

Creating a “label,” or recognized brand, for your firm will increase your credibility and clientele base.

When most people go shopping for clothes, they tend to look for particular designer labels that match the quality, look and status they want communicate in what they wear. The same can be true for law firms. Your prospects are looking for the “label,” or rather, a firm with a strong reputation, client service and expertise that they feel will meet their needs.

In a recent study described in [The Economist](#), Rob Nelissen and Marijin Meijers of Tilburg University discovered that designer clothes and people’s perception of these clothes can bring certain benefits. These include better cooperation from others, job recommendations and even the ability to collect more money when soliciting for charity. This got me thinking about how this same phenomenon could relate to legal marketing.

“What is interesting is that the label is so persuasive...People react to designer labels as signals of underlying quality. Only the best can afford them,” [The Economist](#), *I’ve Got you Labelled*, April 2-8, 2011.

So how does this apply to legal marketing? Those firms that are branded well, and whose brands are associated with quality will be noticed more and gain more business. Think about it, which firm “labels” do you tend to notice when flipping through *American Lawyer*, *Inside Counsel* or *Corporate Counsel*? Typically it’s those that you are most familiar with and the ones with the best reputations, right?

Just to be clear, when I say law firm “labels,” I really mean the firm’s entire brand. This includes the logo, of course, but also the firm’s reputation, practice specialty, where they are located, who they work with, etc. By labeling, or branding, your firm well, you improve your chances of being considered one of the top firms, and in turn, your ability to gain clients and increase revenue.

So when you market your firm, keep in mind the importance of branding. How could it take your firm’s reputation to the next level, enhance and expand it? People are going to evaluate firms (and clothes) based on status; it’s simply human nature. You may know how great your Employment Law practice is, but think about it from an outsider’s perspective – think about someone who only hears information at the country club or online. Decide how you want to be perceived and create a brand that communicates that message to your target audience.

“If everyone agrees something has high status, then it does. But that agreement often transfers the status from the thing to the label. Maybe a further million years or so of evolution will eliminate this failing. In the meantime, [legal] marketers can open up another bottle of champagne,” [The Economist](#), *I’ve Got you Labelled*, April 2-8, 2011.