

BUSINESS OF  
BRANDINGWebsites Aren't  
Built in a Day*Part Two of a Three-Part  
Article*

By Jeffrey Morgan

In the first installment of this article, which has now expanded to three parts, we began to educate law firm professionals about the many steps required in designing and building an effective website, as well as why law firm websites simply can't be designed and launched in a few short months.

Redoing your firm's website is a collaborative process with specific steps that you should try to follow. The purpose of this three-part article is to review each of those steps so that law firm professionals have a better understanding of website design and development in order to better manage internal expectations when they undertake a website redesign project. The end result should be a website that will resonate with your current and potential clients while effectively differentiating the firm and communicating a unique value proposition.

In the installment herein, we review the more creative and technical aspects that go into the website redesign process, including design layout and content strategy.

*continued on page 6*Firm Marketing Initiatives: Trends We See  
For 2013

By Bruce Alltop and Craig Brown

As the recent drama of large firm closings played out in the national media right before our eyes, we had the misfortune (or fortune, depending on how you view it) of seeing something we don't always have the opportunity to see: the inner workings of another firm.

The *coup de grace* for the demise of these institutions presents a common thread. In the end, one thing becomes patently clear: When lawyers no longer feel they are at a place that can support and reward the ambitions they have for their practice, they head for the door.

Some recent reports forecast even more doom on the horizon for large firms. Attracting, integrating and, most important, retaining top talent has become all-important to the success of firms. What is it that draws great lawyers to your firm and keeps them satisfied? Survey results show that overall compensation is usually less important than other factors.

We're seeing many firms take action to stave off potential defections and build quality platforms that stabilize firms. The types of actions we see firms taking include the following.

**BEEFING UP BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENTS**

Timekeepers are telling us that the real value of the marketing department is being proactive and strategic in the area of business development. Brochures and branding, although important parts of a holistic sales and marketing program, have taken a back seat to effective business development. Unfortunately, many marketing professionals in law firms these days lack formal business development training and/or experience. As a result, the marketing department's value, as ranked by their lawyers, is average at best. Business development professionals who have formal sales training and experience are being brought into firms at an accelerated rate. We expect this trend to continue for many years to come.

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## 2013 Trends

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### CREATING SALES TEAMS

We are seeing less “lone-wolf” business development behavior in law firms. Activity absent an institutional foundation has limited benefits, and simply isn’t sustainable long-term. Compensation programs are being modified to provide an economic incentive to plan, go-to-market, and service clients as a team. It will take a few comp cycles for lawyers to believe that “origination” isn’t king anymore, but once they do, exponential value will be recognized by firms and clients alike. As lawyers begin working together and communicating more effectively, sales professionals, typically aligned by industry, will be added to the roster. Once this occurs, proactive and strategic business development activity will happen at increasing rates.

### INCREASED COACHING AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

In the current environment, it’s not enough to offer only the firms’ experienced partners business development training and coaching. We’re seeing client development training and individual coaching offered to senior associates and junior partners so they can meet the business development demands that will be placed upon them as they grow within the firm. “We’ve had great success training our senior counsel for several years, and are now contemplating broadening that group to include selected senior associates as well. We need lawyers whose business development acumen grows alongside their lawyering skills,” reports Michelle Klopp, director of business development at Hanson Bridgett in San Francisco.

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In conjunction with lawyer training, we are being asked to train marketing professionals as well. The primary focus of marketing department training is on understanding the business of law. Just as we teach lawyers to understand their clients’ business, we apply the same philosophy to marketing by helping them understand the issues that face their attorneys — and how to deliver maximum value as they help them overcome these issues. In addition, marketing professionals benefit from learning sales processes and creating an organization that helps lawyers guide prospects through a pipeline from initial contact to valued client. Jackie Greenbaum, client relations manager at nationwide employment law powerhouse Fisher & Phillips, claims “receiving training on the sales process and how to help lawyers use a pipeline has really boosted our business development efforts and helped me coach the lawyers in a significant way.”

