



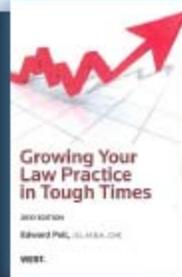
Week of **February 23, 2010**

## A Rose by Any Other Name...

Traditionally, when a lawyer or lawyers open a firm they take their own names. One reason for this is ego, but another is that they are really general practitioners without a specialty. They may migrate to one or two or three or four specialties as they become more seasoned in their practice, just by virtue of where their clientele comes from, not because they've selected it.

Another reason for using your name is that your name, to some degree, becomes your brand. When you want people to come to you, how are they going to find you in the phone book or through an Internet search engine? If clients want to refer friends or associates to you, how are they going to describe you? By your name, of course. As you grow, and more partners are added to the firm, then it becomes an issue of choice whether the firm name also grows. Inevitably, over time, the first couple of names for a firm are the ones that clients and prospects associate with the firm. To go contrary to that "share of mind" is at odds with your marketing purpose. But when you see five or six or seven names in a letterhead of a smaller firm, it's inevitably because the other partners believe they need that for their own personal marketing purposes.

It is a growing trend for firms to develop an entirely new name based on the type of law the firm practices. The advantage of calling yourself the Business Connection or Family Law Center is to appeal to that segment of the marketplace from which you anticipate receiving the bulk of your business. It's a way of specializing without going through the specialization process that some state bar associations specify for focusing on a practice area. This is purely a marketing consideration, to be made only if you've decided in advance that you want to have one kind of practice. If you expect to expand into other practice areas, it makes no sense at all.



## Growing Your Law Practice in Tough Times

Following the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, and facing a sea change in clients' demands and expectations, law firms must respond and adapt quickly and effectively. Law firms must choose the kind of law practice they will be; the marketing and business development tactics they will use; the overhead that is critical to their functioning; how to price, bill and collect for services; and how to manage the cash flow cycle.

Success lies in identifying and capturing the right kinds of clients, providing the services those clients need in ways that add value, and ensuring prompt payment and the ability to grow profits. This book, based on the experiences of Ed and his clients over 20 years of coaching and consulting, provides the keys to successfully thriving in the new era.

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One thing a generic law firm name does do is symbolize that clients belong to the firm and not to the lawyer, and that is in the best interests of firm, lawyer and client alike. Lawyers who have successfully "branded" themselves as personalities, like a Melvin Belli or Johnnie Cochran, are few and far between. Most clients presume each lawyer is as competent as the next. Institutionalizing the work done for a given client can involve other firm lawyers in the delivery of legal services, even if one lawyer remains the client's primary contact. If clients place primary reliance on the firm, the lawyer benefits as the firm itself maintains relationships and generates new ones.

## Personal Commentary

Why should one's birth-day be any different than any other day? My mother used to say, "If you can't remember me throughout the year, don't bother me on my birthday." That always seemed a little harsh to me, but there is some merit in her feeling. Expressed slightly differently, let's make every day count, for ourselves as well as for those making our lives better. I wear Lance Armstrong's yellow band because it says "Livestrong" as a reminder to me to live each day as well as I know how to do.

My birthday has now come and gone—one more year. I love what I do; I enjoy coaching lawyers to achieve more of their potential; and I love sharing in my children's and grandchildren's growth. I continue to live a blessed life. Thanks to all who have contributed to me, my growth, and my enjoyment over the years.

Best wishes,

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