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How to Turn Attorney Biographies into Law Firm Marketing Tools

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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), 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.**

An attorney's bio, especially an online version, is one of their first methods of contact with potential clients. Whether people are shopping for representation or simply doing research on the firm, what's put out into the world should speak for you, not about you. By following a few simple guidelines and thinking of your bio as more of a marketing tool than resume, attorneys can create a powerful message.

Reflect your firm.

If your firm prides itself on a casual, friendly atmosphere, let it be known. Using your first name can immediately draw people in and create a warm connection to readers. If your firm takes pride in being a global powerhouse, "Mr." or "Ms." sends a clear message and a serious tone. The one thing to avoid? Nicknames. Even in the most casual office some nicknames are a bit too informal for a business setting.

Tell clients how YOU can help THEM.

Identify your client. Now put together the experience and/or cases that would interest them. A bio is not the place to list everything you have ever done; it's a place to highlight the expertise you have in a particular area. If you're currently litigating cases revolving around aviation, then a former career as a pilot would cause clients to take notice. If you're currently working in real estate, it's just a fun fact.

Don't limit yourself.

Many attorneys find themselves covering more than just one practice area and there's no rule that says you can only have one bio. Tailoring your bios to each practice area can be a helpful tool when meeting with potential clients. A general bio can highlight your overall accomplishments and additional area-specific bios can be a great follow-up tool.

Avoid the dreaded lists.

Edit yourself when it comes to memberships and awards. Keep descriptive paragraphs lively, short and informative, and banish listings to a separate space on the page. Keep them limited to only those organizations or awards that are recent or important to your practice. You can always create a full (longer) bio, available upon request.

Don't get personal.

Clients want to know how you can help them, not that you play second base for the firm softball team. Try not to include hobbies or personal interests under a business heading. If you want to include the information, create a separate element and label it "Life beyond the Law..." or "Life outside the firm..."

Keep it current.

Revisit your bio every three-to-six months (if not more) and take stock. Keep your information current and make sure you're speaking to the clients you want, not the clients you have already had.