### EMPHASIS ON THOUGHT LEADERSHIP THROUGH CONTENT CREATION

Firms are realizing that lawyers capable of excellent content creation may not have the time or inclination to update social media sites and tools. We’re seeing more firms assist lawyers by providing them the back-end support to showcase quality content. This helps build reputations based on content that may otherwise be buried in a scholarly publication. Marketing teams work with lawyers by placing and repurposing their wisdom in a variety of feeds. Marketing staff monitor the community and suggest topics for focus. Marketing also ensures that the sites are up-to-date and fresh, and linked to other tools. Kevin O’Keefe, CEO at Lexblog, sees the trend one step ahead. “I see law firms, like corporate America, moving away from centralized social media,” he says. “In-house marketing departments are focusing on enabling and empowering lawyers to engage their target audience directly in order to enhance their word-of-mouth reputation and build relationships. Not only is it not possible to network on behalf of hundreds of lawyers, but it’s also not as effective. Social, after all, means socializing.” As social media continues

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Editorial e-mail: [wampolsk@alm.com](mailto:wampolsk@alm.com)  
Circulation e-mail: [customercare@alm.com](mailto:customercare@alm.com)

Reprints: [www.almreprints.com](http://www.almreprints.com)

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:

ALM  
120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271

Published Monthly by:  
Law Journal Newsletters  
1617 JFK Boulevard, Suite 1750, Philadelphia, PA 19103  
[www.ljonline.com](http://www.ljonline.com)



# THE VOICE OF THE CLIENT

## Client-Driven Growth

By Bruce D. Heintz

This article reviews a number of ideas for converting a law firm's key clients, the 20-plus largest, into an engine of revenue growth, via a Key Client Program.

### BASIC TENETS

**Consider the Firm's Key Clients As Your Best Friends** — Too many lawyers and clients think of themselves as adversaries locked in endless fee-negotiating wars. Instead, if the firm has the right attitude and does the right things, clients will want to respond by contributing to the firm's success and will seek to partner with it, sometimes in a symbiotic manner.

**Capitalize on Relationships the Firm Already Has with Existing Key Clients** — Possibly too much effort has been expended at trying to acquire new clients. But, as Woody Allen said, "Eighty percent of success is showing up," and with regard to the firm's Key Clients, the firm's lawyers are already in the door. Further, the firm will have some help here, because many clients are pushing for the same thing — consolidating more work into fewer law firms.

**Make Client Service the Organizing Principal of the Firm's Culture and the Theme of Its Public Presence** — Tired of the internal bickering that emanates from the endless melodrama of lawyers' differing interests? Try taking the high road by elevating client service as the common goal of everyone in the firm, something the entire firm can rally around and work together on. At the same time, for its public face, a dedication to client service will distinguish the firm. In a recent review of the websites of the largest 50 law firms in the U.S., only a handful even mentioned "client service." But, in your firm, you can make it a way of life.

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**Identify a Limited Number of "Centers of Excellence" and Build Them Out** — Since a firm has limited resources, it needs to select the practices in which it can be the "best in the world" and, accordingly, concentrate its investments. This is not to make "losers" out of any practices that are not designated as one of these areas. But, looking at the firm's client and practice base as an investment portfolio to be managed as such, the firm should continuously be reshaping itself by migrating its holdings toward the most profitable sectors (geographies, industries and practice areas) and gaining the highest yields possible from each of its investments (Key Clients).

### FOUNDATIONS OF A KEY CLIENT PROGRAM

**Listen to the Firm's Key Clients, in Depth, One Client at a Time** — Let the following, amazing phenomena of human nature work for you: 1) Clients want to talk and, given the right circumstances, will tell all; 2) A third-party interviewer can elicit much more candid feedback from your clients than you can, so hire one instead of doing it yourself; 3) Your clients know that you want to expand work and will volunteer ways you can do it and even offer to partner up with you to achieve it.

