

ARRIVING AT THE TOP—AND USING LEVERAGE TO STAY THERE

NATIONAL EXPANSION

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Once a law firm has achieved national brand status, the next challenge is to not only stay there but to keep on growing.

The mechanism for moving ‘past the top’ involves ‘leveraging’, a term that can mean different things depending upon the environment to which it is applied. However, across all platforms, it means improving the sustainable growth of your firm via a strategy that increases your return by adding strength—or perhaps even ‘clout’—to your position. We will examine in what areas your firm can apply leveraging to maintain and expand its national brand position.

Recognition and Beyond

Leveraging your firm’s brand involves creating a recognizable name in new and expanding spheres so that a wider market knows of the unique benefits that your firm can provide to clients. It requires building on the reputation, accomplishments, and personal relationships that have been built up over the years and making sure that your firm remains quite favorably distinct from your competitors.

But choosing how you will be perceived by way of your brand identity means leveraging the unique capabilities of your partners and associates and leveraging marketing techniques to your advantage. What clients can expect from your firm should be front and center in not just your formal marketing campaigns but also by way of personal encounters that staff have with virtually anyone. From your family dentist to your stock broker and to your neighborhood clergy or retailers, everyone your lawyers come in contact with should be viewed as a potential client, whether directly or by referral. Leveraging social contacts should be an essential part of your firm’s leveraging endeavors.

Partner and Associate Leveraging

Building a firm-level reputation may sound like an undertaking best left to the firm’s marketing and branding managers. But in fact, the leveraging of individuals at your firm—whether the individual is already a ‘star’ or a ‘rising star’—is yet another key to giving your firm a strong, ongoing presence in the marketplace. By building up his or her personal brand, the reputation of the partner or associate will concomitantly raise the reputation of the firm and drive more business to it. Although that reputation may already be well established within the firm—or even among opposing counsel—personal branding to the wider potential-client market will serve the firm’s greater market. By arranging to be featured in a write-up in a local newspaper or maintaining an online blog, personal leveraging should be considered part of ‘pulling for the team.’

Leveraging Technology

LinkedIn and Facebook are among the most powerful business networking devices used by law firms. Each member of the firm should have a profile page that associates them with the firm. A profile is in effect and introduction before the client ever meets you or any member of your team.

Executive Summary

› The Issue

How can a top law firm further leverage its position for additional growth?

› The Gravamen

Brand leveraging can take place in several areas and involve firm personalities as well as the firm’s brand itself.

› The Path Forward

Consider just about every contact throughout life as a potential client for your firm, and leverage that contact opportunity.

Because ‘first impressions are lasting impressions’, firms should seriously consider a comprehensive social media strategy that increases their visibility in the market. A compelling bio with an emphasis on your professional accomplishments—as well as selected personal interests—coupled with the right SEO keywords can go a long way in keeping you and your firm at the top of a prospective client’s search results. It is the chance for your firm to give a global ‘elevator pitch’—but on an extremely crowded elevator!

If your firm is not making use of podcasts, it should be. Potential clients rely on podcasts to glean legal information that they need at a particular time or in a particular practice area. Having that information so conveniently available—with your firm’s branding all over it—delivers your firm to the palm of the prospective client’s hand. Building up a subscriber market makes for an even more advantageous leveraging of this technology tool. Even if your firm does not digitally distribute podcasts of its own, arranging to be a guest on another professional podcast is another way of harnessing this technology.

Merger and Acquisition

In the words of Ecclesiastes: ‘Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor’. In an era of law firm consolidation, that adage was not lost on British law firm GL Law when it decided to become a part of Shakespeare Martineau, which in turn is

associated with the legal and professional services group Ampa. In the words of Richard Hill, managing director of GL Law, “Our strategy to bring innovation to new service areas and empower our team to work collaboratively has resulted in great success for both our clients and the firm.”

