MPF FEATURED ARTICLE

WHERE ARE WE NOW?
REVEALING THE LATEST TRENDS IN
LEGAL MARKETING AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

by

Legal Marketing Association and Bloomberg Law

February 15, 2019
Where Are We Now? Revealing the Latest Trends in Legal Marketing and Business Development

Results from a joint Legal Marketing Association and Bloomberg Law® research study - April 2018
Key Findings

In this 2018 joint survey from the Legal Marketing Association (LMA) and Bloomberg Law, we look at whether law firms are investing in marketing, shifts in legal marketer* roles and responsibilities, their relationships with attorneys and the increasing role of technology in marketing and business development. We take a pulse on the current state and analyze trends since our 2016 survey. With responses from 190 marketers and 135 attorneys, the results highlight where their perspectives align and where they differ. Overall, it’s clear that the pace of investment in marketing/business development and emphasis on these functions at firms of all sizes does not seem to be slowing down. And, this knowledgeable group of professionals continue to gain traction, voice and influence.

Level of Focus on Marketing/Business Development

Two years ago, 67% of both attorneys and legal marketers agreed that their law firm was increasing its emphasis/focus on business development and marketing efforts. Now, two years later, firms continue to invest at a high level, with 62% of respondents continuing to say their firm is increasing its emphasis/focus on business development and marketing efforts.

More good news for legal marketers is that 41% of attorneys reported hiring or increasing marketing staff as one of the top new investments in the past two years that have been most effective in developing new business. And, for 63% of respondents, the continued investment is not just in head count, but comes in the form of budgets that are projected to increase over the next two years.

Changing Roles and Responsibilities

There are also positive signs that attorneys are beginning to accept previous shifts in marketers’ roles toward greater involvement in business development, client relationship management and firm strategy. In 2016, we found that marketers and business development professionals had begun doing significantly more practice and process improvement, practice and business planning, firm strategic planning, client service and client relationship management. At that time, marketers were also focusing more on competitive intelligence, while pure business development professionals were engaging in more direct business development, as well as forming and managing client teams.

These new responsibilities have gained traction. Compared to 2016, there is a significant increase in the proportion of attorneys relying on business development professionals to complete marketing, business development and competitive intelligence tasks. This year we also see fewer attorneys engaged in six key marketing business development

* In our 2017 joint study on roles, responsibilities and structures, we found that marketing and business development departments are coming together to support growth initiatives, most often under one global head responsible for both functions. With 85% of firms having one single head or chief, throughout this report, we use “legal marketers” to refer collectively to professionals within law firms whose primary responsibility is for marketing, business development, public relations, competitive intelligence, pricing, business intelligence, internal communications, client relations and/or event management at their firms.
activities. Both attorneys and legal marketers agree they have a positive mutual relationship and that the top reason those relationships have gotten better is due to building credibility and trust. Attorneys and legal marketers also agree that marketers are providing valuable insights to attorneys and better understanding attorneys and their needs.

**Business Development Involvement**

The client-first mindset we reported both in 2016 and 2017 has continued, with legal marketers leading the charge through an increasing focus on holistic client management. A full 60% of legal marketing respondents reported involvement in direct business development efforts for their firms, most notably at the beginning and end of the client life cycle. At the beginning of the customer journey, they are most involved in initial client outreach and pitch meetings, and at the end of the cycle, they are most involved with client feedback interviews. When interacting directly with clients, legal marketers are most likely to engage with in-house counsel and other business professionals and are more likely than attorneys to engage with procurement professionals. One-third of legal marketers also interact with general counsel to drive business and enhance the client experience.

Overall, both attorneys and legal marketers report diversified relationships that include touch points with legal operations, procurement, compliance and risk professionals, as well as those in more general business roles. This multi-pronged approach helps to solidify the overall firm relationship with the client organization in a way that transcends any one individual or function.

**Demonstrating Value**

Internal pressures to increase revenue continue in 2018 to be the number one reason that both attorneys and legal marketers cite for their firm’s increased focus on marketing and business development. But we also saw growth in the number of legal marketers citing pressure from other law firms that are effectively using marketing as a key reason for this increased emphasis.