**Respond to Your Key Clients' Wishes, Thoroughly, One Client at a Time** — After conducting the Key Client Interviews described above, get the Client Team working on the development of a Client Service Plan. This plan should specify action steps for building expanded long-term relationships and tactical means for correcting problems and capitalizing on any opportunities that might produce immediate mutual benefits.

**Be Aware of the Difference Between Performing at an "A" Versus an "A+" Level** — Any one of your Key Clients has the purchasing power to demand the best when it comes to receiving legal support. Hence, if your firm is not performing at the "A+" level, possibly your client will seek out someone else who can. Accordingly, your volume will be slowly nibbled away through the process

of marginalization wherein "even your best friends [read: your clients] won't tell you" that you're failing.

**Put Your Client Teams on a Weight Training Program and Pump Them Up** — The key to the prowess of a Client Team is its leader, usually the Relationship Partner. If he/she is not an initiator or when he/she needs help, that is where the firm's CMO and supporting players come into play. They can: assist with analyses and research; help organize meetings; train participants in methodologies and business development tactics; and push, shove, prod and monitor to get results. If need be, have the Managing Partner or other colleague senior partner join in to keep things seriously targeted and on track.

**Reprioritize the CMO's Job by Getting Him/Her Personally Involved with the Key Client Teams** — Because it takes gravitas to motivate and move partners, make sure that you are using the most senior marketing person available, your CMO, as an active and, if necessary, combative (in a productive sense) participant in the goings-on of each Key Client Team.

**Operate a Firm-Wide Key Client Program** — For each Key Client, the following should be applied: 1) Designate a Relationship Partner(s) and a starting roster for the Client Team; 2) Research the history and raise questions about the relationship and services provided; 3) Identify the "holes" where firm capabilities might be relevant, but not yet provided; and 4) Line up the processes of the Key Client Interviews and Client Service Plans. Also, of course, put in place the requisite assignments of responsibility, including with regard to the firm Chair/MP, CMO and others.

### ADVANCED PROCESSES IN A KEY CLIENT PROGRAM

**Pursue Preferred Provider Relationships with Appropriate Key Clients** — The trends in legal cost reduction (including through processes like Six Sigma) and convergence continue as large companies concentrate more of their legal purchases in fewer suppliers — and, concomitantly, ask for a volume discount. For a law firm serving one of these companies, the winning play is to package the so-called

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## Voice of the Client

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commodity or repetitive work — taking it over from the company's other law firms — while offering an alternative fee arrangement.

The two key points that distinguish this from a giveaway are: 1) When your firm consolidates this work, at the same time, it must build into its own operations the economies of scale that allow it to produce that work for less cost, including via delegation of labor (for example, paralegals in place of lawyers), Work Process Re-engineering (simplifying and making production more efficient) and Project Management (staying on-time, on-budget and on-quality specs); and 2) In these preferred provider relationships, the *quid pro quo* for a firm's consideration in pricing might include introductions to opportunities within the company to perform new, higher-level, higher billing-rate work and, in some cases, having the sponsoring company become a general advocate for a firm with regard to recommendations and referrals outside of the company.

**Develop and Apply a Client Profitability Analysis** — Most law firms would consider this an anathema with regard to collegiality. But as W. Edwards Deming, one of the early innovators in modern management, famously said, "If you can't measure it, you can't manage it." And this is especially true today with regard to client relationships, particularly if alternative fee arrangements are to be offered and opportunities to become preferred providers are pursued.

**Consider Holding a Client Retreat with Certain Key Clients** — You may remember how effective some of your firm's partner retreats have been at raising pressing issues and in encouraging people to work together, form consensus, and develop practical plans. Well, the same processes can operate in an off-site retreat with representatives from a Key Client. Many of the ingredients would be the same: thoughtful selection of who should participate; an interesting, fun or beautiful retreat site; an agenda and structured exercises; a third-party facilitator; documented outputs and assigned responsibilities

for follow-up — and the right amount of socializing and relaxation. The greatest value of one of these client retreats might be the human bonding that could naturally occur.

