



News Flash: GCs Are Really Reading Your Attorney Bio

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Imagine you had the ability to market yourself, your practice and your expertise at any hour of the day. Imagine that even as you're tied up handling an important matter for a client, there are countless potential clients who are thoroughly examining your capabilities. Imagine being able to showcase your strengths, knowledge and acumen to clients while you're not even in the office.

All of this is possible with your attorney biography. Your bio is not merely a quick snapshot of your practice or something to fill space on the company website. It's your chance to highlight what you do best and show potential clients why you're the attorney they need. *A 2010 study by the Wicker Park Group revealed that 90 percent of general counsel view attorney bios as the most important section of a law firm's website, and further studies have revealed that bios account for more than half of the page views on firm websites.* There's no doubt your bio is a valuable marketing tool, but how do you ensure you're getting the most out of it? Here are some tips:

Use Your Narrative Wisely

Your narrative should be a clear and concise reflection of your practice. While you want to include as much relevant information as possible, many attorneys make the mistake of rounding out their bios with mindless marketing fluff or outdated information. For example, if you've been a partner in the Labor & Employment Department for over 20 years, you don't have to reference the patent application you were assigned as a first-year associate. Your narrative should not read like your memoirs, detailing every matter you've worked on throughout your career. Quite simply, clients only want to know what you do and how it will benefit them.

Along those lines, include details that set you apart from other attorneys in your practice area(s). Have you worked in-house? Have you handled a high-profile matter that demonstrated your abilities? Does your education or career background offer you added insight? Don't settle for vague practice descriptions, such as labeling yourself a benefits attorney or product liability attorney. What's your niche or specialty? Why do you bring more value than another attorney? Answering those questions makes you more visible to clients in an increasingly competitive legal marketplace.

Keep it Current

Many attorneys may start out with the best intentions in keeping their bio updated, but as the workload increases, it gets pushed down the priority list until it's forgotten altogether. However, keeping your bio as up-to-date as possible is important. Time-sensitive language and references to outdated industry trends, technology or legislation informs clients that you easily overlook details or simply aren't technology-savvy, both of which hurt your chances to land their work.

Conversely, referencing current events or trends in your bio reinforces the message to clients that you're attentive and progressive in handling their issues. For instance, intellectual property attorneys can convey how they're helping clients prepare for the America Invents Act. Health care attorneys currently have a plethora of evolving legislation that can be referenced to show their thought leadership, as do labor and employment attorneys. Regardless of your practice area, clients want to know their attorney is looking out for them before they pick up the phone, and keeping your bio current shows your ability to be proactive.

Tell me More!

Potential clients aren't likely to hire an attorney based simply on what he or she says they can do. While each firm has their own style of citing specific cases, it's important to remember these are designed to show your abilities and experience. Simply stating that you "handled a product liability matter and reached a settlement" tells potential clients nothing. Was this a consumer product? Was there a design defect? What did you find during the investigation? While you certainly don't need to recap every step, including details that highlight your process helps potential clients envision how you would handle their matter.

In many cases, your bio will be the first form of communication with potential clients, and they'll use it to thoroughly vet you, often before you're even aware they're seeking counsel. For example, let's say a patent attorney is asked by a client to recommend someone within his firm who has real estate experience. Although he does his best to promote a co-worker's knowledge and capabilities, the client flatly replies that he already examined that attorney's bio, and didn't see any mention of handling real estate matters. The client ends up taking the matter to another firm, and the real estate attorney misses an opportunity he likely never knew existed, simply because his bio didn't reflect his capabilities.

In short, a technology-driven world has changed the way attorneys market themselves. The ease of accessing bios from mobile devices and smart phones give GCs and other clients unlimited options when seeking an attorney, and they often will make a hiring decision based solely on an attorney's bio. Knowing that, shouldn't you make sure your bio is accurate and up to date?

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