it compelling. Make it relevant. Change the focus as the work you are doing changes along with regulations, legislation, etc.

For example, look at [Pete Broderick's bio overview](#) on the Cox Smith site, then Google "Pete Broderick." This comes up in the search results:

*Pete Broderick has built an extensive commercial real estate leasing practice representing landlords and tenants of commercial properties of all kinds ...*

This top-of-the-page Google result copies the first 150 characters of his bio overview. It's relevant and represents Pete's practice focus well.

One more tip: Use your formal name as the header in your bio, but use your first name or nickname in all other references. For example, Pete's bio header is Peter R. "Pete" Broderick. His bio overview starts, "Pete Broderick has..." and all subsequent references are to "Pete," not Mr. Broderick. As casual as the Internet has become, it comes across as unfriendly, overly conservative or inaccessible to use Mr. or Ms.

**6. Can Your Site Be Accessed on a Smartphone or PDA?** You don't need to hire someone to create a mobile app of your whole website, but people still want to access your site on their smartphones. Ensure that your designer understands how to design your site so that is fully accessible and navigable on mobile devices—without having to pay more for it. Even the largest sites should be accessible via smartphones.

Two good examples: Look at [Greenberg Traurig's site](#), which starts with a Flash element that all smartphones can see except for iPhones (Apple doesn't like Flash). Or try [Rogers & Hardin's site](#).

**7. Have You Written for the Scanning Reader?** No one has time (even if they have the inclination) to pore through pages and pages of data on your firm's site. Break up your website content into smaller pieces and shorter paragraphs. Use headlines, call-outs or sidebars to highlight calls to action or critical points you don't want readers to miss. For example, [Jeffer Mangels Butler & Mitchell's practice and industry descriptions](#) take a consistent approach—using a box with important links to client successes, news, events, blogs and more, plus short paragraphs with relevant case studies.

**8. Is Your Site "Usable"?** Designing a site so that it's "usable" is both an art and a science. There are countless law firm sites that are difficult to navigate, and where it's impossible to find anything. They don't offer keyword and advanced searches, and force a visitor to click multiple times. Creating a highly usable site requires an understanding of both human behavior and graphic and information design. "Answers in one or two clicks from the home page" (but one click is better than two) is the mantra for ultimate usability. In addition, a keyword and advanced search on

every page is basic website hygiene.

Try using cascading “mega-menus” from your global navigation bar that preview the pages inside each section. Two great examples: [Miller & Chevalier](#) and [Cox Smith](#).

**9. Is It Clear that You Care?** Every lawyer should care about his or her firm’s website. What is it communicating about you and your firm? Is it a hodgepodge of old data? Does it have a “What’s New” button with nothing more recent than the passage of the Dodd-Frank Act?

Care about how you look, what you say, how you are perceived. Then care some more. Take some chances. Stretch—this is the medium to do it.

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## KEEP GOING

### Do These Three Things to Keep Your Site Fresh

Heading into 2012, we asked Deborah McMurray what law firms can do to freshen up their websites for the biggest impact—and lowest cost. Read her post, [“Three Ways to Make Your Website More Dynamic,”](#) for tips on how you can get started on these three things:

**1. Check Your Relevance.** Destination news sites have spoiled us when it comes to the currency and relevancy of content. It’s impossible for most law firms to meet that high standard of currency. Still, every law firm should critically review content at least every year, if not more often. Every piece of old content causes a visitor to question whether you and your firm are stale. It taints the perceived efficacy of the good content you have. But, with potentially thousands of pages of content, how do you slog through it all and test its relevance?

**2. Make Sure Your Offline Activities Drive Targeted Traffic to Your Site.** Every presentation you give should drive traffic to specific pages of your website. Write your speeches with this in mind. Tell a story about a current event that can be analogized to your specific subject matter, use keywords that are in the news and in conversation and relate to your practice, and ensure that these top keywords appear in your bio and practice description (and that they produce relevant search results if a visitor searches by them). Include various URLs in your presentation materials that answer your audience’s questions—link not to your main domain, but to interior pages, such as [www.firmname.com/fcpa/india](#).

