

# A Law Firm Rebrand: Understanding Where You Are — and Where You Need to Go (Part 2)

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A law firm's brand is more than just marketing—it is the embodiment of the firm's identity, what it stands for, and where it is going. A firm's brand is the ongoing story and visuals that are elicited in a client when they hear your firm name. Whether due to expansion of services or for a more modern look, it is often in an evolving firm's best interest to rebrand. A rebrand is not only the renaissance of the external messaging, but also an opportunity to look internally at the vision, beliefs and culture.

## **IDENTIFY REBRAND TRIGGERS**

The goal of a rebranding strategy is to develop instant recognition, inciting a subconscious favorable reaction and instinctive preference to the firm. To start, a rebranding strategy should begin with the business reasons behind the rebrand.

Does the firm need to accelerate growth in a new market? Is it driven by the need to compete with larger or more established competitors? Was there a change in ownership or stakeholders? Or is the current brand simply no longer accurate? Often it is a combination of motivations behind a rebrand but, whatever the reasons, it is important to fully identify the “why,” making it front and center as the rebranding process begins. With clear objectives, it is much easier to avoid potential gaps and ensure the achievement of the desired business goals of rebranding.

## **SELF-AWARENESS IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS**

After identifying the business drivers behind the rebranding, a firm must look inward to capture its unique spirit. Just as lawyers cannot take a blanket approach for all clients, a firm’s brand should be a bespoke identity that is rooted in its character, culture and vision. It is not simply defining services but, instead, needs to start by assessing the firm’s unique value proposition (UVP) and building the rebrand around this. A firm’s UVP is a clear statement describing its benefits, how it meets clients’ needs, and what distinguishes it from competitors. Often, the defining differences between law firms may be more nuanced, as opposed to major deviations. Simply put, define what separates you from similarly-situated firms, answering the question “why are you the best choice?” Decide what makes your firm unique, and refine that identity to a few keywords and selling points that will encompass the overall theme of the rebrand.

## **ASSESS THE CURRENT BRAND EXPERIENCE THROUGH THE CLIENTS’ LENS**

Virtually all law firms have blind spots, with a distorted view of their image in the marketplace. Similarly, clients frequently have a myopic view of a firm’s services. Understanding not only your prospective audience but your existing clients is key while re-envisioning the brand. Conduct external research on your firm and clients with the goal of obtaining an objective understanding of your current brand perception and competencies. Absent external and objective market research, you run the risk of rebranding on false assumptions. Ensure you understand your brand, clients, and market better than anyone else, then rebuild your brand based on this research.

## **REBRAND WITH TOMORROW IN MIND**

As a law firm’s business plans take into account industry forecasts, trends and future predictions, so too must its brand. It is vital to plan for growth. A successful rebrand will find a balance between the past, present, and future, honoring a firm’s heritage, as well as its growth trajectory. It must also emphasize its relevance in the present market, and where it is going, to ensure that the brand has longevity. To do this, a visual identity that is scalable, robust, and accessible must be designed with a firm’s acknowledged UVPs and identity in mind. It is essential that the rebrand focuses on every touchpoint for the firm, not the least of which is the website.

Rebranding expressions (e.g., logo, colors, typography, tonality) necessitates an updated website, arguably the most important outward-facing brand piece for a law firm, and the epicenter of firm marketing plans. Each element of the website should reinforce the rebrand, from the visual design elements to the messaging and content itself. The website, together

with the remaining elements of the firm's online presence and tangible marketing collateral – brochures, business cards, signage, etc—are the tools used to connect, promote and establish the new brand. Once these steps are completed, unveil the rebrand to your employees, clients, and prospective clients with a marketing campaign for maximum influence.

Like anything successful, rebrands require a thoughtful approach and take time. Time to understand. Time to develop and cultivate. And time to impact. With a holistic strategy to intentionally and deliberately crafting a rebrand, firms can be sure all audiences appreciate its unique strengths and offerings.

At the end of the day, a well-executed rebrand will illustrate to existing and potential clients the value of your firm, even before they learn the value of your services.

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