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Paula Black has advised law firms around the globe on everything from powerful and innovative design to marketing strategy and business growth. She is an award-winning Amazon-bestselling author and the force behind **In Black & White** (inblackandwhiteblog.com), a blog dedicated to clear, straightforward advice and open discussion of legal marketing issues. For more information on Paula Black, her books and her company please visit paulablacklegalmarketing.com.

How To Work With A Copywriter

When it comes to legal marketing (and marketing in general) the power is in the message. Once you've established your personal or firm brand, and have a clear view on your points of differentiation and core audience, it's time to start writing. Lawyers are great at legal writing—but to truly connect with readers is a different form of the art. And let's be honest, not everyone has the time, the skill or the desire to delve into copywriting. Enter the copywriter. More and more, firms are choosing to employ the talents of professional copywriters to help them craft their message for brochures, websites and even presentations. But it's not as easy as just handing off the assignment. Here are a few tips to working with your copywriter.

Be picky.

Not all copywriters work the same. Look closely at candidates to be sure their vision gels with yours. View examples of past work and see if it draws you in. Though they'll be writing from your perspective, every writer has their own style.

Be open-minded.

Don't get stuck looking exclusively at writers with law experience. Sometimes working with a copywriter who has experience in other industries can bring new ideas and a breath of fresh air to stale copy. By taking cues from previous work they can often tweak dull legal copy and incorporate new language and ideas. Added plus: If they've worked in industries that reflect your client roster chances are they'll have a good insight into how those clients think, work and communicate.

Be consistent.

From the beginning figure out how much writing will need to be done (at least at first glance) and how it will flow together. For instance: it's easier to write copy for a brochure and website at the same time, rather than go back a year later and try to adapt. All materials should reflect the same voice, so keeping the same writer on all projects only makes sense to attain the best results.

Be available.

You can't hand over a copywriting project without input. From the beginning, understand what your copywriter will need from you—whether it be company information, access to employees for interviews and quotes, photos, history, bios... and then be sure to follow through. It only benefits you to give writers as much information as you can.

Be honest.

Don't like a certain word? Tell them! Don't love the way they phrased something? Tell them! You must be honest with your copywriter if you want the best results. Once they get to know your preferences they can better create content that makes both of you happy.

Be respectful.

Sometimes you just have to defer to an expert. Where lawyers tend to want to write like well...a lawyer, copywriters know what draws readers in and engages them in the copy. While they will most likely always be grateful for your input, there will be times when you will have to just trust their experience.

In the end, working with a copywriter can be a great benefit to your firm. They can bring a new perspective and new voice to firm materials and have the added advantage of being not only NOT a lawyer, but a potential client as well. They know what people want to read and can craft your message to resonate in the most powerful way.