



How do you market a law firm in a *smaller* city, state, or country?

How can you generate in-bound referrals if you live in an area where the "big-city" lawyers don't know anyone? How can *you* generate business from outside your borders? Here's one way:

It's easy to find a lawyer in a big city. Most lawyers know how to find a skilled litigator in San Francisco, or a smart real estate lawyer Atlanta -- or at least know someone who probably does. All it takes is one phone call and you can get a few names of some talented local lawyers to call.

But how do you find a lawyer in a small town? Or in a state where there are more sheep than people? Or in a small-population country? How would *you* find a proven lawyer in, say, Grangeville, Idaho, or Reykjavik, Iceland?

We were in [Reykjavik](#) last week, conducting marketing training at **LEX, one of Iceland's leading law firms.**

One of the interesting marketing challenges confronted by *all* Icelandic firms is that they're in a country where many potential prospects from beyond their borders simply do not personally know a lawyer.



In fact, **they might not even know anyone who knows a lawyer there** – which makes direct referrals challenging.

That's the situation faced by most firms in smaller geographic markets (whether it's a city, state, or country). **Firms in those markets can develop significant new business *strictly* from the power of their brand** – i.e. by being the best-known, or best-marketed, firm in that region. You can simply seek to become directly associated with that region, here "**LEX is Icelandic for Law**"©



For example, in its marketing outside of Iceland, LEX could use imagery like this ice cube, to **become synonymous with Iceland.** It could market directly to businesses in specific cities or countries that have in-bound legal needs in Iceland.

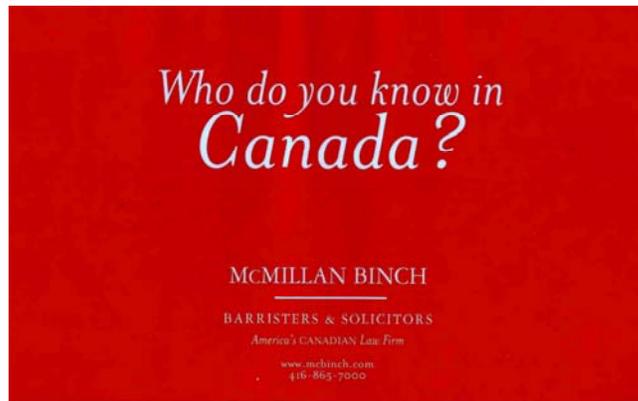


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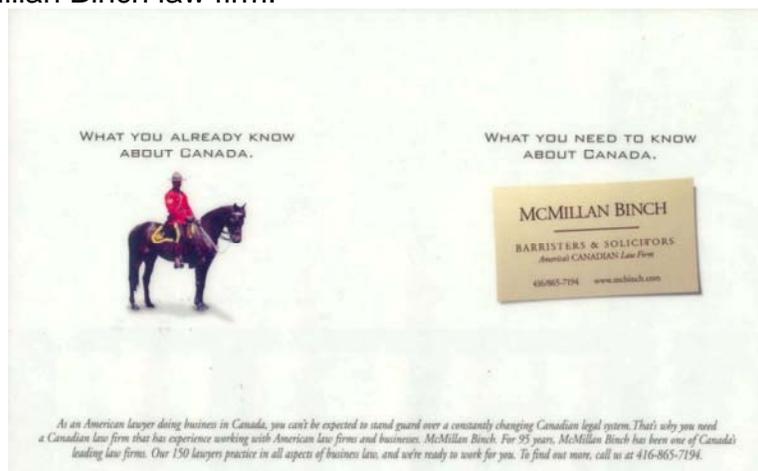
Or they could market to specific individuals, law firms, industries, trade groups, or international networks. You wouldn't have to see this icy image very often to remember it, which makes the marketing efforts cost-effective.

We first used this strategy around 13 years ago when law firms were just starting to market creatively and proactively, and Canada's **McMillan Binch** law firm **wanted to increase its visibility and name recognition** as a safe choice for NAFTA and other referrals north from the US.



We developed a light-hearted "America's Canadian Law Firm" campaign that played off of the stereotype that Americans didn't know much about Canada. After a "Who do you know in Canada?" teaser, we launched "What you already know about Canada" - including a Mountie, a red maple leaf, and a moose. It included advertising, direct mail, and a campaign targeting reporters -- seeking to get quoted more often in the relevant publications.

Juxtaposed next to it was "What you need to know about Canada" which was, of course, the McMillan Binch law firm.



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Today, we would focus significant marketing effort *online*, seeking a high Google ranking for organic searches and **Google AdWords** that named the relevant geography. It's difficult and costly for a business law firm to try to get on the first screen of a Google search for "Litigator Chicago." (And experience shows that the leads it generates are rarely to the clients you want.)

However, you can turn up some good prospects if you earned a high ranking for small-town searches like "tax lawyer Paducah Kentucky."

BTW, in case you happen to need a lawyer in Iceland, I found the **LEX lawyers to be extremely impressive**, and their managing partner, [Heimir Örn Herbertsson](#), to be inspiring. I predict that the firm will continue to have significant success.

