

BRANDING YOUR BUSINESS

Making a favourable first impression is important for businesses, and law firms are no exception. Developing good branding is an important way to communicate identity and positioning to clients, but lawyers say that getting it right requires careful consideration.

WHAT CONSIDERATIONS SHOULD YOU TAKE INTO ACCOUNT WHEN BRANDING YOUR FIRM, AND WHAT DO FIRMS GET WRONG?



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DARSHI SHAH, partner, Juris Corp, India

Traditionally, law firms would rely on their personal relations to tap into the minds of the clients and the people at large. And then came a wave of change. With a tougher competitive landscape and client sophistication, law firms are now required to differentiate themselves in the legal arena by being able to position themselves as one with a distinctive and authentic unique brand identity. For strengthening a firm's brand identity, one of the key elements to consider is communication by way of significant content. Consistent and high-quality content go on to highlight the value statements, what the firm does, what sets it apart from the rest, how client needs can be met, and their problems resolved. This not only creates distinctive and meaningful connections but also establishes trust and credibility in an increasingly competitive environment.

What is often overlooked by firms is how to maintain consistent brand identity and how to have effective and clear content that will stand out for creating an organic presence to draw clients.

MAUREEN POH, director, Helmsman, Singapore

Our goal in branding is to have people think of Helmsman LLC as a practical and effective firm that can assist them in various aspects of their trading and shipping businesses. To achieve this objective, we need to understand our firm's purpose and strengths deeply and clearly – what issues do we want to address and what audience do we wish to target? We are fortunate in that our firm comprises experienced trading and shipping legal and trade finance specialists. This naturally helps differentiate us from other firms in a crowded marketplace. We also think about our target audience and what they value most. We listen



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carefully to identify what is important to them, and then act on it. By doing so, we are able to appeal to them and to communicate our brand to them so that they remember us. We feel that as important as the external messaging is, the internal communication of the Helmsman brand is also equally important. This is sometimes overlooked by firms. We find that lawyers who are able to contribute to the firm's branding strategy feel more passionately about their work. Happy lawyers make for a productive and cohesive firm, which in turn feeds into a strong brand identity.

SANTOSH VIKRAM SINGH, partner, Fox Mandal & Associates, India

Being categorised as a noble profession, the legal industry has not considered branding seriously until very recently, at least not in India. Moreover, law firms have mostly relied upon and used partners' names as the name of the firm and utilised their professional reputation to market the firm and its services. However, the trend seems to have been changing of late as law firms are espousing a formal corporate structure. The key considerations for the successful branding of a law firm would be, first, knowing the desired image you want to create and communicate; second, knowing what changes must be made both internally and externally; third, identifying and setting up the right team to champion it; fourth, knowing how long the exercise must be carried out; and finally, focusing on quality.

What do firms get wrong? The major point where most of the firms go wrong in branding - is when they try to emulate someone else. Here, they do not just lose their identity but end up creating a wrong message and ultimately fail to connect with the right audience. ^{ALB}