

Q: My full-service firm doesn't get much business from the Yellow Pages, and our sales rep says we need a bigger ad. Do we?

A: A great ad in the Yellow Pages can develop lots of good business for consumer practices like personal injury, divorce, and criminal. However, in my opinion, a business firm doesn't need anything more than the bare minimum Yellow Pages listing -- a simple name and address. Sophisticated business executives do not shop for lawyers in the Yellow Pages, in either the primary directory or display ad section of the book. I've done a lot of research on this issue and set up a Yellow Pages advertising company targeting these consumers Red Jackal Ads. It's a very complicated industry -- and I suspect that they like keeping it that way.

Your real audience already knows your name, so they will look you up in the white pages. A larger Yellow Pages listing is *way* too expensive for this. People who don't know who to use (think about how you might find a plumber or pest control company) look through the Yellow Pages by general category, but executives don't find business lawyers there. There's a lot of data supporting this issue.

Further, the commission for your Yellow Pages sales representative is paid based upon how much *more* they charge you over last year's contract, so their incentive is to persuade you to buy a bigger ad or more varied placements, or an ad with more colors or features, so they might not mention this. . . .