In reaction to these pressures, we see emphasis on direct client-facing business development activities (85% of attorneys; 60% of legal marketers). Both marketers and attorneys agree that the two areas that have been most effective for developing new business are client meetings and firm-hosted events, with cross-selling with other practice areas/attorneys and networking coming in third and fourth, respectively. Events are one of the largest marketing investments at most firms (20% of overall marketing budget per the LMA/Bloomberg Law 2017 study); therefore, it is no wonder that we have anecdotally seen an increased emphasis on making the most of this investment through more rigor and scrutiny to ensure a strong return on investment (ROI).

Perhaps as a result of this increased rigor and proven ROI, significantly more attorneys are looking for marketing assistance with firm-hosted events in 2018 than in 2016. Attorneys also ranked planning and executing events most positively when sharing perceptions of their firm’s marketing and business development functions.
Continued Investment

Law firms continue to increase their investment in marketing and business development activities to respond to internal and external pressures.

Budget Increases

As in 2016, roughly two-thirds of respondents agree that their firm is increasing its investment in marketing and business development activities. Only 5% of attorneys and marketers disagree outright with that statement, confirming that the vast majority of firms continue to invest in this area.

This increased emphasis is expected to come not only in terms of focus, but also in dollars and cents. A commensurate 63% of respondents, regardless of firm size, report an expected increase in their overall marketing/business development budget in the next two years. This is on top of the increases over the last two years reported by 55% of respondents. With this continued growth, perhaps law firms are finally moving toward the average 6.9% of revenue allocated to marketing by other industries.*

Catalysts for Investment

Attorneys and marketers largely agree on the catalysts for increased emphasis and focus on marketing and business development functions within their firms (see chart below). However, there have been two statistically significant shifts: In 2018, attorneys are less likely than they were in 2016 to perceive internal pressure to generate revenue as a catalyst, while marketers are more likely to cite pressure from other law firms. This may reflect an overall shift toward an outside-in viewpoint that prioritizes the external perspective provided by clients and the marketplace.

Entry of alternative service providers continues to stay at the bottom of the list, with fewer than 12% of attorneys and 14% of marketers citing this as a catalyst for increased marketing and business development investment. Similar to 2016, law firms do not yet seem to feel threatened to any great degree by innovative disruptors such as alternative service providers. Those may be mostly hype or they may be gathering new threats just around the corner. Either way, they are not yet dramatically impacting law firms’ behavior.

**Catalysts for Increasing Emphasis/Focus on Marketing and Business Development**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Catalyst</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More internal pressure to generate revenue</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate counsel reducing the number of firms they will work with</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure from other law firms that are effectively using marketing</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients are requesting new billing models</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trend towards corporate counsel in-sourcing more work</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demand for specialized expertise</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in number of RFP and auction-type bidding processes</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry of alternative service providers and new legal technologies</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. What are the perceived catalysts for increasing your firm’s emphasis/focus on law firm marketing and business development functions?
Most Effective Investments

Some of the most effective marketing and business development activities initiated over the past two years include increased social media efforts, investment in new technology, increasing in-person events and implementing business plans. (See chart below.) The top two initiatives from attorneys’ perspectives are increasing social media efforts (52%) and hiring/increasing marketing staff (41%). While marketers do deem social media efforts as effective (39%), those efforts were ranked lower by marketers than by attorneys. Perhaps this difference is because marketers adopted social media strategies early and those efforts have become table stakes for most marketers as opposed to an interesting new development. That said, we have anecdotally seen firms continue to become more sophisticated users of social channels.

Marketers also seem to be taking a longer-term view of new business development, focusing on a full range of investments including new technology, in-person events and business plans. At the top of the list for marketers in terms of effective investments is holding/increasing in-person events or client visits to foster direct relationships with clients (42%). This emphasis on in-person events carries through in other areas of the study as well, both for marketers and for attorneys, and underscores the focus on client relationships identified in 2016.

