

## **Q: My lawyers aren't sure branding works for law firms. Does it really?**

**A:** Does branding work for law firms? Of course it does. Just like every other type of business in every other industry selling any other product or service.

But it only really works well when it's done "right." For example:

- Is there a smart, differentiated strategy that sets the firm apart from other firms, or does it simply promise the obvious, e.g. that the lawyers are, skilled, smart, represent businesses, or get results?
- Are the marketing materials designed to jump off the page and grab you by the throat, or are they using globes, gavels, columns, handshakes, or the other forgettable clichéd images?
- Is it a dynamic, innovative, multi-faceted campaign, or simply an innocuous but cleverly worded tag line?
- Is the target audience sufficiently narrow that the firm can build omnipresence?
- Is the firm spending at least the minimum amount necessary to create the repetition that will cause them to be noticed and remembered?
- Do the lawyers truly believe in the strategy and message, or do they privately scoff to their own clients that "that's just something our marketing department came up with"?
- Does the firm have management in place that is committed to sustaining it?
- *Etc. etc.*

Plenty of firms *say* they're engaging in a branding campaign when they really aren't. Starting with a flawed strategy and weak execution, when it doesn't immediately generate enormous quantities of new clients, the lawyers blame "Branding." Sometimes that's the fault of the firm's too-conservative culture, sometimes it's using an agency that doesn't adequately understand law firms and our audience. Sometimes that's just the best a novice firm can do at that time and they will improve their efforts next time.

Marketing *can* work.

But no tool, tactic or strategy is effective when impotently executed. *That's* where I'd like to see the conversation -- educating lawyers of the difference between good and bad marketing, so they become more receptive to the type of marketing that *does* work. A better-educated audience lets us do our jobs better.

I believe that the good news is that the amount of "good" work that exists today is *so* much greater than that which existed just a couple years ago -- it's a good sign. Every day I wake up excited to do my job because I think the bar is being raised every single day. Our lawyer clients are willing to accept more much creativity which lets us all do better and better work.

FYI, for more information, kill a few minutes playing around with the Automatic Ad Generator or Automatic Tag Line Generator links under Fun Stuff at [www.rossfishman.com](http://www.rossfishman.com). I think it helps make my point.