



AND THE ART OF LEGAL NETWORKING

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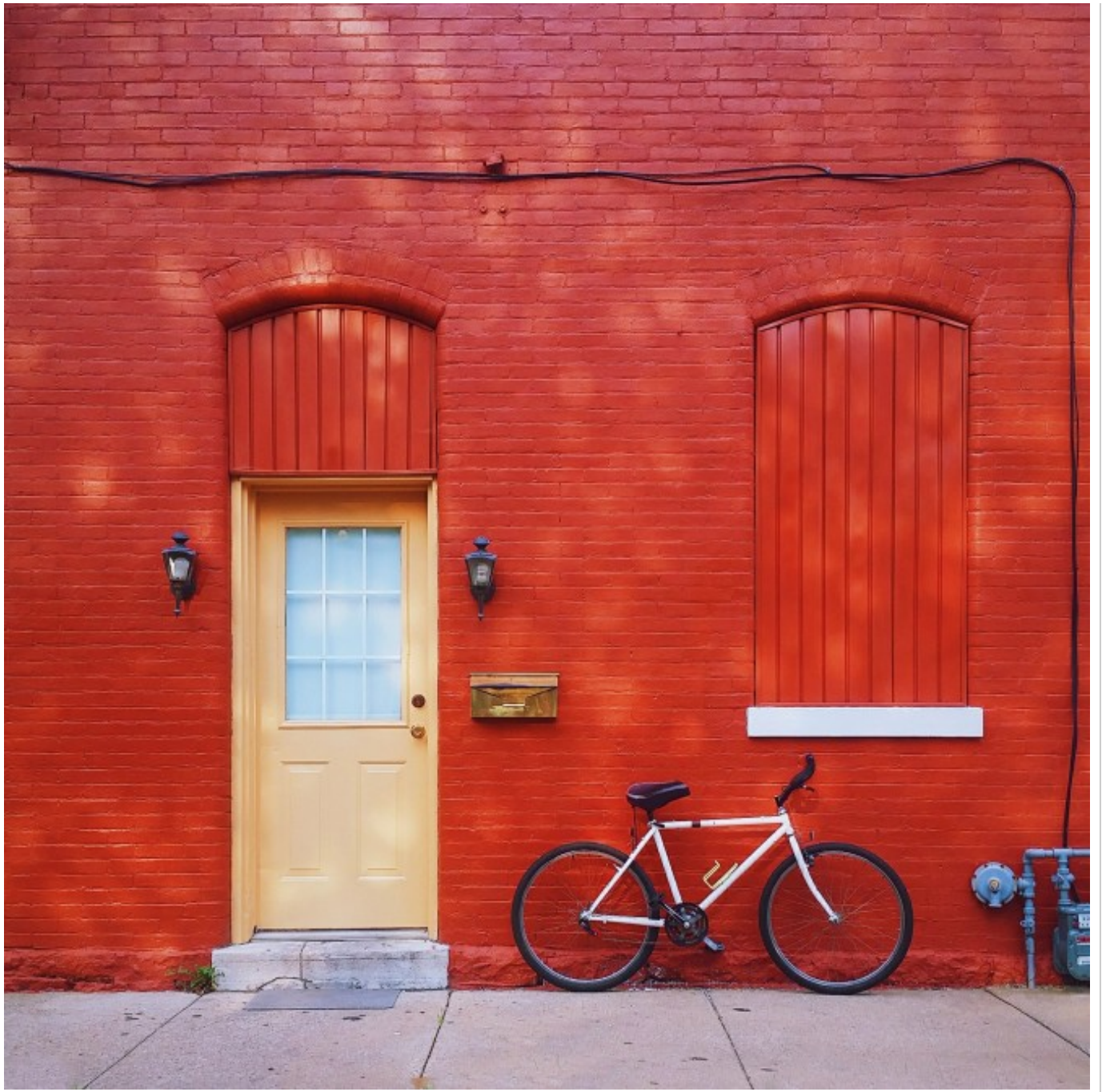
INSIGHTS & COMMENTARY ON

*Relationship Building
within the International
Lawyers Network*

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11 Consumer Companies that Legal Marketers Can Learn From

BY LINDSAY GRIFFITHS ON JANUARY 5, 2016



Rather than our typical “Two for Tuesdays” post today, I want to share a great piece I came across while browsing Klout (remember [when I mentioned how much I’m loving Klout’s “explore” feature?](#)).

[Megan Conley](#) wrote a post for HubSpot’s blog on “[11 Impressive B2C Campaigns That B2B Marketers Can Learn From](#).” If you’re a regular Zen reader, you’ll already know why I like this, but Conley does a beautiful job of summing it up:

“

[O]ur best ideas come when we take a step outside the scope of our work and seek inspiration from unlikely sources.”

