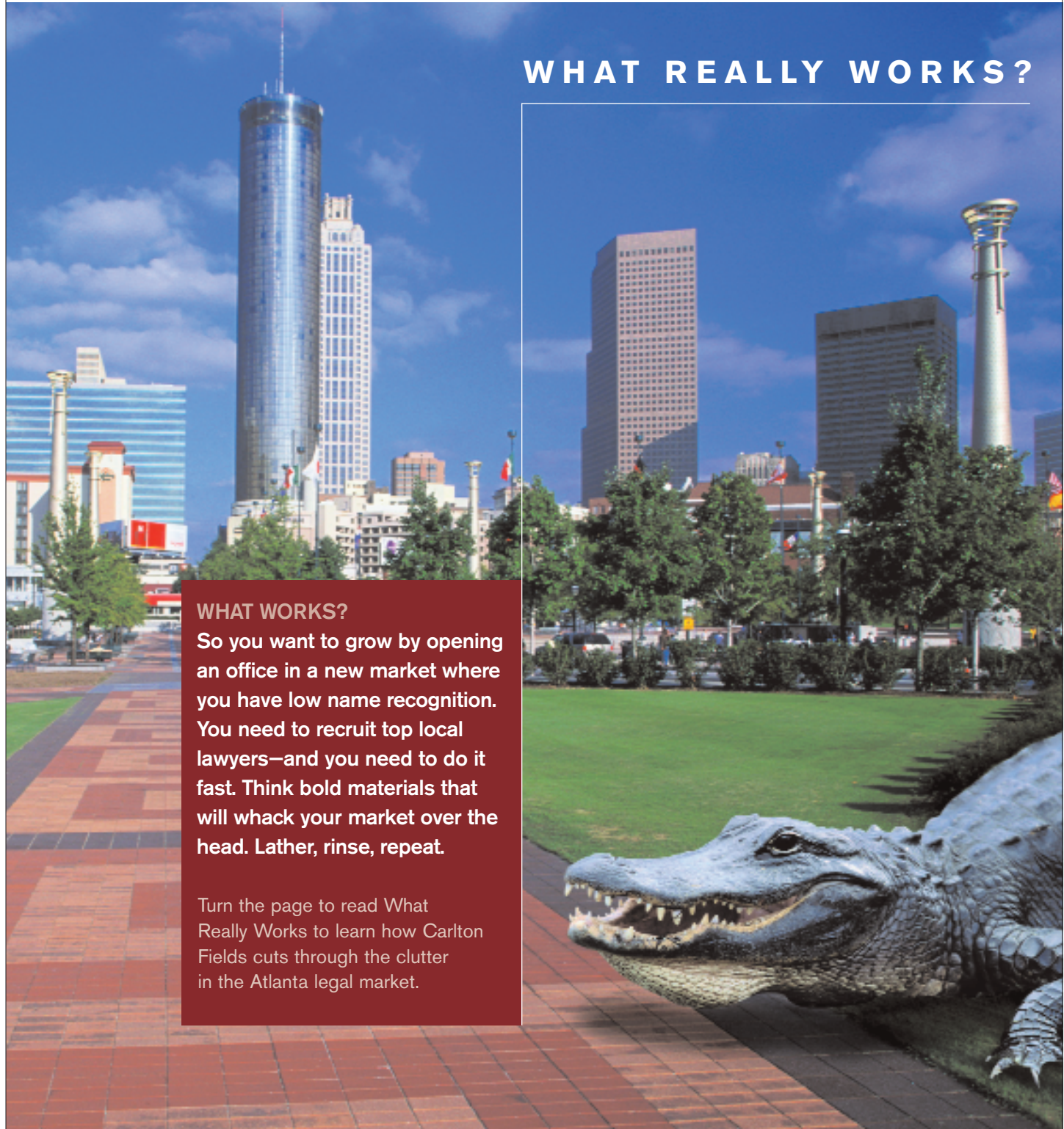


LAW PRACTICE **Front** LINES

INTELLIGENCE, INSIGHTS & TACTICS FOR YOUR LAW PRACTICE

MARKETING MANAGEMENT TECHNOLOGY FINANCE



WHAT REALLY WORKS?

WHAT WORKS?

So you want to grow by opening an office in a new market where you have low name recognition. You need to recruit top local lawyers—and you need to do it fast. Think bold materials that will whack your market over the head. Lather, rinse, repeat.

Turn the page to read What Really Works to learn how Carlton Fields cuts through the clutter in the Atlanta legal market.

What REALLY

Recruiting in a New Market with Shock-and-Awe Tactics

You can't create a splash with mediocre materials that trickle out slowly. Solution: Strategic, creative materials that are front-loaded for massive visibility.



BY ROSS
FISHMAN



Carlton Fields. Florida's law firm, now in Atlanta.

Carlton Fields' fast-growing Atlanta office is looking for talented lawyers seeking a ground-floor opportunity for job satisfaction in Atlanta's office market.

Atlanta | Miami



Carlton Fields. Florida's law firm, in Atlanta.

Carlton Fields' fast-growing Atlanta office is looking for talented lawyers seeking a ground-floor opportunity with our team. For more information, contact Wayne Shattuck, Atlanta office's managing shareholder, at 404.815.2399, or wshattuck@carltonfields.com.

CARLTON FIELDS
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

www.carltonfields.com

Atlanta | Miami | Orlando | St. Petersburg | Tallahassee | Tampa | West Palm Beach

WHO Carlton Fields, a 250-lawyer full-service firm.