In 2021, there were nine major Big Law cross-border mergers, a clear indication that leveraging reputation and capabilities does not have to remain within the domestic context. As always, growth is the driving force behind all areas of leveraging and, indeed, across all business sectors. To paraphrase the English poet Robert Browning, ‘a firm’s reach should exceed its grasp’.

“BRANDING IS WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT YOU WHEN YOU ARE NOT IN THE ROOM.”

- JEFF BEZOS, FOUNDER AND CEO OF AMAZON.COM

Action

1 Know Your Own Brand:

Your firm’s brand consists of reputation, accomplishments, and personal relationships; understand how all of those elements can be leveraged.

2 Your Target Market:

Expanding your brand in the marketplace requires building up a perception of what your firm identity is, and how your firm’s unique capabilities can better serve your current and potential clients better than the competition.

3 Leverage Personalities:

Brand leveraging should not be viewed as merely ‘firm-centric’, but rather holistically, building on the reputations of partners and associates and even non-lawyer members of your team.

4 Technology Presence:

A whole world of digital opportunities is just waiting to be leveraged! Fully exploit the platforms that exist to leverage your firm among other firms, among potential clients, and even cross-border for further empowering your firm.

Further Reading

1. <https://business.yelp.com/advertise/attorney-marketing/>
2. <https://www.ethoscopywriting.com/blog/how-law-firms-can-leverage-content-marketing>
3. <https://www.law.com/americanlawyer/2018/06/05/law-firms-are-increasing-leverage-and-they-shouldnt-stop/>
4. <https://www.thomsonreuters.com/en-us/posts/legal/legal-networks/>
5. <https://www.abajournal.com/voice/article/building-and-leveraging-a-legal-brand-on-linkedin>
6. <https://lawgazette.com.sg/practice/tech-talk/leveraging-technology-to-grow-your-personal-brand/>





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After receiving his Juris Doctor degree from The John Marshall Law School in Chicago, Mr. Brochin served as an Administrative Law Judge with the Illinois Department of Labor for six years where he presided over cases dealing with job separation issues and matters pertaining to contested Unemployment Insurance claims. He also co-wrote the agency's administrative rules, and periodically served as a 'ghost writer' for Board of Review decisions.

Following that position, he was Director of Development for a Chicago-area non-profit college where he was responsible for High Net Worth donations to the institution. For the next eighteen years he practiced as a solo practitioner attorney with an emphasis in the fields of Real Estate law and Commercial Contracts transactions, and was an agent for several national title insurance agencies.

In 2003 he was recruited to head up a U.S. title insurance research office in Israel, a position he held for four years, and between 2007-2017 he participated in litigation support for several high-profile cases. He has taught Business Law as a faculty member of the Jerusalem College of Technology, and has authored a wide variety of legal White Papers and timely legal articles as a professional legal content writer for GPL clients. Separate from his legal writing, he has co-authored academic articles on Middle East security topics that have been published in peer-reviewed publications.



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William Anderson is Managing Director and Head of Law & Compliance. He leads the GreenPoint practice in providing regulatory, legal, and technology solutions to law firms, legal publishers, and in-house law departments around the world, overseeing our team of experienced US attorneys and data and technology experts. Will has over 25 years' experience working with corporations to improve the management of their legal and corporate compliance functions. Will began his legal career as a litigator with a predecessor firm to Drinker, Biddle LLP. He then served as in-house counsel to Andersen Consulting LLP, managing risk and working with outside counsel on active litigation involving the firm.

Will has leveraged his legal experience interpreting regulations and appearing before federal (DOJ, SEC, FTC) and state agencies (NYAG) to oversee research and other areas at Bear Stearns. In this capacity, he counseled analysts on regulatory risk and evolving compliance requirements. Will also consulted on the development of a proprietary tool to ensure effective documentation of compliance clearance of research reports. Will then went on to work in product development and content creation for a global online compliance development firm pioneering the dynamic updating of regulated firms' policies and procedures from online updates and resources. Will holds a Juris Doctorate with High Honors from the Washington University School of Law in Saint Louis and is admitted to state and federal bars. He lives in Pawling, NY, with his wife and daughter.



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