**3. Create QR Codes for Important Website Pages.** Quick Response (or QR) codes are becoming ubiquitous in certain fields—such as automotive and real estate, on movie posters near train stations and on products advertised via airport dioramas. But they are seldom used by lawyers as a marketing tool. While the codes look like hieroglyphics, they are a one-click pathway to the pages of your website—such as your bio, blog or e-alert library—that are the most relevant to what you do. You can instantly create them for new pages on your site to alert visitors and drive traffic to your latest resources—and include the QR codes in your handouts and on your business card, too.

# Email Signatures: Valuable Real Estate

**BY DEBORAH MCMURRAY AND KEITH WEWE |**  
ATTORNEY AT WORK MARKETING COLLECTION

**Y**our email signature may be a tiny element in the scheme of your marketing, but it can be the most concise and consistent way to communicate who you are and where to find you. E-signatures have come so far in the past couple of years that email addicts revere and rely on them as much as any other source of contact information. Knowing this, it's surprising that more people don't take great care to maximize its impact. Let's look at some basic tips for using this tiny bit of e-real estate to its fullest potential.

## The Dos and Don'ts for an Email Signature that Works for You

- DO hire a designer, if possible, to lay out your e-signature or e-card. It is as much a part of your identity as your letterhead and business card, if not more so. If someone is creating a new website or stationery system for you, be sure an e-signature is included in the project.
- DON'T ignore your e-signature, though, if you can't afford professional help. Just keep it simple and consistent—for example, use only one font in a single size and color. And keep the following dos and don'ts in mind.
- DO use a common email font, such as Arial or Calibri (both sans serif) or Times Roman (serif) for your text. For font color, use black or dark gray. If you pick an unusual font, there is no way to know how it will appear on the recipient's monitor.
- DO include full contact information: name, title, firm, full mailing address, email link, direct-dial telephone, mobile phone and fax. Also include a V-card link.
- DO include your assistant's name, email and phone to demonstrate your ultimate accessibility.
- DON'T include your resume, lists of awards or a list of services you provide. This is not the place—it looks unsophisticated and makes it appear that you are trying too hard.

## Logos and Taglines

- DO include your logo if you have a nice one. The visual connection to your brand increases the memorability of your firm. But make certain your logo image is embedded in the email instead of linking to an image file on a public server. Your recipients' security settings may block downloaded images, which means your logo will appear as a blank square with a small "x" in the corner.
- DON'T assume that a bigger logo is better—keep your logo tastefully small. Don't worry, your readers will see it.
- DO include your tagline—it is tied to your brand and is a part of your positioning strategy. A designer can create a logo-tagline "lock-up" so it looks less cluttered and appears as one image.
- DON'T be tempted to include inspirational quotes and patriotic messages. Good intentions are the driver here, but it can come across as lacking in business savvy and sophistication.

## Links and Social Media

- DO link to your website and include your URL. If you use smart or vanity URLs on your website for your bios and practice or industry descriptions, include them, too. An example of a smart URL is: [www.rh-law.com/attorneys/christopherjwillis](http://www.rh-law.com/attorneys/christopherjwillis). A vanity URL is a bit shorter:

[www.jmbm.com/jimbutler](http://www.jmbm.com/jimbutler). Alternatively, you may wish to hyperlink the words “Bio” and “My Practice” in place of the actual URLs.

- DON'T include too many website links. Limit yourself to just one or two that put your best professional foot forward.
- DO create additional “stickiness” by including the icon-links to your Twitter and LinkedIn accounts. If you want to include Facebook, that's fine, but including more icons than this gets into the “really?” territory.
- DO include a link to your blog if you write on topics that advance your professional brand and it helps inform clients of your subject matter expertise.
- DON'T link to your personal blog. If you blog about travel, pets, fashion or whatever, save that for your personal email correspondence.

