

## Q: Do general firm brochures work? Really?

**A:** It's not that they can't be persuasive; it's just that they generally aren't.

In my opinion, that's not the fault of the tool, but of the execution. Boring brochures don't persuade me any more than clichéd ads, jargon-laden newsletters, dull web sites, or anything else. And I feel that too many (most, perhaps?) brochures fail from lack of strategy and messaging, even before you get to the ponderous writing or bland design.

I'm not sure the test should be whether a brochure directly convinced me to buy the product or service ("Hey, I saw your brochure -- would you handle my antitrust case?") or whether it should be considered one more tool that positions your firm in a way that makes you more likely to get the work and supports the lawyers' in-person relationship-building activities. ("Here's some more information about our firm and why we're different from other similar-looking firms.") It's an image piece that helps you sell your firm.

Below is a brochure we did for Segal McCambridge Singer & Mahoney, a high-end class action defense firm (asbestos, latex gloves, *etc.*). The "We make the complex simple<sup>sm</sup>" tag line tells how they approach their incredibly complicated cases in a way that resonates with the in-house lawyer targets. The appropriate use of humor helps sell the message and keep them reading, and gives us a theme to use in the advertising and web site as well (see [smsm.com](http://smsm.com)). Instead of using the firm's logo, the intriguing cover is a teaser that causes the reader to want to open it to learn more.

Pasted below, with the client's approval, is an unsolicited letter the client received from a sophisticated in-house lawyer who'd just received the brochure. I don't believe one letter proves the point, but we've heard this type of comment from many others who didn't write it down. When clients are taping pages of your brochure to their office wall, and asking for more copies, it's a good start, at least:

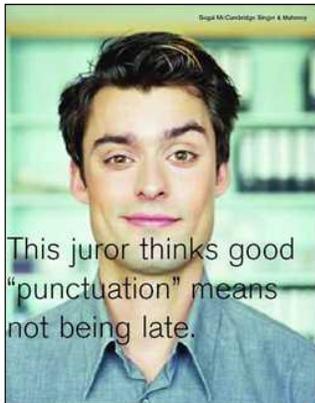
"I wanted to let you know that we've received your firm's recent marketing brochure and I just have you let you know how clever it is and what an impact it's had. We receive law firm marketing materials quite routinely here and they typically have a half-life of about 15 seconds before they make it into the circular file.

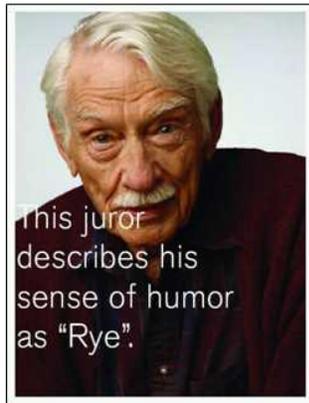
"The cover on the new one that you sent was enough to make me read on and even laugh but it really drives home the point that most attorneys get so caught up in legal issues that they lose the big picture of how it all comes down to what a jury is willing or able to decide in a given case. This is truly different from the straight-delivery ones that we receive which go on about how qualified the firm is and how many years of experience they have... I know that you guys have the experience but

in a simple and clear way, this told me that you know what you're doing and what's really important in handling these complex cases.

"I've shown it to a few other adjusters and brought it to my weekly unit meeting. My Director actually photocopied the first two pages and has them hanging on the wall of her office. She asked me about my impressions of your firm and whether you are on our approved counsel list. I let her know that you're doing National Claims Council work on one of my accounts and that I know of another Analyst here who has you guys as NCC on an account and is equally impressed.

"I can't make any promises, but my Director and I talked about recommending SMSM for our approved counsel list. By chance, do you have a copy of this brochure on a PDF file that we can forward to the Litigation Management Committee here to begin the process of recommending you for panel counsel? It can be a long process and even if you don't end up on the list now, I've seen firms get selected down the road."

 <p>This juror thinks good "punctuation" means not being late.</p>	<p>And it's our job to help him understand the mutagenic, toxicological, microbiological and carcinogenic properties of chrysotile, crocidolite and other asbestiform minerals.</p>	<p>We make the complex simple.</p>	<p>SMSM lawyers try, and win, bet-the-company lawsuits by studying the intricacies of each case, and finding an effective solution that is simple to understand and compelling to judges and jurors.</p>
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 <p>This juror describes his sense of humor as "Rye".</p>	<p>And it's our job to have him grasp the difference among allergens, antigens, endotoxins and proteins.</p>	 <p>This juror thinks "Myriad" was a girl from her fourth-grade class.</p>	<p>And it's our job to help her understand the epidemiological distinctions between mild tricuspid valvular regurgitation, endothelialized foreign matter, and bacterial endocarditis.</p>
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