

Conveying Your Firm's Personality

By Jean Marie Caragher



While a firm's promotional materials will never actually close the sale, brochures and other communications materials play a vital role conveying the essence and personality of the firm telling its story in a creative and compelling way. If your firm's promotional materials are ready for an update, it is important to gather thoughts and impressions

from those who really know your firm.

A few questions to ask your partners and staff include:

- What does Jones & Day stand for?
- What are the unique strengths of Jones & Day?
- What attracted you to work here?
- What differentiates Jones & Day from its competitors?

Questions to ask your clients include:

- Why did you select Jones & Day?
- What do you see as the major strength of Jones & Day?
- What makes Jones & Day unique?
- What does Jones & Day offer that is superior to other accounting and consulting firms?

Based on the responses and utilizing other marketing research, including a competitive analysis, a design team can then provide branding options. This includes a logo, a tagline, and color selections, the foundation of a brand. After these initial decisions are made, the design of letterhead, business cards, envelopes, etc., follows. Then, the final component is a promotional package, which includes brochures.

Creating a new image is a commitment of both time and

money. The process can take an average of six to nine months and cost from \$25,000 to more than \$100,000, so how can you gain buy-in from your partners to make this investment?

First, remind them that managing partners are predicting a more competitive marketplace in the future. Do your promotional and communications materials differentiate your firm and accurately describe what clients can expect from working with your team? Second, form an internal task force of no more than seven members to lead the project. Members should represent the different departments, niches, and levels of your firm, understand marketing, and have the authority to make decisions. Third, the task force leader should be your firm's marketing professional or consultant. This person is responsible for communicating branding options, acting as a liaison with the designers and copywriters, seeking input from all task force members, and keeping the process moving forward.

The image you create for your firm must represent what it actually is, not what you would like it to be. It should convey a set of expectations of working with your team members and the services offered by your firm. Your efforts will backfire if you create an image that can't be delivered.

Don't underestimate the value that professional designers, copywriters, and consultants add to the process. Creating your firm's image is both an art and a science. You will benefit from working with professionals who understand the meaning of colors, design, and storytelling.

Creating a new image will rejuvenate your firm, differentiate it from your competitors, help you deliver more consistent messages to your constituencies, and focus your marketing efforts. **PA**



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