### Finishing Touches

- DO include the required disclaimers and confidentiality notices. Note that the font size and structure of these may be governed by your state bar rules.
- DO create multiple file formats of your e-signature (HTML format for HTML emails, TXT format for Plain Text emails, RTF format for Rich Text emails), so that your signature is well-optimized for different viewers.
- DON'T create your entire signature block as one image (see our earlier advice about images being blocked by some security settings).
- DO be consistent. Everyone in your firm should use the same design and email signature protocols.

Finally, a note of caution: There is a fine line—easily crossed—that will quickly take your e-signature from “desired utility” to “irritating self-promotion.” More, bigger and brighter are not always better.

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# Law Firm Holiday Card Planner

BY ELIZABETH A. BUTCHER | ATTORNEY AT WORK MARKETING COLLECTION

**S**ummer is gone, the kids are back at school, morning traffic has returned to normal (it is worse) and that can mean only one thing: Time to start planning your cards for the 2011 holiday season. Seems too early, right? It's not. To help you out, here is a 13-step guide to making the critical decisions and a timeline for getting it all done. Open up your calendar and note these deadlines!

## 1. Which Holiday Are You Observing?

In recent years, some lawyers have decided to beat the holiday card rush and send "Happy Thanksgiving" or "Happy New Year" greetings. Most, however, send their cards to arrive in early December, to take the traditional "season's greetings" approach to cover the many holidays happening at the end of the year. Many holidays? Yes. Al-Kijra (11/27), Chanuka (12/20-12/28), Christmas (12/25), Kwanzaa (12/26) and Chinese New Year (1/23) to name a few.

It's wise and thoughtful to remember that many clients and colleagues come from different faiths and ethnic backgrounds. Some observe their significant holidays at other times of the year entirely. Whatever the holiday and however you express your message, it is a good idea to start the project in September. So if you are reading this now, you are off to a good start!

## 2. E-card, Printed Card or No Card?

Do you want to sign your cards by hand, or merely hit "send" to distribute? Perhaps you want to do both or maybe you don't want to send a card at all? Although many firms have turned to e-cards, the signed printed card is still a favorite. Whatever your decision, make your selection soon and get started right away on design concepts and updating mailing lists.

## 3. To Contribute or Not to Contribute—That is the Question!

Some law firms select three, four or more charitable organizations to contribute to at the holidays, others one or none. Here, from [Woods Oviatt Gilman](#), is a good example of a holiday card incorporating charitable contributions. Some firms even make a contribution in the name of their clients and skip the greeting card.

## 4. What's Your Message: "Happy Holidays," "Happy New Year" or ... ?

What do you want the card to say? "Wishing you the best in the New Year?" "Warm holiday wishes to you and yours?" "Season's greetings?" Or ... perhaps you want to go down the humorous message path? The options are endless, of course. Just make sure your message accepts celebration of various holiday traditions and that it is about the recipient instead of all about you. The best approach is to keep your content simple and concise. Look at this humorous take on the law firm holiday card message development process in [Manatt's 2010 holiday card](#). (This card went viral and as of June 2011 it had been viewed 425,345 times. Talk about a hard-working holiday card!)

## 5. What's the Creative Concept?

Having selected the holiday message you wish to express, you have to consider the "creative." What images will you use? What words will you choose? Do you want to include animation or music in your electronic card? If you incorporate music, what will it be? Holiday cards traditionally use many different images, including wintery landscape scenes, bright holiday lights, gifts being wrapped or unwrapped, wreaths and photos of cities in which the firms reside. Just make sure that the tone and spirit of the card reflects your firm's brand. If that means something more

unusual, creative or quirky, plan on production taking a bit more time than a traditional card, since the more creative elements that are added the longer it may take to get the concept through internal approval and production.

