

# Reputation-Building Techniques for 2012

By Kimberly Alford Rice

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As a new lawyer, there are few proactive steps you can take that are as important as building a solid reputation among your various constituents (partners within your firm; peers; professional contacts, etc.).

Focus on beginning 2012 with a few simple steps you can integrate into your daily practice which will yield long-term benefits of developing a solid reputation as a formidable expert in your chosen area of practice:

- Keep your bio (print and online) up to date and include recent achievements. Presumably, you are an over achiever so the professional accolades are not far behind. Join a professional group, settle into a leadership position with the Bar association, or take a high profile role on your firm's charitable committee. Document these activities on your bio.
- Jump into social networking marketing by becoming actively involved in LinkedIn groups which align with your practice focus. If you have not "declared" yet, join a couple of legal-oriented groups (like Bar associations), alumni groups and/or general "young professional" groups in the area. The key here is to become active in these groups to demonstrate your leadership skills and burgeoning expertise. Actively seek connections within the groups to grow your network and reputation.
- Become a "go-to" person known for something specific...whether it's an area of law, a chosen "cause", or business topic...this is all part of creating your unique personal brand.
- Author articles and blog posts around a topic of particular interest and find a publication (print or online) to publish it. This lends third-party credibility to your writing and may be re-purposed many times over. It only takes scant online research to find a home for your writing and it's well worth the effort to resume and reputation-building efforts.
- Reach out to appropriate media to cultivate relationship and provide expert commentary. Building a strong reputation in the press can be a highly valuable exercise for business development purposes. Research who covers topics in your area of legal practice (sometimes it's the reporter who covers "legal" of a business publication) and offer relevant insights which may be helpful in future articles. Reporters are always scrambling to find reliable sources and often give preferential consideration to those who help them out.

Make 2012 a successful year in advancing your personal brand and professional reputation by taking thoughtful steps to enhancing your credibility in ways which reflect positively on you. You'll find that this is a cornerstone for professional development for the years ahead.