



Paula Black & Associates
3006 Aviation Avenue, Suite 3B <http://www.jdsupra.com/post/documentViewer.aspx?fid=52d72d47-142a-4937-9483-9a36bf96e146>
Coconut Grove, Florida 33133
Phone 305-859-9554 • Fax 305-860-0016
paulablacklegalmarketing.com

Document hosted at JDSUPRA™



Contact Paula Black at:
3006 Aviation Avenue, Suite 3B
Coconut Grove, FL 33133
P 305-859-9554
F 305-860-0016
paulablacklegalmarketing.com

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.

10 Marketing Issues to Address at Your Next Retreat

From team building to corporate culture, retreats give you a captive audience for the firm's internal business, making it a perfect time to discuss an often ignored part of your business—marketing. By taking just a few minutes to sit down with partners, associates and staff you can make long-term changes that may be easier than you think. Below are 10 simple yet crucial issues to bring up at your next firm retreat...

1. Points of Differentiation

In order to stand out in a sea of law firms you must identify and then market what makes your firm unique. Are you focused on personal attention? Have a 100-year history in a certain region? Employ attorneys who speak multiple languages? Bringing together partners, associates and staff can quickly bring about a clear vision of what makes the firm different and how that fits with what your clients need. You can then use that as part of your law firm marketing and business development plan.

2. Firm Personality

If your firm were a car what would it be? Strong and tough like a Ford truck? Sleek and fast like a Ferrari? Sophisticated and state-of-the-art like a Mercedes S-Class? How about an ice cream flavor? A beverage? A movie genre? All of these exercises not only make for a lively discussion, but work to help define your firm personality.

Once that emerges, look for ways to incorporate it in your firm's daily business— from answering the phones to your letterhead.

3. Define your message and brand

It may be a word, a symbol or a motto but having a message can do more to keep attorneys on the same page than almost anything else. Decide what your message and is and stick to it, whether it be stamping your symbol on letters and emails or boldly displaying your firm mantra on the company website. Repetition will help attorneys stay on message and clients recognize your presence.

4. Set clear marketing and business development goals

For firms who rely on billable hours, marketing often takes a backseat. Make that change. Retreats are a perfect time to create and set clear expectations for attorneys and partners for non-billable time devoted to marketing and business development. And don't forget to reward the performers!

5. Use your relationships

Relationships are key to marketing your firm. Have the attorneys and staff brainstorm individual contacts in specific industries that they have neglected, and pledge to call or visit them at least one a month for the next year. On the internal side, create relationships between attorneys and staff by pairing younger associates with senior rainmakers who can act as marketing mentors.

6. Look at your client list

The 80/20 rule says that 80% of a firm's business comes from the top 20% of its clients. Go through that list and ask yourself what you can do to bring in even more business from those individuals and companies. Are you cross-marketing between practice areas? Bringing a wide variety of practices together in one room can create instant ideas of what else you can do for them.

7. Take a good look at your printed materials

Do you have a logo? A tagline? Does your letterhead reflect the personality of the firm or is it a generic stuffy piece of paper? Bring samples of everything from note cards to envelopes to brochures and take a good, hard look at them.

You may be surprised at what you find. From moving a logo around to creating an e-mail signature, the ideas that come from careful and honest evaluation can make a big difference in moving forward with marketing plans.

8. Evaluate your website

Make sure you're looking at your website as a marketing tool and not an IT plaything. Video, podcasts and blogs are great, but nothing can replace a good solid, well-organized homepage and clearly defined practice areas. Also- look at how the attorney biographies are categorized. Are they easy to navigate and easy to read? If not, consider hiring someone to revamp and redesign—it's a simple and non-expensive way to instantly update your firm image.

9. Rethink your attorney biographies

No one, NO ONE is going to read a three-page attorney biography. Though they may be proud of their accomplishments, attorneys need to realize the importance of being clear and succinct. Have the attorneys sit down with copies of their bio and take the time to update and edit what's there. From cases to clubs and organizations, limit the information and focus on what the attorney can do for a new client, not what they have done for old ones.

10. Consider bringing in a professional

Whether it be a web designer, a graphic designer or a marketing specialist, investing in professional help can not only keep attorneys and staff on track but can give valuable feedback from a firm outsider.

Remember: be prepared, have an agenda and keep focused on the discussion at hand. Involve everyone from partners to associates to staff and keep an open mind to marketing ideas, plans and needs. But most of all... make it a true priority to institute those strategies when the retreat ends.