#### **6. Who Will Receive the Card?**

Maybe you've decided to send both electronic and print holiday cards. How do you decide who receives them and which lawyer or lawyers will sign and send them? Do you create one central list that is approved by firm management (just typing that phrase makes me cringe), or do practice groups develop their own lists and assign lawyers to send and therefore organize the signature process? For larger firms, this becomes one of the most difficult portions of the holiday card project. Another option is to have each individual lawyer responsible for their own holiday card distribution. The main concern here is that one recipient may receive multiple cards from your firm. Some firms believe this reinforces the importance of the recipient, others think it makes the firm look uncoordinated and wasteful.

As for the actual mailing list, you should include clients, prospects, friends of the firm, real or potential referral sources and firm alumni. Staff managers may wish to send the greetings to vendors and professional association colleagues. In some firms, the relationship between firm and client is broadened by including paralegals, assistants and secretaries in the signing groups, or encouraging them to send their own greetings to their contacts in the client organization.

#### **7. Who Signs and Sends the Card?**

For a solo lawyer, this is a perfect time of year for a sincere handwritten note on each card. Lawyers in larger firms who can make this work while coordinating with others find it to be the best approach for them as well. Many different strategies have been developed for the actual signings, one being to set up large conference rooms for signing sessions to ensure that everyone who touches a client signs their card.

The best approach may be a combination of organized signing and individual attorneys sending their own cards, working with the relationship partner to make the decision. I am not sure taking only one approach is manageable, given all the variables. Clearly, for some clients you want to show a unified message. For others, that approach may not make sense because the contact your firm has with the client includes numerous people from completely different departments or offices. Your employment attorneys may be dealing with the HR professionals, where your litigation attorneys may be working only with one lawyer in the compliance department. So, your employment attorneys can sign one card for all the HR professionals and the litigation attorney can send one card to the compliance contact.

It goes without saying that this is all an organizational nightmare. (See why you need to start early?) Make sure now that you know who will have overall responsibility for this signing and mailing project. If you don't, you'll be sorry later on.

#### **8. Where Do You Purchase Holiday Cards or How Do You Develop an E-card?**

There are many places where you can just purchase the standard "cookie-cutter" holiday card, imprinted with your firm name or not. Simply type "corporate holiday cards" into the search engine of your choice. For a more unique holiday card, something that only your firm will have, reach out to a graphic designer or a company that creates electronic greetings. There are several companies geared toward law firm holiday e-greetings. One of them, Saturno, has a site that contains [sample holiday e-cards](#) from 2010.

### 9. What About the Envelope or “From” Field in Your E-card?

It's easy to get so focused on the card that you forget to plan the envelope. If you have multiple offices and lawyers sending cards, you will need to create envelopes with return addresses from each office. Nothing says “I did not put any thought into my holiday greeting” like a holiday card from a Boston lawyer sent in an envelope with the firm's New York return address. Also, lawyers in smaller offices have been known to feel marginalized by the implication that they aren't in the “home (important) office.” In respect to an electronic card, on the front side you'll need to figure out whether the “From” field of your email should be filled with the “Law Firm Name LLP” or each individual attorney's name.

### 10. Should you Conform or Buck the Holiday Card Trends?

The trend toward electronic holiday cards continues. If you decide this approach better represents your firm or saves you money and time, make sure you let your designer know up front because it could take more time to develop something that is unique. [HansonBridgett's holiday cards](#) are incredibly creative, incorporating all of the attorneys and staff expressing their holiday greeting.

### 11. How Much Will All This Cost?

Of course, how much you spend will depend on different aspects of production. Print cards are expensive and, like anything a firm prints, the higher the quantity the more expensive the project. You also have to anticipate that the cost of print cards goes up with each one you send because of postage. The e-card makes the stamp and printing costs of the card and the envelope disappear. Yet, electronic cards are not necessarily the less expensive alternative. Do you want a static card, simple repetitive motions, complex repetitive motion or one that tells a story? The more creative elements, animation and story, the more expensive the e-card. I have seen quotes for e-cards in the following ranges:

- Static: \$1,500 to \$3,000
- Simple repetitive motions: \$5,800 to \$8,500
- Tells a story: \$12,000 to \$24,500

That said, I have also seen prices from smaller design companies and freelancers at much lower prices. If this is a direction you choose, you will need to shop around and ask for samples and references. (And actually call the references!) [My firm's 2010 holiday e-card](#) was based on the image and content used in our print card (we do both), and had simple motion incorporated. It was reasonably priced and received lots of positive feedback.