### LEVERAGING FURTHER

**Leverage Loyal Relationships by Operating a Client Advocacy Program** — Formalizing such a program might include: 1) Identifying the individual executive(s) in each appropriate Key Client who might fit the requirements for participating (having the aforementioned *quid pro quo* interests) and, then, inviting him/her into the effort; 2) Setting up opportunities to trade on these relationships, for example, for a company in which the firm is trying to get access, have the General Counsel of one of the firm's current clients introduce your lead lawyer as "my good friend" to the General Counsel of the target company. There even could be an outside Executive Advisory Board where seasoned players from your clients would meet as a group and provide insights and ideas to help the firm become the best that it can be.

**Enhance Client-Service Skills, Firm-Wide, by Telling Stories Heard During the Key Client Interviews** — After Key Client Interviews have been conducted with a number of the firm's clients, summaries of the more instructive or generally applicable best practices and do's and don'ts can be synthesized and presented to the partnership during meetings and retreats.

**Apply to Future Proposals the Insights Gained Through the Key Client Interviews** — If you know what turns on, and turns off, your largest and most valuable clients, then you can apply this learning to the acquisition of new clients of the same ilk. Doing so is similar to the very useful exercise of conducting Win/Loss interviews.

### CLIENT EXPERIENCE MANAGEMENT

**Take a Holistic View of the Subject of "Client Experience"** — Customer Experience Management is the current label that has been given to the most advanced processes by which companies attempt to understand and satisfy their customers. Law firms might learn a thing or two from these efforts. For example, an early

step in the process is mapping out the "customer journey." This journey includes the various steps involved and who in the company participates — along with possibly others outside the company, for example, friends who might recommend the company or product — that collectively impact the customer's ultimate decision to purchase. Translating this into the law firm arena, when a firm proposes to a client, involved in addition to the General Counsel might be the CFO as well as a representative of Strategic Sourcing (Purchasing). And the relevant participants from the law firm can include partners, associates, marketing professionals and possibly even a secretary who is merely answering the phone.

**Reorient Attitudes Toward Client Service by Fostering "Employee Engagement"** — Surprisingly, it is still an evolving subject regarding how to get everyone in the firm oriented toward "doing their bit" in serving the firm's clients. Certainly, the partners can learn from hearing the feedback gained from the Key Client Interviews. And training and sensitivity sessions can be conducted that make associates and staff more aware of their ultimate impact on the firm's clients, including what actions they can individually take to make that impact the most favorably perceived.

**Leverage Your Firm's Own "Unique Client Experience"** — Maybe your firm has unique approach to how it treats clients. Maybe, it is the firm's culture, the lawyers' attitudes, the personalities of your people, some of the traditions that have become part of the ethos, or other tangible or intangible attributes. After interviewing a number of client executives of a law firm, I can usually discern these differences, as nuanced as they might be. So, if these attributes can be identified, why not package and present them to the world as what the firm's clients — and any other company that is fortunate enough to hire the firm — will experience. This, then, can be your firm's unique client experience that, for your current and prospective clients, raises the standards of excellence and differentiates you from all the rest.

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## Pricing Legal Services

### *How Legal Marketers Must Be Involved*

By Michael DeCosta

Legal marketing executives recognize their responsibility to demonstrate a strong connection between revenue and productivity. Beyond the “value-added” components of their efforts, expectations have risen in law firms for the marketing team to contribute directly to top-line growth. While their roles typically fall short of direct selling to new clients, in recent years marketing executives have been integrally involved in ongoing account management, prospecting, and expansion. They are juxtaposed with the rainmakers — practically joined at the hip in supporting partners as they embark into the legal market battlefield.

