



Mid-Atlantic Region

Annual Conference Recap: How to Punch Above Your Weight with an Ambitious Legal Brand

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“Punching Above Your Weight” was one of the first sessions at the 2022 LMA Annual Conference. Talking about branding in the legal industry can often send you down the rabbit hole into a discussion about logos, taglines and colors. But as most legal marketers know, branding is much more than that. In this session, **Eugene McCormick** from Passle (shameless plug for Passle, a new annual sponsor of the Mid-Atlantic Region) interviewed **Carolyn Manning**, Chief Marketing & Business Development Officer of Mintz.

Carolyn defines Mintz’s brand as its profile in the market. The firm’s challenge was competing with Am Law 50 firms, with the market not being fully aware of Mintz’s capabilities, and a highly competitive battle for talent and clients with more limited resources. It needed to elevate the Mintz brand and articulate who the firm is to potential employees and prospects in a highly competitive market.

Our learning objectives for the session were:

1. Define your approach to marketing and BD strategy.
2. Establish your firm as a destination for talent and business.
3. Discover how content can help position your firm.

About Mintz:

- 6+ years of record growth
- Top “deft dealmakers” in M&A (BTI 2021)
- Among “most feared” in litigation (BTI 2021)
- 79th on the Am Law 200 (2021)

How did Mintz get here?

Putting the Customer Experience First

Like great brands such as Apple and Amazon, you must put the customer experience at the front of everything. Great legal brands put the customer experience (CX) in the center by not just solving the legal issue at hand but bringing value to the relationship. Remind and train attorneys to keep CX at the center. Bring business and networking opportunities to your clients. Create a robust alumni program – people are changing jobs so rapidly now that your former associate or partner could be your next client. If I work with Mintz, I know I will get a lot of value out of that relationship (the “Mintz experience”). The client becomes reliant on the firm for more than just legal advice.

Thought Leadership

During the pandemic, Mintz produced a record amount of content but needed a more focused content strategy. The firm established a measurable baseline – PR (media hits), social media activity, outbound content, amount of content, types of content, etc. It looked at all of its content and distribution channels and analyzed the data. Mintz had previously focused on quantity, getting its name out into the marketplace. The more focused approach now concentrated on a quality vs. quantity approach, with the goal of consistently demonstrating domain expertise in the market.

Every marketer struggles with incentivizing attorneys to write. Mintz used gamification, the Passle platform and an editorial calendar to make it easier for attorneys to create individual brand opportunities. The firm also outsourced when appropriate, such as using Pitchbook to create a market report and finding journalists in the sector to ghostwrite.

Part of this more focused approach also included looking at the PR function both internally and externally. After some shifts, the firm settled on what it believes is the right balance between an internal PR staff and an external agency. Mintz chose attorneys in the firm with a specific point of view it could articulate to both the in-house and external PR team.

Closing the Gap between Capability and Perception

Storytelling. We may have had fewer matters, but what stories can we tell about what we accomplished for our clients?

Competitive Analysis. What is their story and how did they go to market? What do we want to be known for and how do we stack up?

Build Brand Awareness Internally

Just as Mintz tightened up the external content distribution, it did the same for its internal content, changing the look of internal communications every six months to keep it fresh and eye-catching. Stories of business development wins as a direct result of marketing efforts are celebrated within the firm. Don't be shy about sharing marketing success!

Carolyn reminded us to never let the brand conversation take your eye off the BD ball. Your brand supports BD, but keep your focus on BD. And remember that in today's highly competitive market for the best talent, your brand is an important recruiting tool as well.

Understand the challenge. Build the plan. Become the destination.

