

## **Five Brand Building Tools Every Law Firm Should Evaluate Today Then Ask Yourself: Is It Time to Re-Brand?**

by Paula Black

Marketing materials can encompass everything from business cards to brochures to signage and are often one of the most overlooked aspects in the day-to-day marketing of law firms. We understand that budgets are tight and time is short, so we've put together a list of five things every firm should evaluate on a regular basis. It shouldn't take more than a few minutes to look them over and see what's working and what needs to be adjusted.

### **1. Your Website**

Forget the fancy flash animation, client sign-ins and blogs, does your website reflect your firm? Does the color palette reflect your firm personality? Is it clear and easy to read? Can a visitor go to the site and immediately understand who you are and what you do? If not, it may be time for an update.

### **2. Your Attorney Biographies**

An easy way to update your materials is to spend an hour creating a short template that all attorney bios need to fit. No more 5-page biographies, keep the information short and relevant to the clients that attorneys are trying to land, not the ones they already have. And if it means cutting out a few highlights, so be it. Also keep careful watch on the personal aspects. It's great to be involved in community organizations but limit them to those you are truly involved in on a regular basis, rather than in name only.

### **3. Your Business Cards**

Business cards are a cheap and easy way to update your marketing materials. Even the most conservative firms can get a little creative when it comes to their cards. Think outside the box...turn them vertical if your logo allows, go for a 2-sided card so that your firm name (or logo) takes center stage on one side or even add a tagline for extra marketing message punch.

### **4. Your Firm Brochure**

With the popularity of the web, firm brochures don't have to be as detailed and chock full of information as they used to be. Use the brochure to highlight your best assets and give a true feel for the firm culture. Does your brochure have personal quotes from firm partners and represent your firm TODAY? Does it give statistics and results? Stats and results make people stop and take notice. Does it feel like it could be generic to any firm your size? Does it feel like it truly fits with your other materials? Use the website to get into real details...use your brochure to set the tone.

### **5. Your E-Mail**

It may be simple but having a formatted e-mail signature with your firm logo, tagline (if you have one) and contact information lends an extra air of sophistication and professionalism to an otherwise basic form of communication. Have them personalized for each attorney, secretary and paralegal...it will be a small detail that people will notice. A short list... but an important one. By regularly reviewing even the simplest of marketing tools, you will make it easier to continually present a modern and up-to-date visual representation of your firm... keep in mind there will come a time you will need to reevaluate!

### **Is It Time to Re-Brand?**

Though I CONTINUALLY stress the importance of repetition and continuity, there are always instances where a firm re-branding is not only smart, but also necessary. A new look can breathe new life into a firm, get members and staff excited and is a fantastic way to kick-off a business development initiative. But when moving forward with the project, there are certain things that must be considered. As I said, repetition is key to a great brand so think hard before throwing an existing one away. If your firm has had the same logo for 30 years and it works...don't change it. There are plenty of ways to update materials without an entire re-branding, and often just a little design magic can make a world of difference. Here are two instances when re-branding is a good idea:

**1. Taking the Firm in a New Direction.** Sometimes when firm members shift, the focus of the firm can change. You may bring in new practice areas or eliminate others. You may even choose to market the firm to one specific audience (i.e. Aviation, Maritime, Construction, etc...) and when this happens it may be time to consider a re-branding. Re-branding with an eye toward a specific audience can have a huge impact on your marketing and business development. Speaking to exactly the clients you want through your branding will make it easy for outsiders to recognize what you do and whom you work with.

**2. Updating or Adding to your Materials.** Make no mistake; there are many firms out there whose firm materials haven't been updated since 1982. If your firm falls into that category, it's definitely time to consider a re-branding. Moving to a new and more modern look can breathe new life into an established firm while giving them a chance to reintroduce themselves (and their attorneys) to clients and colleagues. Little changes such as shortening a long firm's name and tweaking the existing color scheme or icon (or even adding a tagline) are all great branding strategies that won't discount the firm history.

So while small changes may work for some firms, a re-branding may be the answer for others. It may be a long overdue project... and one that can reap incredible benefits. Remember to stick to your firm personality, listen to the advice of professionals and above all else (once you've completed the process)...stay true to your brand!

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#### About the Author



**Paula Black** is an author, legal branding expert, business development consultant and coach. As founder and president of Paula Black & Associates, Paula has delivered powerful and innovative marketing and business development solutions for more than twenty five years. Among her firm's greatest strengths is the branding and positioning of law firms. She can be reached at 305.859.9554 or [info@paulablack.com](mailto:info@paulablack.com)

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