With the onset of new approaches to pricing legal services, the sliver of light between law firm marketing executives and partners has narrowed even further. Alternative Fee Arrangements (AFAs) have dominated the headlines of legal press and have crept into the mainstream media as well. How firms have approached this industry zeitgeist varies greatly. As in the steps of bereavement, the first hurdle for some has been to accept that this trend is here to stay. Slowly, firms have made it over that psychological threshold and are embracing the new model.

### **VALUE-BASED PRICING IS ON A FAST TRACK**

While a few prestigious firms have been partially inoculated from the

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trend, many AmLaw 100 and 200 firms are now knee-deep in rethinking how to address and capitalize on these new client expectations. While clients have always pushed back on fees, historically, corporate legal departments — whose leadership teams are often comprised of Big Law alumni — have lacked the tools and, for that matter, the mandate to rethink the model of procuring legal services. In 2008, the Association of Corporate Counsel published its ACC Value Challenge manifesto, which called for a collaborative approach to providing more value-based pricing and delivery models that transcend the traditional billable hour arrangement. In a few short years, conventional structures have been supplanted by innovative solutions. Today, AFAs can represent as much as 20% of a firm’s revenue, if not higher.

How legal marketing executives have dealt with this trend has varied greatly. While AFAs have forced a fundamental rethinking of how law firms operate, grow and compete, some marketing organizations have missed the chance to seize on this opportunity. In fact, this is the “power of the purse” that legal marketing has been waiting for. They should grab hold of it. From a career standpoint, marketing executives who cannot show they have their hands in the pricing function run the risk of falling behind their contemporaries in skills and experiences. This is true both in terms of the value they show to their current firms as well as prospective employers.

### **THE ART AND SCIENCE OF PRICING**

Knowing how to price starts with the fundamental application of financial analysis to determine how best to charge for service to be rendered. It is scientific and formulaic. As such, many firms have housed the pricing function initially within their finance departments where computational tools exist to scrub the numbers. Finance teams have tapped their FP&A experts to review data and construct appropriate algorithms to determine price. In fact, finance departments

have had this information for years, but have done little with it to change firms’ operating models. The information was primarily used for profitability analysis and compensation distribution and adjustments, not creating new pricing models. As long as the billable hour model dominated (admittedly, it still does) the industry, the efficient delivery of legal services was not paramount and finance departments were not expected to reinvent that wheel.

Further, no mandate existed to drive changes in how attorneys practiced law, dealt with clients, and billed their time. The only client fiat was to ensure top-notch legal services were delivered, followed by a little price negotiation at the end of the matter. Today, clients demand more. While finance departments have done yeoman’s work in terms of vetting appropriate billing rates, pricing is fundamentally an account management function. Clearly, account management should be within the purview of marketing executives’ job responsibilities. Therefore, raising pricing to an art form is their duty.

Crunching numbers is not necessarily the forte of most marketing executives, but one in which they need to become well-versed. Knowing what things cost and managing to an effective bottom line is critical to making sure revenue growth is not squandered. Undoubtedly, growth for growth’s sake can be one of the most disruptive forces in any partnership. Once those ground rules are understood, marketing executives must offer perspective beyond the numbers. If a marketing organization is aligned in a business partner model with resources deployed by practice, then practice group management and legal project management is already something they are exposed to.

In many instances, properly marketing a firm’s approach to AFAs can create a competitive advantage. Some firms have gone so far as to address AFAs on their website and related collateral material. That can create a near-term competitive advantage in the market but also could have some drawbacks. As we know, not all matters are necessarily subject to

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## Career Journal

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alternative pricing structures. Certainly, there are times, for example, in a “bet-the-house” deal or highly litigious matter where clients are more than willing to pay by the hour. It is important that proper internal and external messaging around AFAs is incorporated into the models used. There is no “one-size-fits-all” model, and arrangements can still be fairly complex with many variables built into the proposal.

Pricing is essentially proprietary, but positioned correctly, it can be used externally. There are no better resources within a firm’s cadre of leadership to take on this balancing act than marketing executives.