Yes.

We've said before that it can be tempting to stay within the confines of the legal industry, because we're just so darn specialized. But as Conley points out:

“

For B2B marketers, this means that the creative spark you're looking for might not be found directly within your industry. In fact, there's actually a lot B2B marketers can learn by observing the approach of B2C companies.”

And lest we forget, just because we're working at and for and with law firms, we're still, at the heart of things, B2B marketers – yes, lawyers, even you are B2B marketers because even though a large part of your day-to-day is consumed with the actual practice of law, there is a not-insignificant portion of it that is involved with informing people about why they should commit to trusting you to be their advocate, be they existing or potential clients.

Conley points out that admittedly:

“

Of course, B2B and B2C marketing have their long list of differences. With B2B marketing, the door is open to technical jargon and long, deliberate marketing funnels. Yet, B2C marketers often have more room to stretch their imagination with lofty expectations for either witty or tear-jerking campaigns.

But despite the dissimilarity between the two, there is an opportunity to surface fresh ideas to by exploring out-of-the-box examples. And with a bit of inspiration and original execution, your B2B campaigns can rival the creativity of the most buzz-worthy consumer marketing.”

I'd really love to take her entire post and share it with you here, because it's really excellent – but instead,

I'll wait while you read through it yourselves for the examples of great B2C campaigns that we can learn from. As I mentioned, I'm not doing my typical Two for Tuesdays today, so instead, I'll pull my favorite lessons from Conley's post and share them with you here, along with how we in the legal industry may be able to adapt those to our own marketing efforts.

- **Visual Strategy:** Chobani: "Even if you market for a niche B2B business with one main product, there are still endless possibilities for your visual marketing. As you determine a visual strategy for social media, especially Instagram, start by thinking beyond the product itself to the many ways or locations your product can be used."

It's not easy to translate visual strategy for law firms, but it can be done, and it can be done creatively. Think unique and beautiful parts of the cities that you're located in, high fashion portraits of your lawyers and clients, using images to represent the tools of the trade (not gavels and columns, please, but dramatic, artistic representations of the specific pieces of the practice areas that your firm specializes in). Bring beauty and depth to the people part of the service that you provide, and add character to the places and things that you use to provide it, in the same way that Chobani ascribes human characteristics to their ingredients and yogurt.

- **Know Your Audience:** Tesco & Threadless: "By thoughtfully identifying common challenges of grocery shoppers, Tesco Living proves to be an exceptional example of helpful inbound marketing."

"But the more you know your audience, the more you'll be able to cater your content to the style your readers like best. "

This is an easy one for lawyers and law firms – you know what your clients common challenges are already. But HOW you translate that into your marketing to make things simpler for them is the key.

- **A Unified Message:** Starbucks: "Nevertheless, marketers of any industry would value from the coffee chain's omni-channel approach to marketing and selling."

No one does a better job than Starbucks of reinforcing their message across all of their various platforms – you get the same feeling in their store as you do from their Instagram account, and their app, and even their emails. Can you say the same about your firm's marketing?

- **Personalization:** Spotify: "As you consider how to add a human touch to your marketing campaigns, think how you can expand beyond email personalization tokens to impress your customers."

Last year, we talked about how segmentation would be the trend for 2016, and personalization is the height of segmentation. We all send emails to groups of people, we all send other kinds of social messages to groups – how can we -push beyond those groups and take it to the next level to make it about those one-on-one interactions that are really going to create loyalty to our

firms, or to individual lawyers? Take blogging for instance – in many cases, lawyers used to see something that would affect their client, and send them an email with a link to a story on that legislation or case result, and a note with how it would impact them and the steps they may want to take. This evolved into more generalized client alerts that the firm could send out by email to all clients of that type or sector, and then further evolved into that lawyer being able to author a blog that they could then use to also meet potential clients in the same category that they'd have no way of getting to know otherwise. While that still holds value, we're now talking about drilling back down in the other direction, and identifying what we can be doing to get back to that one-on-one interaction with clients, not just when it comes to work and potential work, but also in our marketing.

- **Create Community:** Herschel: “Like Herschel Supply, consider how your brand can use social media to create a community, not simply a list of followers. This way, customers become stakeholders in your marketing and voices in how your product story is told.”

This is a tough one for the legal industry, but still possible. First, identify whether a community is necessary, or if it already exists. If it doesn't, you may be the one to facilitate it – for example, would it benefit your clients to be able to talk to each other about the issues that they face?

