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Special Issue The MLF 50

The Second Annual MLF 50: The Top 50 Law Firms in Marketing and Communications

Law Firm Marketing Viewed As a 'Full Contact Sport'

By Elizabeth Anne "Betiayn" Tursi

At the outset, let me congratulate the 50 firms that made this year's MLF 50. The fact that out of the hundreds of law firms with marketing programs, these 50 firms have attained the status of being considered the best programs in the country is a testament to the fabulous strides that law firm marketing, business development and media programs have achieved over the last year. There is good news here: Marketing is alive, well and prospering at many of the AmLaw 200 firms. This year, the MLF 50 showcases a wide range of firms and their marketing activities that can best be described by using a sports metaphor — a full contact sport. The profession has come a long way in terms of sophistication, depth and creativity. In the following pages, you will see the power of marketing, business development and media and how they can transform and strengthen a law firm — and yes, make it more profitable. What is important to note is that many of these marketing activities were created as vehicles for pro bono and diversity initiatives. It should come as no surprise that doing good deeds for others and creating a diverse

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environment leads to prosperity.

Once again this year, the process of selecting the top 50 firms was not an easy task. While some firms provided substantive submissions, others that are listed provided little or no information. There is only so much prodding one can do to elicit that information. I was forced to do extensive research on those firms that I believed have established viable marketing and media programs, but for whatever reason were not in a position to send me a written submission. There were also many firms that did provide submissions but, frankly speaking, their marketing achievements did not rise to the level that would warrant inclusion in the top 50. My advice to them is to keep up the good work and ... maybe next year.

Let's review the criteria for inclusion on this list:

- **Marketing Strategy.** Formal plan (needs assessment, overall firm plan, target industries, practices area plans, proposal strategy for major engagements and new-business pipeline reports, cross marketing, individual marketing plans); an example of a success including implementation and cost; whether or not a yearly budget is created and the criteria used in creating the plan with line item examples; and examples of major new initiatives.
- **Results.** Measurable return-on-investment (ROI) in specific efforts; how expenditures on specific strategies and tactics resulted in new matters, clients or additional profits.
- **Marketing Department.** Staffing, including "who does what" and why; size of staff; deployment of staff; CMO/Director reporting requirements, committee (if applica-

ble); process for integrating new professionals in to the team retention efforts; professional development opportunities for the marketing staff; ratio of professionals to lawyers; and cutting-edge positions.

- **Communications/Public Relations/Media Relations.** State objectives, strategies, planning and implementation. Where possible, demonstrate integration with marketing programs. Tie results achieved to planned objectives. Estimate budget and whether internal or public relations agency resources spearheaded the efforts. Emphasize sustained efforts and proactive approaches to communicating with target audiences using internal and external communications to influence the visibility, image and reputation of the practice or firm. Describe specific ways external and internal communications strategies were used to demonstrate the knowledge of individual practitioners and/or firm. Explain ways your firm develops ongoing relationships with the news media to stimulate media inquiries, interviews, bylined articles, case histories, speaker platforms, seminars, trade shows and community involvement. Include examples of how your firm uses its Web site, internal communications, Web conferences, e-zines, blogs, etc. Quantify/measure results achieved contrasting pre- and post-program conditions.
- **Commitment.** Marketing requirements for partners and associates, training programs, percentage of gross revenue as applied to marketing; participation of marketing partner on governing body of firm.
- **Advertising and Visual Communications.**

Approach, implementation and one example of a return on investment.

- **Web Site and Firm Blogs.** Development, look and feel, leads and clients from visitors and clients, increase in traffic or search engine ranking.
- **Client Service Programs.** Goal setting, client service teams, client surveys, metrics and ROI.
- **Outreach.** Community activities, pro bono

and diversity programs that utilize marketing strategy and communications.

Again this year, not every firm that made the list included all of the criteria enumerated above. At my recommendation, some firms selected one or more of the criteria and focused on those areas in which they stand out above all others. In the research I did for the firms that did not do formal submissions, I looked at the overall firm's marketing

program and then selected a specific criteria in which those firms excelled.

While I do not have enough space to highlight all the firms, I am presenting some of the more important aspects of the top six marketing and communications programs that struck a chord as having well thought-out and meaningful programs. Beginning with the February issue, other listed firms will be featured in *Marketing The Law Firm*.

The Second Annual MLF 50:

The Top Law Firms in Marketing and Communications

RANKED FIRMS					
MLF Rank	Firm Name	AmLaw 200 Rank	MLF Rank	Firm Name	AmLaw 200 Rank
1	Duane Morris	71			
2	Goodwin Procter	53			
3	Jenner & Block	72			
4	Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal	48			
5	Goulston & Storrs	N/A			
6	Manatt, Phelps & Phillips	106			
7	Winston & Strawn	31	42	Haynes and Boone	101
8	Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft	42	43	Schulte Roth & Zabel	67
9	Thompson Hine	131	44	Ogletree, Deakins, Nash, Smoak & Stewart	173
10	Proskauer Rose	47	45	Jeffer, Mangels, Butler & Marmaro	181
11	Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz	140	46	Sutherland Asbill & Brennan	97
12	Holland & Hart	149	47	Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw	8
			48	Steptoe & Johnson	78
			49	Lord, Bissell & Brook	136
			50	Dickstein Shapiro Morin & Oshinsky	80