Many partners are loath to focus on price, as they perceive it as weakening the relationship-driven aspects of the practice of law. Similarly, finance executives seldom have access to the nuances of client relationships and can easily default to a binary interpretation of right and wrong pricing. Both sides need to be reconciled into a cohesive strategy. Marketing should be that glue.

### CREATING A ‘VALUE’

#### PROPOSITION

The reality is that the ACC Value Challenge is a call to law firms to work in a more collaborative manner with corporate legal departments to better serve the needs of their shared customer base. Marketing executives are invaluable resources to bring into those discussions, as they offer

a healthy perspective on market conditions, competitive intelligence, and residual value (beyond revenue) of certain client relations.

In many respects, AFAs provide the first pecuniary tools for marketing executives to truly impact potential revenue. Their insights will provide effective color commentary beyond what the numbers might initially indicate. Enhanced financial prowess is yet another skill senior marketing executives must possess to remain substantive contributors to their firms’ success. From a career perspective, suffice to say, this must be part of the marketing executive’s repertoire, and a core component of his or her professional resume.



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## Business of Branding

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### DESIGN LAYOUT

With your firm’s wireframes approved, you are now ready to begin design exploration. For many firms, this is the phase that most attorneys have been waiting for. Everyone begins to get excited when the design team is ready to present “concepts” to the firm that will hopefully result in a winning design direction and a communication style that will represent the firm’s culture. Because this is one of the most engaging or “sexy” phases of any new website assignment, many design and marketing professionals soon learn that while they have been painstakingly developing and reviewing the earlier phases of the firm’s new website — the sitemaps and wireframes — many of the firm’s attorneys may have not have been as engaged or focused on these stages. As a result, once designs are presented to the firm, quite often this is when you be-

gin to hear from your lawyers about changes and/or edits to the website’s navigation and/or architecture. This also happens when sitemaps or wireframes have not been shared outside of your committee before moving on to the design phase.

Remember, the larger you grow your circle of support, the easier it will be later when naysayers pop up after the launch complaining that they don’t like aspects of the site. You should be aware that changes requested during the design concept phase — changes that most likely could have been caught during the sitemap or wireframe stages — will only delay your website project. Unfortunately, this is when the marketing and design team learn that the firm’s lawyers simply didn’t have a full understanding of what the sitemap and wireframes represented to the website assignment when they were presented. Had they been better educated regarding the importance of these phases, it is likely that they would have identified these edits much earlier.

Because these initial stages do not have images or illustrations representing the firm’s personality, many lawyers on the website committee simply entrust these stages to the marketing team, and only give a cursory review of the sitemap and wireframes so that they can get to the creative phase. When changes are requested at the

creative concept phase, lawyers tend to become frustrated when they learn that edits and changes requested at this point take longer to make than those made during the sitemap or wireframe phase. One of the most important lessons that you can take away from this article is that the better you and your lawyers review and suggest edits during the wireframe phase, the greater the opportunity you will have that your website project will stay on track and launch on schedule.

### INITIAL CONCEPTS

When design agencies make the initial design concept presentations, most will present two to three concepts that represent a specific direction based on the firm’s strategic plan and brand platform. In many cases, firms are shown only a few pages — generally the home page, a bio page and perhaps one other main page of the website — so that a specific design direction can be selected by the firm before all the other pages of the firm’s website are done. At this juncture, it is important to go outside of your website committee, again so that you can get additional input and opinions from other members of the firm’s leadership and continue to build your circle of support.

Expect this stage to take two to three rounds of revisions before everyone is comfortable with a

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## Case Study: How Benesch Drilled Down

By Jeanne M. Hammerstrom

*Editor's note: When Benesch sent us this story in conjunction with its winning entry in the MLF 50, we asked its Marketing Department to explain how they thought outside the box — and came up with such a unique marketing endeavor. Here is their response.*

As the nation is striving to achieve energy independence, one of the fastest-growing energy sources will be Utica Shale, an Ohio shale deposit believed to be unusually rich in natural gas, oil and natural-gas liquids. Eastern Ohio, home to Benesch headquarters, is conservatively estimated to have the country's fourth largest shale deposits representing the potential for creating more than 200,000 jobs directly or indirectly supported by Utica Shale leasing, exploration, drilling and pipeline construction.