BACKGROUND Established in 1901, Carlton Fields is one of Florida's oldest and largest law firms, with six offices across the state. It had called itself "The Florida Firm" since 1992. But when it developed a growth plan that included opening an Atlanta office, its first office outside of Florida, Carlton Fields found that it had a recruiting problem.

To comprise the ranks of its planned office, the firm's aggressive growth goals targeted high-level partners at top Atlanta firms. The firm had signed a lease for significant office space that it needed to fill quickly with top local lawyers. However, despite the fact that Carlton Fields was a terrific firm with high quality-of-life scores in AmLaw surveys, it was having trouble getting its headhunter calls returned because of its low local name recognition.

Initial research disclosed that another problem was that dozens of prominent national and regional firms had also opened Atlanta offices recently, although most of them had similar name recognition problems. The new firms seemed interchangeable, and few of them were really fighting to get noticed.

So although Atlanta was an intensely competitive legal market, the firm had an outstanding opportunity to one-up the other newcomers—if it could leverage its reputation and quality-of-life ratings.

MARKETING GOAL Carlton Fields needed to build significant name recognition among highly skilled Atlanta partner-level lawyers within a matter of weeks. The objectives were to (1) inform the lateral targets of the firm's dominance in the Florida market for credibility, and (2) showcase its friendly work environment. And because Atlanta is such a large and saturated market, the campaign materials needed to be extremely bold to cut through the clutter.

RESEARCH We interviewed headhunters, lawyers who had accepted or rejected the firm's job offers, prospects, consultants and other parties to pinpoint the marketing challenges and obstacles to success. The firm then conducted market research to identify its competitors and

learn more about the invasion of new out-of-state firms.

IMPLEMENTATION We developed three primary messages: (1) *Credibility*, (2) *Work Environment* and (3) *Recruiting*. We then created a four-ad series of humorous, colorful, eye-catching ads that used both visual stereotypes of Florida (e.g., sunburns, beaches and alligators) and connected the firm's roots with similarly iconic imagery that conveyed the concept of either "lawyer" or "Atlanta" (e.g., a giant Georgia peach and the city's downtown).

Firms often trickle out their campaigns evenly over a long period of time, such as one ad each month for a year. Instead, we chose a shock-and-awe strategy—front-loading the advertising placement, thereby overwhelming the Atlanta legal market with the impact in the early weeks.

To reach the campaign's broad audience, we decided that a single publication was the most appropriate advertising vehicle—specifically because there was a very well-read local legal publication, the *Fulton County Daily Report*. Most of the target audience read this publication and we wanted to hit those readers quickly with ads that caused them to (1) take notice and (2) remember the firm name, the message and what it offered. We wanted to make a big splash instantly—in case another competitor saw what we were doing and decided to do it, too.

DIFFERENTIATION In the first weeks of the launch, we ran two or three half-page or two-third-page ads two or three days per week on consecutive odd-numbered pages near the front of the newspaper (e.g., pages 3, 5 and 7), so readers turn-

ing the pages saw the ads in sequence, one right after the other, multiplying the campaign's early impact. We negotiated a good deal with the publication, and the shocking red color caused the ads to jump off the page. If you read the paper, you couldn't miss the ads—not a chance. We reduced them in quantity and frequency after the first few weeks, after the initial impact was achieved.

We also reprinted them as 8.5 x 11-inch glossy handouts and mailed them directly to lateral prospects at select target firms. Therefore, the hottest targets not only saw the campaign materials in print, but also saw them landing on their desks.

RESULTS Anecdotal evidence indicated that the campaign attained massive visibility in the Atlanta legal community. Every Atlanta lawyer we surveyed remembered the ads and commented approvingly on the content. Most importantly, they remembered the message—the name of the firm, its Florida roots, and that it was seeking laterals. Research with local headhunters indicated that the recognition problem was completely solved. The success rate of headhunter calls more than *doubled*, and in-person recruiting success *tripled*. And the entire campaign cost less than half of one headhunter fee.

The next year, the campaign ran again and we added another couple of versions to the mix.

Carlton Fields's Atlanta office now has 21 top-quality lawyers. ^{1P}

Ross Fishman (www.rossfishman.com) specializes in marketing training and creating differentiation programs for law firms worldwide. A Fellow of the College of Law Practice Management, he is an inaugural member of the Legal Marketing Association's Hall of Fame.

What Do We Do? Ideas You Can Use

Good campaigns will make you money, but they're costly—which puts them in a precarious position in a firm's budget. For example, firms typically buy a "13x" advertising rate in monthly magazines, which is the point of frequency where the multiple-placement discount begins. Then the firms run their ads once each month, which seems perfectly logical. After three to four months, though, the bean counters who live in every firm will start asking, "What clients have these ads generated?"

In other words, "Since the ads started running, how many CEOs we have never had contact with have called our receptionists and said, 'I saw your ad and would like to hire one of your attorneys, any attorney, to take my company public?'" At less-sophisticated firms, if you answer "None," or "I don't know," the consequence is that the campaign is then probably teetering on life support, if not officially dead.

Powerful, potentially effective programs often die young, before they've had a chance to succeed, and the efforts and opportunity for greatness are squandered. Once dead, the opportunity won't come back around for at least another five years, or at the next management turnover at the earliest. For campaigns to succeed in firms that do not have lots of marketing experience, or have potentially short attention spans, you need to create a big buzz, fast. The best option is to market the heck out of it early and create a big buzz as soon as possible, so people can feel the difference.

Spend much of the money early and whack your market over the head with your campaign. —Ross Fishman