



PR Attracts Business for California Law Firm

I am sure you get this question all the time: Can you connect PR to actual business?

Greenberg Glusker, a boutique firm in Los Angeles, offers us a great example on how we can respond to this important and frequently asked question.

Greenberg Glusker Partner Lee Dresie recently secured a \$1.1 million judgment on behalf of his client in a case against a boat manufacturer, Tiara Yachts, and an engine manufacturer, Volvo Penta of The Americas. Based on this success, the firm quickly issued a news release to promote this litigation victory.

According to the release, the client, who is a 20-year boating enthusiast, had been a loyal customer of Tiara Yachts prior to purchasing a brand new Tiara 4300 Sovran in late 2006. But after experiencing four failures in the first 66 hours of operation, the firm's client attempted to exercise his right of rescission under California law and tried to return the boat for a full refund. The boat manufacturer and engine manufacturer refused the client's demand to buy back the faulty boat. This led to a suit against both manufacturers for breaching their obligations under California's Song-Beverly Consumer Warranty Act.

Soon after the release was posted on the wire and in boating industry trade publications, calls from other boaters in Los Angeles and from around the world came into the firm with similar complaints against Tiara. While this firm is not necessarily known for its boating expertise or its litigation against these types of manufacturers, the attorneys and marketing department were thrilled that their efforts to promote this case generated leads for other potential cases.

Successes like these take more than just a court victory. They take a team effort to create PR success. Among the tasks the team needs to accomplish are the following:

- 1) The firm needs to obtain the client's permission to promote the case.
- 2) The lead counsel needs to immediately reach out to the firm's marketing and/or PR teams to inform them about the win.
- 3) The PR team must move swiftly to generate a release (or a pitch) and get it in front of the targeted media that will care about this type of case.
- 4) The team needs to follow up on any media inquiries, provide commentary from the attorneys involved and track any resulting media mentions.
- 5) If the media mentions create any new opportunities, the PR and business development teams need to work closely together to connect the dots.

The true value of this instance — beyond generating business — is that it provides the firm's marketing and PR team a great example to give to skeptical attorneys who question whether PR contributes to a firm's overall business development efforts.