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**Paula Black** has advised law firms around the globe on everything from powerful and innovative design to marketing strategy and business growth. She is an award-winning Amazon-bestselling author and the force behind **In Black & White** ([inblackandwhiteblog.com](http://inblackandwhiteblog.com)), a blog dedicated to clear, straightforward advice and open discussion of legal marketing issues. For more information on Paula Black, her books and her company please visit [paulablacklegalmarketing.com](http://paulablacklegalmarketing.com).

## 5 Ways For Firms and Attorneys To Stand Out To Clients During Holiday Season

For many law firms holiday cards cause stress year round. From collecting and organizing your lists to choosing a card, to simply getting them mailed, it can often be more time consuming than an actual case. And for what? To be opened, looked at and ultimately thrown away. Don't waste money on a throwaway holiday card (or gift). Incorporate the holidays into your legal marketing plan and the results may surprise you. Here we present our top tips for making yourself stand out during the holiday rush.

### **Avoid the crowds.**

Meaning... holidays don't just mean Christmas and Chanukah. Instead of getting lost in a pile of so-called "holiday cards," time yours to appear alone. Sending a Thanksgiving card is one option. Not only does it eliminate any holiday bias (most everyone in the US celebrates Thanksgiving!), it's a good excuse to literally THANK your clients for their support and loyalty during rough economic times. Another option is to wait out the holiday season and send New Year's cards. It will accomplish the same thing and give you a chance to remind them of your relationship as they gear up for the coming year.

### **Make it personal.**

I can't stress this one enough. If you don't plan on individually signing each card, don't send them. Not everyone needs a personalized message, but everyone does deserve an actual signature. There is a huge difference between a stamp with your firm name and the signature of an actual human being. Don't fool yourself, your

clients will notice.

### **Be creative.**

If you decide to go the traditional route and send a card in December, be sure to put your own spin on it to avoid getting lost in the crowd. There are plenty of companies out there who will send you brochures full of cards with promises of making your life easy. Guess what? Your competition is getting the exact same sales pitch. For a nominal fee any good graphic design company can design and print a custom card for your firm. Be sure to incorporate your firm name or logo (or both) into the design so that your clients know exactly who the card is from without having to read the message. A former client of mine (known to be unafraid of creative marketing) went so far as to depict his firm logo driving a snow-covered sled on the cover of his card. It was so well received the attorneys received multiple e-mails and phone calls commenting on the design. Guess what? That translated into a memorable card, which translated into more business for the attorneys.

### **Give them something they can use.**

Forget the wine and cheese. Give clients something useful to their business and they won't forget it. For attorneys with smaller clients lists you may want to consider a great business or reference book (as in "I found this incredibly interesting and hope you do as well..."). Publishers will many times offer discounts for buyers who order in bulk, something larger firms might consider when perusing holiday gift ideas. Another client I worked with ordered books yearly through an Economist program. The book, basically a pocket World in Figures, not only acted as a fantastic desk reference book, but came completely packaged in his firm branding. From logo to tagline to back cover copy... everything shouted their firm name. Clients loved the gift so much, his support staff often spent weeks post-New Years sending more out to clients who wished to gift them to their own peers. Those books (complete with his firm branding) sat on potentially thousands of desks over the following year...and beyond.

### **Give back to the community.**

While working with charitable organizations is an excellent compliment to any marketing plan, never forget that it must come from a sincere place. If you choose to use the holidays to make donations why not get clients involved as well. It can be as simple as a mention in your holiday card ("We are happy to have made a donation in your name to Charity X") or as involved as hosting a holiday party to benefit your organization. One thing to always remember is

that personal connections are incredibly important. Let your clients know why this particular charity or organization is important to you, what they do and how you support them. It's a great way to inspire others and gives firms and attorneys an opportunity to show the human side of a business.

I always stress that smart marketing is in the everyday activity. It can find its way, even in the smallest of nuances, into everything you say, do...and send. Holidays are a great time to remind clients of your relationship, but don't get lost in the avalanche. Have a plan and make it count.