How often do opportunities like this come around to any service firm? Building on the deep-rooted strength of Benesch's Energy Practice Group, the firm formed a cross-functional team of corporate, public and private finance, transportation and logistics, regulatory, environmental, real estate, public law and construction attorneys to form the Shale Oil & Gas Industry Team. At the same time, and as part of this effort, the Marketing Department engaged a business consulting firm to test the opportunity to determine if it was worth allocating time and firm resources, and to build the strongest business case going forward. We wanted to ensure that we had a solid foundation and certain opportunities before developing a practice in this

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area. The consulting firm delivered a report, with additional research and resources from our Marketing Department, from which the green light was given to build our strategy and business plan.

### BUILDING ON THE SHALE BOOM

The Marketing Department capitalized on this opportunity to market the firm's capabilities to a large number of businesses affected by the shale boom. By aligning our attorneys from various practice areas with clients in different industries that have, or will be, affected, we are helping navigate the complexities and exploit the potential of the Utica Shale in the following areas: 1) Real Estate; 2) Environmental; 3) Transportation & Logistics; 4) Public Finance; 5) Public Law; 6) Private Equity; 7) Corporate; and 8) Construction.

One of our first steps was to tap the expertise of a market intelligence agency to manage the flood of information about the industry. Our intent was to use the information to cultivate stronger end-client relationships by providing our clients with a steady flow of news and information as it relates to Utica Shale. Using keywords, the agency filters news about the industry and provides briefings in a private newsroom from which we send updates and industry reports to our clients and contacts. We also created a twitter handle (@ohioshaleupdate) to report daily updates about the industry and, most recently, launched a blog ([www.ohioshaleupdate.com](http://www.ohioshaleupdate.com)) to which we post regularly on topical issues, such as regulatory changes or how regional banks are mobilizing teams to attract shale sector business. Clients are thrilled with the timeliness of Benesch's information as well as the firm's ability to personalize the news they need.

### RAISING THE FIRM'S PROFILE

To raise our public profile, Benesch worked with a PR firm specializing in the shale industry to assist in showcasing the firm as a thought leader via speaking opportunities, sponsorships, studies and published pieces. For example, in the last quarter of 2012, we conducted a survey of National Tank Truck Carriers (NTTC) and Ohio

Trucking Association (OTA) members to determine how the shale boom is affecting the transportation/logistics industry. The marketing value of such a study is multi-dimensional and carries far greater value than simply advertising. When the associations share the survey findings among thousands of its members or Benesch shares the report among clients and prospects, we are heightening awareness of the firm as a thought leader in the transportation industry. We plan to publish the results and replicate the survey among other industries with interests relevant to shale oil and gas. We've also helped our attorneys to secure speaking spots at various related industry conferences and conventions.

### REPURPOSING THE RESULTS

With information consistently flowing from the firm's consultants and various news sources, our Marketing Department needed to synchronize and create a methodology for sharing information. We created an internal site to which all parties and the firm participants have access. This alleviated the flood of e-mails and averted redundancies, thereby making the operation and all communications more efficient and cost-effective. We use the site to post all activities in which the firm is engaged such as sponsorships, events, presentations, industry reports and competitor activities and events. Internally, we track opportunities, pipelines and ROI.

### CONCLUSION

Since the launch of our "Shale Initiative," the firm has generated a dozen new clients, each contributing mightily to the firm's revenue. By carefully building a business case before launching our marketing initiative and optimizing consultant output, the Benesch Marketing Department now serves our clients and prospects with far greater effectiveness and precision. We are aligning with relevant industry partners, building an ever-increasing thought leadership platform and positioning the firm for greatest growth impact. It's been an "energizing" effort, to say the least, and an opportunity to work with almost every practice area of the firm.



