

Thursday, September 14 | 10:15 am – 11:15 am

Workshop | Breakout Sessions #1

Modernize Your Media Strategy: Five Aspects of Law Firm PR to Update for 2023 and Beyond

Body of Knowledge: Communications

Presenters

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Session Overview

Competition for law firm media coverage has intensified, and the outlets from which to earn it have shrunk. Firms are issuing a steady stream of press releases and frenetically posting content, but is it landing anywhere? The rise of national “hub” and regional “spoke” coverage models has made news holes even smaller, but the payoff for landing coverage has never been more impactful.

This workshop will explore five key aspects of law firm communications that have changed dramatically in recent years and the new ways of thinking about and approaching law firm media strategy.

- Modernizing your media approach – What today’s reporters, editors and producers need from law firms and lawyers and how to think about the new reporting models to maximize coverage potential.
- Making your website newsfeed/newsroom work harder – Delivering key messages to various stakeholders consistently and evolving your messaging over time.
- Embracing shared media (and sparing your local reporters) – Defining the role of and approach to social media and making the most of it.
- Leveraging paid editorial options for extended reach, education and credibility.
- Measuring impact – Emerging approaches to evaluating the payoff from PR that speak to law firm management.

Session Notes

Five Aspects of Law Firm PR to Update - Top 5 ways to prioritize

#1 - Modernizing your media approach

- There has been so much change in the world of media (cut staff, speed, increased coverage of a lot of topics, etc.)
- Important to keep an eye on new products - lots of opportunity/channel but must be aware of what they are
- **Downsized newsrooms = opportunities**
- **Understanding today's news cycle is important** - breaking news, then analysis opportunities -if can't make the breaking news, bring analysis in second
- Prepare pitches in advance to be the first in the news cycle - opportunity for analysis for follow up calls - try to get in front of the news of the day
- Plan ahead for what might happen - if this, then that
- With the speed and volume of what reporters are covering, they don't have the depth - this is an opportunity for junior lawyers to help with the depth - this also helps young lawyers and young reporters build relationships
- **PR is a long game!**
- There is a lot to be covered - make sure what you are pitching to them makes sense - what do they need? include a quote in your pitch audio/video - **give them content they can work with**
- Reporter deadlines have reduced - their goal is to be the first to report and to be accurate - help them!
- **Credibility is key with media - and you have lots of chances to erode it!**

#2 Make Your Website Newsfeed/Newsroom Work Harder

- 2022 survey of journalists - 98% reported that a newsroom on website important for reporters to access
- Include audio and video - humanize the content - helps build trust (also helps with proposing the lawyer as a potential speaker)
- Audience question: If you need to get something out quickly, can compromise a bit on quality (video on phone vs using videographer)
- Simple ring lighting makes it look more professional
- **C.O.P.E. with it - Create Once, Publish Strategically and Enthusiastically**
- **Audit your content!** - Do a content audit - make sure your content is what you intend it to be - make sure you know what is evergreen, what's timely, is the lawyer still there, etc. - make sure you do a consistent audit to make sure story intended is
- **Consider multi-tool/tactic campaigns**
- **Don't throw away quotes with a long shelf life**
- **Offer reporter-oriented resources**
- Pro-tip: **Site ; search on Google** - it will tell you in order the indexed pages on Google
- Pro-tip: If a lawyer leaves, don't delete their content - put in draft in case they decide to come back

- Be aware of how quotes are used (for recruiting purposes as well - lateral recruiting is just as important)
- Pro-tip: **TEMI - turns recorded video or audio into a transcript**

#3 Embrace Owned and Shared Media

- Anything you can control can help you boost your performance
- **Audience targeting / list segmentation is important**
- Breadcrumbs of want to be known for? Or something we want everyone to know? What is the goal/purpose? How do you segment out email list?
- **Make it personal on social** - humanize it! Video/audio
- **Have channel specific plans - and know why you're choosing the channel**
- Create an announcement that can be shared on day one start for new lawyers - I've joined "yay"!
- Can play around with own messaging and timing
- Manage lawyer expectations when pitching to multiple publications - can only send to one at a time to see who bites, so might take a while
- Audience question: Opinion on X?
- many other places to put info now
- what does it say below the surface by using or not? Is it political?
- wait and see mode right now
- but don't lose your handle! - continue to stake out territory
- media seem to be seeking out validation more on LinkedIn now - moving away from X
- Audience question: what are the other sources?
- LinkedIn to source potential sources and topics
- Instagram - have had success turning quote into something visual - visual quote - use for text news and marketing - more culture/recruiting focused
- **Experiment and evolve (wisely)**

#4 Leveraging paid editorial options for extended reach

- Sponsor content
- **Traditional outlets comingling paid and earned media** - tremendous opportunity here
- Traditional media creates a walled community
- There are opportunities in publications with entrepreneur leadership - industry groups (example: Forbes Councils)
- You can do a paid piece that gets you the shared and earned media
- **Consider interplay between paid and earned- and budget impacts**
- **Understand goal, ROI and politics** - All of these have a budget impact - be mindful of what the goal is - what is my ROI?
- In law firms, this can also be about politics - why did they get promoted and not me?
- **Paid opportunities are your foot in the door - to establish the thought leader - "paid contributor" formats can mint thought leaders**
- Idea: Partner with business journal on event in law firm's office - a way to get in front of a good list - partnering with the publication

- Do we just want to make sure presence is known? Is it worth the money to do this?

#5 Measuring impact

- Data is a piece of information - alone cannot demonstrate impact
- Important to demonstrate the impact and value of everything we do
- Know you can tell a story with the metrics
- **ROI is a long game with PR - establish this expectation upfront**
- **Bake measurement into the planning stages, establish baselines and dashboards**
- What is success going to look like? - Ask - what does success look like to you? A quote, clients see you, laterals will be watching, etc.
- What data points help you tell this story?
- **Establish what your success is going to look like and be flexible!**
- ID all the pieces of info you should be collecting
- Get people excited about the work you have done and the story you can tell the firm
- **Talk to all stakeholder styles**
- **Tracking can be done with free and paid tools**
- Find out how info is collected
- Make sure measure progress and celebrate baby steps - even getting the lawyer to be comfortable, just doing it can be identified as a win! They'll be prepared for next time
- Even the internal metrics are important to track and be aware of
- Set expectations!
- What are your goals and how can we achieve that?
- Don't be afraid of lofty goals - what are the steps we can take along the way?
- Bring the person along with you - helps you build your strategy
- Make sure they know availability - reporters on a short time frame (Here's what can happen if you are not available when you say you will be!)
- Think about how to piggyback on existing spins - if you are sponsoring content - think creatively

Q&A

- Audience question: What are the trends?
- Are you in office or remote
- Media becoming a valuable resource to them - here is some background - build trust, become resource
- make sure attorney understands what they are covering, care about - make sure they follow up with the reported with anything that might be missing
- Second day stories: Opportunity to add on to what has already been covered - Can provide a different angle/ perspective