

Special Issue

The MLF 50

The Fifth-Anniversary MLF 50: The Top 50 Law Firms in Marketing and Communications

So You Think That Marketing Is Not Top-of-Mind in Law Firms? Thank Again!

By Elizabeth Anne 'Betiayn' Tursi

Back in April of this year when I started to think about announcing The Fifth-Anniversary MLF 50, I tossed and turned about whether, in these challenging times for law firms, there might be anything to talk about. I am happy to say that there is, and the great news is that what is going on in firms with active marketing and communications departments is quite remarkable. The big difference is that the programs being created and implemented are all tied to business development. Even in the branding corridors, business development is the catalyst and that's as it should be.

Yes, we all have been reading about the layoffs, the push-back dates on incoming classes of associates, and the administrative cuts. The good news here is that law firms have finally figured it out — they are businesses and in order to prosper, they need to market themselves and communicate in a way that nurtures and protects their existing client base while constantly seeking out new business opportunities. While the billable hour has always been the business model for firms, it is now less about billable hours and more about keeping the existing clients happy and “bargaining” for new business. At long last, marketing and communications can take center stage and become the key indicator by which law firms can measure their success ratio.

Once again this year, many firms submitted detailed descriptions of their marketing, business development and communications programs. Some of the firms that are listed provided no information. As with past practice for those firms, research was conducted. It should be noted that while I would have liked to feature examples of the ad campaigns that some firms created, space does not permit me to do so.

Every firm that is on The Fifth-Anniversary MLF 50 is to be congratulated. This wasn't an easy year for marketing and communications. And yet, in spite of the challenges, there are at least 50 firms which have demonstrated that having a plan and implementing it can lead to spectacular results. Herewith the results of “The Fifth-Anniversary MLF 50 Top Five.”

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RANKED FIRMS					
MLF Rank	Firm Name	AmLaw 200 Rank*	MLF Rank	Firm Name	AmLaw 200 Rank*
1	Proskauer Rose	41	26	Holland & Hart	142
2	Locke, Lord Bissell & Liddell	69	27	Carlton Fields	162
3	Benesch, Friedlander, Coplan & Aronoff	N/A	28	Littler Mendelson	76
4	K&L Gates	19	29	Baker & McKenzie	2
5	Goodwin Procter	38	30	Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr	21
6	Fitzpatrick, Cella, Harper & Scinto	189	31	Morgan Lewis & Bockius	12
7	Pryor Cashman	N/A	32	Bingham McCutchen	32
8	Duane Morris	72	33	Mayer Brown	8
9	Fish & Richardson	70	34	Allen Matkins Leck Gamble Mallory & Natsis	147
10	Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel	90	35	Reed Smith	16
11	Lane Powell	N/A	36	Nixon Peabody	63
12	Leonard, Street & Deinard	N/A	37	Mayer Brown	8
13	Latham & Watkins	3	38	Covington & Burling	54
14	Jenner & Block	81	39	Townsend and Townsend and Crew	148
15	Jones Day	4	40	Dickstein Shapiro	87
16	Debevoise & Plimpton	33	41	Shook, Hardy & Bacon	83
17	King & Spalding	40	42	Quarles & Brady	126
18	Crowell & Moring	91	43	Hunton & Williams	39
19	Manatt, Phelps & Phillips	106	44	Herrick, Feinstein	164
20	Winston & Strawn	34	45	Sills Cummis & Gross	196
21	Foley & Lardner	35	46	Cooley Godward Kronish	51
22	Goulston & Storrs	175	47	Curtis, Mallet-Prevost, Colt & Mosle	177
23	Hughes Hubbard & Reed	111	48	Gibbons	188
24	Howard Rice	N/A	49	Fenwick & West	134
25	Patton Boggs	80	50	Snell & Wilmer	115

*Ranking in 2009 AmLaw 200 N/A=Not listed on AmLaw200 Rankings