



Paula Black & Associates

3006 Aviation Avenue, Suite 3B
Coconut Grove, Florida 33133
Phone 305-859-9554 • Fax 305-860-0016
paulablacklegalmarketing.com



Contact Paula Black at:
3006 Aviation Avenue, Suite 3B

Coconut Grove, FL 33133

P 305-859-9554

F 305-860-0016

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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**.

Legal Marketing Wisdom You Should Ignore

Basic marketing strategy may stay constant, but the specific actions and advice that experts give is in a constant state of transition. From social media platforms like Twitter to the ever-changing world of blogging, today's legal marketing is a far cry from that of even just five years ago.

Having worked with lawyers for the last 15 years, I've seen, heard and given a lot of advice when it comes to business development. Does it all still apply? No! In order to keep up with clients, you've got to understand what still works... and what's outdated. Here are few pieces of past wisdom that no longer apply now that the rules have changed!

Your website is your only online presence. Social media and blogging have all but made this piece of advice obsolete. Platforms like Twitter and, if you're so inclined, Facebook, as well as the plethora of blawgs (slang for law-related blogs) and article directories give attorneys a direct connection to potential clients and establish their credibility. While a firm website is important in that it can outline basic information and firm vision, a more personal and specific line of communication such as a blog can help attorneys truly show what sets them apart from the competition.

Cards should only be sent for winter holidays. To truly stand out in a sea of holiday cards, I always advise my clients to send either Thanksgiving or New Year's cards. (For the adventurous there is always July 4th as well!). The lesson here is to think outside the box. Don't want to send holiday cards at all? Have a reception instead;

send clients a card with an interesting article that relates to their business; or even keep a calendar of birthdays and the like. Communicate all year round...not just when you think you have to.

Law firms don't have taglines. Though it's still met with a bit of resistance from some, a lot of firms have accepted the benefits of having a tagline. Whether it's simple, clever, funny or descriptive, a tagline can do wonders for helping firms not only show their points of differentiation, but establish their position and their firm culture among potential clients. Two other options to consider? First, a tagline doesn't always have to be attached to a logo. It can simply be a strong positioning statement or headline that sums up a firm's vision and point of differentiation. Second, it can be as simple as using "Trial Attorneys" versus "Attorneys at Law." It can set you apart and make clear your place in the legal field.

All you need is a capabilities brochure. While a beautiful and informative brochure can make for a great leave-behind, the secret is really in the content. Stop telling clients what you CAN do and show them what you've done. A results-driven brochure can incorporate case studies, statistics about the firm (and its lawyers) and the backgrounds of its attorneys. Additionally, the brochure can often be housed in a folder with articles that the attorney has written (either published traditionally or online) to increase credibility as well as other news and information that will help engage the client (or potential client) and package the firm as their go-to resource for all legal issues.

Your bio should be about what you've done. Sure, clients want to know about your cases and clients...but what they really want to know is how those cases and clients apply to them. Refrain from compiling lists and instead focus on how your experience can be of service to a specific industry or group of clients. Make them understand why you're the best at what you do and use those clients and cases as examples. Also- it's always a good idea to have a few different versions of your bio on hand so you can tailor them to each industry or practice area you work with.

Legal marketing wisdom changes on a constant basis. As new methods of communication continue to crop up, the marketing opportunities for lawyers and firms continue to multiply. My best advice? Read books, subscribe to blogs and follow legal marketing news for the latest trends and ideas.