### 12. How About Some Great Examples of Law Firm Holiday E-cards?

**Fun and interactive.** [Goulston & Storrs](#) has an annual holiday card contest, and their e-card does an excellent job incorporating several drawings in an interactive way. Here is a sample of an interactive e-card from Saturno using a fictitious firm name, with the theme “[Did you build a snowman?](#)”

**Multiple offices.** This is a nice example of a firm celebrating the season from each of the firm's offices, from [Sherman & Howard](#).

**Effective animation.** Both [Foley Hoag](#) and [Goodwin Procter](#) produced law firm holiday cards that successfully used animation.



### 13. Truly? We Have to Start Now?

Take a look at this timeline for planning and delivering your firm holiday card. It becomes pretty obvious that time is already tight (assuming everyone is continuing to practice law during this period).

#### HOLIDAY CARD TIMELINE

##### SEPTEMBER

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Just getting started. Before the end of September you should have already thought about:

- The vendor or designer you will employ to create the card
- The general creative concept and copy for your card
- Whether or not you will be making a charitable contribution as part of the holiday greeting
- Obtaining your first round of draft concepts for review and selection

##### OCTOBER

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Keep the project going. By this time you should have addressed:

- Approving the final card concept (and contribution recipient if you are doing that as part of this)
- Identifying the quantity of print cards you need and ordering them
- Determining how many envelopes you will need and ordering them
- Beginning your mailing list process
- Informing the firm's lawyers (if more than one) of when and how the cards will be distributed to them for signing
- Prepping any other staff or departments that touch the holiday card project on their role in implementing

##### NOVEMBER

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The real countdown begins. Keep up the momentum, and by the end of November you should have:

- The E-card complete and printed cards in-hand
- Mailing lists updated and confirmed
- Printed cards distributed to lawyers
- Signing of the masses complete (if you take that approach)
- Started snail-mailing right after Thanksgiving

##### DECEMBER

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Almost time to celebrate! By the end of the second week of December you should:

- Complete your mailing, preferably in early December
- Handle any last-minute requests for additional cards
- Incorporate your e-card on your firm Web site

Okay, so perhaps you didn't read this article until mid-November. There is still time! It is acceptable to send cards out throughout the end of December. You will have a difficult time finding a vendor to create a custom card for your firm—they are busy working for others! –but nothing's impossible. However, you'll want to gear your message more toward "Happy New Year" if it goes out toward the end of December. You'll also have to eliminate any intention to send the card out with multiple signatures.

Good luck and happy holidays!

***Elizabeth A. Butcher** is Director of Business Development and Marketing for [Wiggin and Dana LLP](#), a law firm with over 135 lawyers and six offices in the Northeast. Before her experience with law firms, Elizabeth worked for Madison Square Garden in various marketing and public relations capacities.*

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#### From the Editors:

## Examples of Law Firm e-Cards

Looking for a little holiday card inspiration? [Click here for a list of links](#) to an exotic collection of law firm e-cards from past years, including those below. And if your firm has one you'd like to show off, [just drop us at note!](#) We'd love to see what you've done.

Arnold & Porter	Cole Schotz
Dewey & LeBoeuf	Dinsmore & Shohl
Faegre & Benson	Goodmans
Much Shelist	Kirkland & Ellis
Sterne Kessler	King & Spalding
Pillsbury	Knobbe Martens
Akin Gump	Young Conaway
Akin Gump	Sedgwick
Haynes and Boone	Orrick
Dickstein Shapiro	Wolf Theiss
Proctor Heyman	Smith Amundsen
Proctor Heyman	Williams Kastner
Nixon Peabody	LMA Your Honor Awards 2010 – Holiday Cards
Lang Michener	
Bilzin Sumberg	



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