

# Turning Your Bio into a Magnet for Business

By **Larry Bodine**, a business development advisor based in Tucson and Chicago. For the last 19 years, he has helped law firms nationwide attract new clients and generate new business by using strategy, business development training and individual attorney coaching. See [www.LarryBodine.com](http://www.LarryBodine.com). He can be reached at 630.942.0977 and [Lbodine@LawMarketing.com](mailto:Lbodine@LawMarketing.com).



**Smart lawyers turn their bios into a marketing magnet that generates leads,** as opposed to a mere resume or a CV, which recites only your education and experience. **The trick is to turn a *feature* of yourself into a *benefit* to the client.** In other words, if you've done a particular activity, you need to answer the question, "So what?" If a client knows you've done something, how does that benefit them?

A "feature" is what something has, like a car with four doors or a new improved formula. A **"benefit" is what it does for clients:** "This car has four doors to accommodate growing families."

For example, consider a hardware-store drill. You look on the box and it tells you the volts and amps and RPMs, but **what you're really buying is a hole.** If you're buying lipstick, it can have a fancy formula, but what women are buying is something that makes them more attractive. And the same thing with pants. If it's got Lycra panels, what you want is to look ten pounds thinner.

## Benefits bring new business

This analysis applies directly to lawyer bios. Benefits are what will generate leads for you; they are going to turn your bio into something that's going to make people call you. If you're trying to reach businesses that want to retain you for legal services, they are looking for business benefits. They want to:

- Make more money
- Keep more money
- Save time
- Cut costs
- Reduce risk
- Importantly, they want you to make them look good

If a CEO client has a troublesome issue that he must present to the Board of Directors, you can work with the CEO to put a good spin on it; **you've just saved the CEO's job and made him look good.** Or, if its litigation and you're working with the CEO, you want the company to look good to the shareholders. **Those are the sort of benefits that clients are looking for.**

If you look at a lot of attorneys' bios, you'll find few there are not a lot of distinctions or differences between them. Many partner bios begin with "Mr. Jones is a senior shareholder and

is chair of the firm's corporate practice group. **He has 25 years experience.**" **So what?** These are features.

**Let's revise it to say:**

Mr. Jones is a senior shareholder in the firm's corporate practice, and can counsel you through your corporate transactions with the confidence and expertise clients seek. With more than 25 years of real-world experience, he knows how to bring many time- and money-saving solutions to your business problems.

Let's look at some of the changes. I kept in "senior shareholder" and "corporate practice" but the "so what?" is that he can "counsel you through your real estate and corporate transactions with the confidence and expertise clients seek." So, I extended the feature into having a benefit from the client's perspective. And what does having "more than 25 years of experience" mean for the client? "He knows how to bring many time- and money-saving solutions to your business problems."

What lawyers need to do is to provide proof points when they make an assertion in a bio. They must have some evidence or examples of what the assertion means for the client.

**Common features in bios**

Another common feature that appears in lawyer bios is the fact that they lecture or speak on particular issues. What might be a potential benefit?

- It shows you're up to speed in the latest trends and news.
- It shows people want to hear what you have to say.
- It makes it sound as if you are frequently in front of people like your client, so you're up to speed with their business.

**However your bio must *spell out these benefits expressly.***

Another feature that shows up on a lot of lawyer bios is "He has testified before the State Legislature, and has assisted legislators and their staff in drafting laws." If I were a client that was affected by their legislation, what would be the benefit to a client?

It shows you may have some influence and credibility. It demonstrates that you know how those laws are interpreted and executed. It may show that the lawyer has helped the Legislature pass certain bills into law. Again, it's taking a capability and turning it into something that matters to the client.

Some features have no benefits for clients, like she has "been an active member of the County Bar Association where she has served on the Bar Council." Clients expect you to belong to a bar association. They have no idea what the bar council is. The only benefit that I can see is to other lawyers who may send you a referral. However, for clients I would add "and many other lawyers refer their cases to this person, who is considered a 'lawyer's lawyer.'"

## A personal brand

Lawyers need to start to think about themselves as a personal brand. Ask yourself, "What do you want to be known for in the business community for the next year?" That's what should be translated into your bio and into activities you do to market yourself. What is it you would want to be known as if you were a product? Are you a Mercedes or a Hyundai?

You may have a great resume, but it will just list all the places that you worked. But when you go into practice, your bio should answer. "What have you done for people? What have you accomplished? How have you helped people? Can you give me some examples? Tell me the names of people that you've worked for?" Writing a bio is completely different from a resume. It really requires a mental shift.

## Elements to add to your bio

The general rule is that if there's something you're going to promote over the next year, it should be in your bio. Describe what you've done for businesses in your target industries, such as, "He helped put together a multi-family project for a large land owner."

If a client were searching your bio, the first thing they would ask is: "Do you work with people in the same circumstances that I am in?" So include the industries you've served and what you have done for them. And in the description of your representative transactions, be sure to include the results that you produced.

Remember - your bio needs to start out with a bang. Something like, "I help X people get what they want." What you're trying to achieve is like the lead paragraph of a newspaper article. First sentence just has to jump off the page and grab readers.

So as you examine your bio, identify everything that you think is a feature. The results of your past experience would be the benefits. Put in things that could be a conversation starter.

Also consider adding your avocations to personalize your bio. If you are an avid golfer or if you like to run in marathons, someone else may read it and say "Oh, I'm interested in that too!" For instance, in Chicago I am on the board of the Theodore Roosevelt Association, and it's an interesting collection of historians, lawyers, academics, writers and authors. That would be the sort of information that I would include in my bio, because it would illustrate:

1. I am interested in history.
2. I read.
3. I am an admirer of a particular historical figure.
4. I am on the board of the organization

## Getting found in Google

Your goal is to turn your bio into something that generates leads for you. You want your bio make people contact you for new business, and one aspect of that is getting found in Google.

Typically, the way general counsel pick a lawyer is they'll call up other general counsel and ask, "Whom do you recommend?" The next thing they are going to do is go online. You should load your bio with key words that are going to be attractive to somebody who is going to be searching for someone like you.

The idea is to use the words that an executive at a Google screen is going to type to find you. If you want to attract mergers, acquisitions, securities work and technology companies, use those words in your bio. The same thing works for a geographic area. If you want to attract clients in Europe, use the word Europe a lot. And the same thing applies to the kind of clients you work with. If you work with CEOs, boards of directors and special committees, use those terms.

I also want to call your attention to the power of testimonials. Remember, it is always much more impressive if someone else says something good about you instead of you saying "I'm the ultimate expert." I found some great testimonials on the website of Pillsbury & Levinson at <http://www.pillsburylevinson.com/CM/Custom/Client-Testimonials.asp>. The testimonials are all little stories. "I lost my Tahoe home..." [Okay right off the bat, 'Tahoe home' tells you this is a high net worth individual.] "...in a Christmas Eve fire...the insurance company used junk science to blame me for the fire and deny coverage...but the attorneys at Pillsbury & Levinson exposed them...the best part is working with Bobby Fischer...he told me what moves to make...he's the ultimate expert."

It all starts with a good bio, so that you can indeed get more business, attract more work, and make more money.

-----  
For more on this topic, call:

Larry Bodine, Esq.

Business Development Advisor

Tel: 630.942.0977

E-mail: [Lbodine@LawMarketing.com](mailto:Lbodine@LawMarketing.com)

Web: <http://www.LarryBodine.com>

Assisting law firms for 20 years:

- Training lawyers at firm retreats.
- Coaching lawyers to develop their personal marketing plans.
- Developing business development strategies.
- Using technology to market a practice.