Perhaps acting as the facilitator of a LinkedIn group or a Facebook group, where clients and potential clients can go to ask questions, share the latest information and concerns, and network with one another, with the possibility for taking that offline, would be a benefit – not only for you as the facilitator, but also for them. It's about identifying where a community can exist, and how you can best foster it.

- **Transparency:** Everlane: “If you are looking for a new approach to gain trust and loyalty from the businesses you sell to, consider how you can increase transparency as you explain sourcing and pricing on your social media and blog.”

Here's a suggestion that would set you apart from many firms, and there are, of course, varying degrees to which you can do this. One level might be sharing photos of “behind the scenes” activities of your firm, such as the fun things you and your colleagues do to foster collaboration (dress-down Fridays for charity, ice cream when it gets above a certain temperature, Halloween costume contests), a “meet & greet” of the lawyers and staff at the firm, and even a view of some of the places in the firm that no one ever gets to see – the break room or what the pile of files on your desk really looks like. And you can, of course, go as deep as identifying what your firm's pricing structure might be, if you want to be so bold (it depends on your firm). But anything that lends itself to a “behind the scenes” look at your firm that allows people to get a sense of the people, the mechanics, etc., will help them to feel that it's more transparent, and give them a sense of investment in the process.

- **Consistency:** Taco Bell: “Whatever you determine your brand voice to be – from witty and

sarcastic to encouraging and empowering — strive for consistency.”

This is generally good advice – the difficulty here can be when you want to market one thing, but in reality, you ARE another. When we decided to come up with our branding statement shortly after I came on board, I did an extensive survey and interview process with the members of our Network to identify the underlying quality that they saw running through everything that we do as an organization. The result of that was “relationships.” It’s much easier to get an organization and firm to buy into a marketing message that is consistent with who you are when it rings true to them, than to try to convince them of something that you want them to believe. While firms are often excellent at having a consistent marketing message across all of their channels, where it seems to sometimes get fuzzy is between the message and the reality, and that’s where consistency is most key. That’s true for your personal brand as a lawyer too – if your message is “there when you need me,” but you never answer emails or phone calls, then the reality of your brand isn’t matching with the messaging.

- **Visual Storytelling:** Toms & Edeka: “Visual storytelling has always been a key ingredient in the marketing success of TOMS. By sharing the stories behind their one-for-one giving model, TOMS is able to gain customers who are all-in with the company’s mission. Therefore, it’s of little surprise that their social media accounts often look more like the work of photojournalists than marketers.”

“But making a human connection through storytelling could be just what your brand needs to add interest to your B2B marketing.”

This actually ISN’T the underlying message for this brand, but it is one of them, so I want to share both – visual storytelling CAN be something that lawyers and law firms embrace as well. It won’t work for every lawyer or practice area, and yes, people are generally more excited to see a pair of shoes show up on their doorstep than a lawyer. But when a good lawyer shows up on your doorstep to alleviate the worry that you’ve been feeling and say “don’t worry, I’ve got it from here,” isn’t that a relief? People may not be excited to see their lawyers, but they are often relieved and comforted. And that is a story we can tell. Tell the story of how you help your clients, or better yet, get them to tell it for you. If you focus on doing this in a way that identifies the feelings, rather than the specifics of the case or matter, you can make it more universal for others in the same boat. Lawyers are advocates for their clients, and that is a message that can be communicated as a story, which has huge marketing value. It would be beautiful and moving to see a law firm tell their lawyers’ stories this way.

“While visual marketing may not be your strongest asset, determine what you do best and consider how you can push the bar and build more buzz around your brand.”

Of course, this is also valuable advice. It's easy to rest on our laurels – we did something well, let's keep doing that. But we don't often ask ourselves, "how could we do that BETTER?" So let's ask ourselves that more.

• **Challenge & Experiment:** Purina: “As content marketing blurs the line between retailer and publisher, consider how you can expand the scope of your campaigns and experiment with new media and storytelling trends.”

We all know the sort of typical paths that marketing ideas take these days, and we all take them. There are a few brave souls who will forge new paths and stretch their brains to consider new ideas, but for the most part, it's a case of “here's this great idea – we do this, and then we put it here, here, and here. And maybe here too. Then we make a video of it, and put it here and here.”

And that is great and necessary. But there are also so many other options these days, and challenges for our creative juices – we should be using them. Look at the example of Purina, creating a partnership with BuzzFeed for a series of videos. What if a law firm did something like that? Unthinkable? I hope not. There are firms out there doing these things. They won't work for everyone, but they will work for some of us, and we should be challenging, and celebrating, each other.

In 2016, what have you challenged yourself to do differently? Are you looking outside of legal for inspiration?