

Top 2010 Legal Growth Areas Create Opportunities for Thought Leaders

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“Follow the money” is a suitable adage for legal marketing when it comes to business development in the new decade. Industries like energy and health care are obvious recipients of funding inflows based on governmental policies and demographics.

Ten top law practice areas with expected high growth rates in 2010 and beyond are outlined below. Attorneys who set themselves apart as thought leaders on these topics—through speaking, writing, and press coverage—will gain a competitive advantage.

1. **Energy and Environmental Law.** As energy efficiency, renewable energy sources, cap and trade, emissions control, climate change, and other energy concerns capture international headlines, attorneys who enter these markets early will benefit from specialization in new “cleantech” energy applications and laws.
2. **Health Care Law.** U.S. employers can expect to see healthcare costs rise 9% in 2010, according to a recent PWC study. This spiraling growth in health care spending will see an associated increase in the need for legal services associated with fraud, reimbursements, malpractice, contracts, patient rights, and more.
3. **Intellectual Property Law.** Continuing economic shifts away from manufacturing toward a more digital and service-based economy will keep IP attorneys busy with copyright, patent, and trademark filings, protection, and litigation.
4. **International Law.** Growth projections for Brazil, Russia, India, and China indicate these “BRIC” countries will collectively match the original G-7’s share of global GDP by 2040-2050, according to the U.S. National Intelligence Council. China is likely to have a greater impact on the world over the next 20 years than any other country. U.S. law firms pursuing global transactions will require cultural diversity, a continually expanding network of relationships among an evolving set of foreign entities, and multiple language skills that transcend many aspects of firm marketing and communications.
5. **Alternative dispute resolution.** Clients seeking a less expensive, more efficient approach to resolve disagreements are exploring many forms of ADR, including mediation, arbitration, special master, discovery referee, project neutral, and dispute review board work. Litigators and in-house counsel will want to determine how to address this trend in their 2010 plans.
6. **Employment Law.** The number of people in the labor force aged 55 to 64 is expected to grow by 33% between 2008 and 2018, and the number of people aged 65 and older is projected to grow by 78%, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Coupled with the trend away from full-benefits, full-time positions to more outsourcing and part-time work, employment law will present opportunities for both plaintiff and corporate attorneys.
7. **Privacy Law.** What we buy, where we go, who we call, medications we consume, foods we eat, and friends we interact with all are tracked digitally. Privacy law across many industries (HIPAA, aviation, identity theft, etc.) continues as a growth industry for the next decade.

8. **Municipal Law.** State and local government tax revenue fell by 7% in the third quarter, continuing a four quarter trend. Solution-oriented municipal lawyers will be in demand as governors and mayors struggle to deal with unfunded pension liabilities, social programs, infrastructure, education, and associated funding sources.
9. **Corporate Law.** Corporate governance remains a priority as boards must address executive compensation, changes in accounting standards, regulatory compliance, and fraud prevention. In financial markets, the aftermath of securitization and derivatives transactions casts a long shadow.
10. **Trust and Estate Law.** Congress left town without addressing the elimination of the estate tax in 2010. What a perfect reason for trust and estate attorneys to engage current or past clients in a renewed discussion about tax and estate planning techniques.

Bankruptcy remains yet another growth area, as both consumers and businesses struggle to emerge from unprecedented levels of debt.

The New Year is most promising for those law firms and attorneys who start 2010 with a marketing plan complete with focus, discipline, and carefully defined goals and objectives. Strategic thought leader marketing campaigns will naturally attract the interest of qualified law firm prospects, the media, and existing clients.

For lawyers who might benefit from a “back to the basics” marketing approach, a free attorney marketing plan is online at <http://www.legalexpertconnections.com/attorneymarketingplan.pdf>.

Call Legal Expert Connections to Discuss your 2010 Legal Marketing Plans

Legal Expert Connections is a national legal marketing agency concentrating in business development for attorneys and experts. Margaret Grisdela, president, is the author of *Courting Your Clients: The Essential Guide to Legal Marketing*. Services include thought leader marketing, Internet marketing, strategic planning, and “Rainmaking in 90 Days” programs. Article placement, speaking engagements, and PR are available on a pay-for-performance basis. The firm’s web sites include www.legalexpertconnections.com, www.payforperformancepr.com, and the law marketing blog www.rainmakingclub.com.

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