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## ***Business of Branding***

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specific design concept and direction. The design stage typically involves moving the information outlined in the planning stage further into reality. The main objectives during this phase are for firm leaders to reach a general consensus on the site's structure and, more importantly, the specific visual representation that will eventually represent the firm in a unique way while resonating with your target audiences. Upon completion of the design concept phase, the website should more or less be ready to move forward in the areas of content development and any special features like blogs, video, event registration pages, as well as recruiting or alumni pages.

### **CONTENT STRATEGY**

As important as having a sound design strategy, you also need to have a well-defined content strategy. Most everyone will agree that one of the keys to a successful website redesign is to make sure you have an easy-to-use Content Management System (CMS) that will allow you to develop and enter content that is specific to your firm on a regular and ongoing basis. Fresh content is what keeps a website relevant and current. Most people who visit a website will only

scan your content. Therefore, it's important that the firm develops eye-catching headlines followed by copy that is written in plain, straightforward English and not "legalese."

Your website is the first place that most of your clients and prospects will look to learn about you, your lawyers and your areas of expertise. It should speak to your external audiences in a way that they find engaging and not what you feel you need tell them. When developing a website content strategy, it's important to focus on your external audiences, providing information that will be of use to your current and prospective clients as opposed to being internally focused. Gone are the days where firms simply took their brochure copy and used that as the basis of their website content.

In his article "How to Write Effective Web Copy," Herman Drost suggests a number of solid ideas, including: "Writing effective web copy begins with an understanding of what the goals of your website are. Remember that you are trying to get someone that you can't see and may have never met take steps towards building a relationship with your [lawyers] or your [law firm]."

This is where it's important to revisit your brand platform or creative

work plan to determine your firm's unique selling proposition and benefits, and focus your copy on these items. Remember to write in an informal style and to keep your sentences simple and easy to understand. Use keywords that will allow search engines to find your site. Also, this is your opportunity to trim the fat and eliminate fluff. Read your bio. Does it go on for pages and pages and include cases that you may have worked on years ago? Ask yourself how long you would stay on your own bio page if you were a stranger to the firm. Look at how you might shorten the narrative of your bios and look for ways to better organize all of the key information on your new bio page so that readers can find information about you that they can relate to.

Finally, monitor your website and see what pages are receiving the most traffic, making sure that you anticipate where your audiences are looking for information. By doing this and adding content to these heavily visited areas, you will only add to the success of your content strategy. This is what will ultimately generate interest in your site and firm.

In the next installment of this article, we will discuss Development and beyond



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## ***2013 Trends***

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to be the main driver behind online thought leadership, we look to see more tools for support of this process.

### **GO-TO-MARKET IMPROVEMENT PLANS**

In order to achieve measurable results that can be routinely replicated, a unified approach to the market is critical. Many firms have a number of talented people and related processes, but coordination and leverage of these resources at an enterprise level are lacking. In many cases, investments in technology have been made, but specific goals and objectives for that technology have not been for-

malized. If only we had a nickel for every time we've heard the phrase, "Our database stinks." We're seeing go-to-market assessments undertaken more frequently. These assessments take a look at everything related to client development, including but not limited to marketing department organizational structure, communication, the pitch and proposal process, client teams, industry teams, client feedback, use of technology, coaching and training programs, etc.

### **CONCLUSION**

The common thread we find in all identified trends is an increasing emphasis on understanding how to build trusting relationships with prospects and clients. Business de-

velopment departments are more focused on constructs that achieve that ultimate goal through training, dedicated sales professionals, assistance with social media and complete department structure. Technology, resources and organizational charts all are evolving to support more and deeper one-on-one lawyer-client relationships. We see this overall trend continuing in 2013 and beyond.



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