

# Legal Unprecedented: Is It Time for Your Law Firm to Rebrand?

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The legal profession is notoriously slow to embrace change. Risk-averse legal practitioners are steeped in precedents, and, as a result, law firms historically have not been under immense pressure to modernize. Unparalleled industry shifts, however, such as changing client expectations, new technologies, and increased competition, are forcing firms to reinvent themselves, often best accomplished via rebranding.

Rebranding is integral to marketing efforts of just about any business. A modern law firm cannot rely on basic marketing tactics, produce the same predictable marketing messages, images, and content, and expect to leave an impact. To continue to thrive, firms must adopt new branding tactics that resonate in today's media landscape. But, before considering rebranding, it is important to understand what a firm's brand actually is and why it matters.

## WHAT IS YOUR BRAND?

It is easy to believe that “branding” is simply a name and logo. Though both are crucial to a brand’s success, they are simply branding tactics. Branding tactics include consistent use of colors, typography, graphics, and messaging in brand communication. But, these are not the brand itself. A brand is the distinct feeling a product or business evokes.

A firm’s brand is the sum of people’s perception of the firm. It encompasses everything that the firm is, and wants to be, for its contacts. It is the value the firm provides to clients. It establishes authenticity, trust, and credibility. A law firm’s brand is the soul of the organization.

As a result, brands evolve over time, and successful businesses rebrand to symbolize this evolution. As the legal industry progresses, so must a firm’s brand to reflect the current marketplace. While modern firms rebrand, thus evolving their communications and marketing strategies, traditional firms who remain stagnant will end up losing their competitive edge.

When should a firm consider rebranding? Typically, the goal of rebranding is to influence and transform clients’ perceptions about services offered. Rebrands are initiated and shaped by business goals and industry evolutions. By overhauling a brand, a firm can set itself apart from competitors, update an antiquated identity, or highlight an expanded business service or market.

## THE DECISION TO REBRAND

*Rebrand to differentiate in the marketplace.*

In a competitive landscape where work and often clients are similar, the same images and messages do not attract attention or create distinction. Even when a firm offers superior legal services, that alone is not enough if clients cannot distinguish it from others. This is where a strong, distinctive brand is crucial and helps a firm showcase what it stands for and how it surpasses competitors. A successfully executed rebrand can build and sustain goodwill, bolster loyalty, and improve recognition. And, an enhanced brand ultimately keeps relationships strong and provides an extra edge over competition.

*Rebrand to breathe new life into your brand.*

Perhaps the most obvious reason to rebrand is that the current brand has simply outgrown its effectiveness. Though the earliest incarnations of a logo, website or messaging may have once been innovative, it is possible the outdated brand is dragging business down. Design styles, color combinations, fonts, and image from a few years ago are likely out of date and, though once modern and compelling, now come across as stale and obsolete. By adapting a firm’s visual identity, it shows that the firm’s business is an authority in the space, rather than a relic.

Similarly, trends in legal marketing evolve, and failing to adapt can affect a brand’s perceptions. People see a brand that seems outdated and perceive the firm to be out-of-touch with modern practices. Ultimately, a rebrand not only portrays to customers that a firm is contemporary and relevant, but also that it is connected to the reforming industry. Nobody wants to retain a firm that is seemingly behind the curve.

*Rebrand as your services grow or change.*

Does the firm's brand accurately reflect the full scope of services it offers in 2020? Has the firm increased its geographic reach or introduced additional services? Successful firms avoid stagnancy, continuing to grow and develop to better serve their clients' legal needs. Smart law firms should consider rebranding if their current brand is not an accurate reflection of the current company.

Knowing when and how to rebrand is a challenge. It is crucial that a rebrand acknowledge the firm's legacy and foundation while including a progressive look and feel signifying the firm's success in recent years. But, rebranding does not just involve new logos, revamping websites, or changing marketing materials. At a fundamental level, rebranding is the inward process of recreating the way that a firm expresses its identity to the world. Thus, for successful rebranding, a firm must examine its core services, values, and image in today's market with the purpose of transforming, inspiring and elevating current and prospective client perceptions and expanding communication to new audiences.

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