Duane Morris tops the MLF 50 chart

* Ranking in 2006 AmLaw 200. N/A=Not Available

DUANE MORRIS

While many law firms struggle to define their marketing and business development function, Duane Morris has clearly articulated its vision. To help elevate it from a regional powerhouse to an international platform, leadership recruited **Ed Schechter** as the firm's first Chief Marketing Officer 5 years ago, and gave him the responsibility and authority to create a first-rate, highly skilled marketing team. Ed instituted measures to track time, costs and report ROI in a way that were rare in legal marketing. This enabled him to build his infrastructure while fulfilling needs, instituting efficiencies and raising expectations. Ed hired senior professionals to become the lawyers' personal strategists and coaches on marketing, business development and client service programs. They work with business intelligence research professionals to create client-specific plans, and support the attorneys on proposal efforts, sales presentations and follow-up. Duane Morris' in-house creative teams handle all aspects of the firm's multimedia and printed collateral development, Web design and direct mail services. Most importantly, all of these professionals work in concert to qualify and evaluate every potential project, ensuring that the resources are utilized appropriately and efficiently, always focusing on ROI.

With more than 40 professional marketers working with 600+ attorneys, the firm's ratio of marketers to lawyers is 1 to 14.5, with Ed still enticing top marketing and business development professionals to join his program (including his most recent hires from an AmLaw 100 firm and Lexis/Nexis/Martindale-Hubbell).

Ed reports directly to firm Chairman Sheldon Bonovitz, who has publicly stated that marketing is key to the firm's financial success: "Our increase in revenue is also, in part, attributed to our marketing and business development personnel." Bonovitz points to the firm's ability to cross-market its practice areas, and its marketing team is critical to these efforts by putting together client teams across practices and offices, managing the details of each initiative and overseeing the dedicated budgets for each practice and industry-focused group. The team-oriented, ego-suppressed, customer-centric approach to marketing and business development is paying off and permeating through the culture of the firm.

Ed's writers and editors produce content at an astonishing rate. The firm's use of its InterAction-based CRM technology gets the Alerts (as well as a half-dozen other communications vehicles) to precisely targeted audiences of executives and decision makers. (Duane Morris also utilizes this technology to reveal to newly joining attorneys who they know in common with their new partners, creating dozens and dozens of instant

introductions and business development leads.)

Duane Morris' traditional media program is already strong — and growing stronger — with attorneys regularly quoted in legal industry and business publications, and this is attributable in large part to the efforts of Joshua Peck, the firm's Media Relations Manager. In addition to the long list of media mentions, the firm has many attorney-authors, the most prolific being Eric Sinrod, who believes his weekly columns in *USA Today* and elsewhere are key to his impressive book of business. (Sinrod has gained a number of his clients, including eBay and Providian, after their legal departments have contacted him directly in response to his columns.)

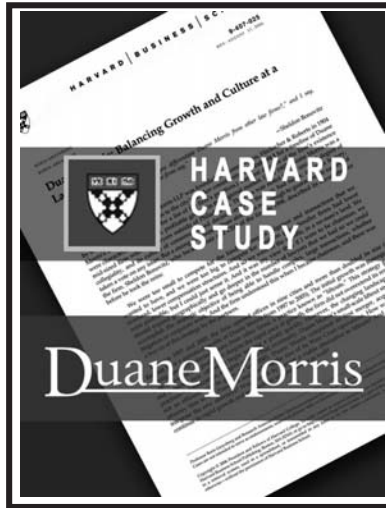
Harvard Business School received word of Duane Morris' innovative approaches, and made the firm the subject of a case study that will be taught this fall. (Harvard

has used law firms as case study subjects only three times in the history of its program.) (See Graphic, at left.)

An audit of www.duanemorris.com revealed that it was "incredibly good" in terms of visitor traffic. The constantly refreshed Web site succeeds in holding the attention of its visitors, with each surfing among its 5000+ content-rich pages for an average of more than 2 minutes. The site is frequently singled out for its wealth of detailed client success stories and testimonials. The firm's many Alerts and Updates are available to news aggregators and readers via RSS feeds, and its newly launched Podcast program features professionally recorded interviews between its attorneys and other industry leaders.

Spearheading the firm's client satisfaction program, Ed Schechter's managers visit the firm's top clients to identify the strengths of the legal services they receive and the areas in need of improvement. Working with the attorneys, the team swiftly addresses any issues and map out opportunities to improve or expand the relationship.

In August, an independent study by BTI research reported that Duane Morris had gained a strong foothold in the client service area. BTI interviewed 240 Corporate Counsel of Fortune 1000 companies, and the firm was singled out by name, in an unprompted manner, as a "major player" in terms of client focus, growth strategy, technology, flexible billing and value. In fact, of the 300 law firms that corporate decision-makers discussed with BTI researchers, Duane Morris was among the few that were described as truly innovative. The firm was also named as one of only 10 "market moving law firms" — firms perceived to influence the future of the legal market.



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