Particularly Effective New Marketing/Business Development Initiatives 
(over the past two years)

Q. Has your firm newly initiated or done anything differently in the past 2 years that has been particularly effective in developing new business?
Emphasis on In-Person Events
Not only are events cited as an effective new tactic, they are also cited by 67% of marketers as one of the most effective business development activities overall.

Attorneys cited firm-hosted events (45%) as the second most effective activity for developing new business, just behind client meetings (54%). The majority of attorneys also have a very positive perception of their marketing and business development team’s capabilities when it comes to developing, planning and hosting events.

Perhaps as a result of this confidence, we see firm-hosted events as one of the fastest growing areas in which attorneys would like significantly more assistance from their legal marketing counterparts in 2018. Attorneys may be starting to see the value legal marketers bring to these often high cost, highly visible activities through a systematic approach to planning and a focus on return on investment.

Attorney Perception of Marketing/BD Functions (2018) in Planning and Executing Events

Of attorneys would like to see more from their legal marketers when it comes to planning and executing events.

Q. What are your perceptions of your firm’s business development/marketing functions in terms of the following?

- Very Positive: 27%
- Positive: 43%
- Somewhat Positive: 24%
- Somewhat Negative: 2%
- Negative: 4%
- Very Negative: 1%
Challenges to Success

Success is never without its challenges, and that is the case with developing new business, marketing the firm and obtaining competitive intelligence at law firms. When asked about their greatest challenges, attorneys and marketers agreed that lack of time is their most pressing concern. Beyond that, attorneys were more likely to cite challenges with finding leads (53%) and getting meetings or face-time with potential clients (34%). Marketers were more likely to turn to internal pressures like insufficient collaboration or engagement among (59%) and with (35%) attorneys, lack of staffing and/or budget (35%), shortcomings of specific tools or resources (29%) and lack of overall support from the firm (24%). Unfortunately, these challenges have not changed much since 2016.

### Greatest Marketing/Business Development/Competitive Intelligence Challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Marketing/Business Development (%)</th>
<th>Attorney (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of time</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient collaboration and/or engagement among attorneys</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of proper staffing</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of budget</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient collaboration and/or engagement between attorneys and business development/marketing staff</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of guidance</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shortcomings of specific tools and/or resources</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty differentiating self/firm from the competition</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firm does not sufficiently understand/support the need for BD</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty finding leads for new work or new clients</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty getting meetings/face-time w/ potential clients</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. What are the greatest challenges you face in effectively developing business, marketing your firm, or obtaining valuable competitive intelligence?
Shifting Roles

Attorneys are beginning to cede marketing- and business development-related activities to the professionals, and legal marketers are taking on more responsibility at the beginning and end of the client lifecycle.

Marketers in the C-Suite

Legal marketers continue to gain a foothold in the C-suite, with titles like Chief Marketing Officer, Chief Business Development Officer and Chief Pricing Officer. Across firm sizes, half of respondents reported that their firms employ someone with a CMO title. Also, 2018 sees an increase in the number of CMO positions that have been in existence for 10 years or more, particularly at large law firms. Could that mean CMO titles first came into vogue at large firms just about ten years ago?

Large firms are also significantly more likely to employ someone as a CMO. With 82% of respondents reporting a CMO at their firm, this title has become nearly ubiquitous in firms of more than 200 attorneys.

Tenure of C-Suite Marketing Titles

Q. How long has your firm employed someone with the following title?

Chief Marketing Officer (CMO)

2016
2018

8%
8%

17%
16%

21%
26%

Chief Business Development Officer (CBDO)

2016
2018

6%
6%

9%
8%

5%
5%

Chief Pricing Officer

2016
2018

3%
3%

2%
2%

4%
2%

1%
Rise of Pricing

Chief Pricing Officer and Director of Pricing are newer titles within firms, but their existence continues to grow. In particular, large firms are statistically much more likely to have someone in these senior pricing roles than are smaller firms.

Not surprisingly, in addition to growth in these roles within the marketing and business development function, attorneys reported spending more time on pricing over the past two years. Nearly two-thirds of attorneys reported pricing as a marketing/business development activity they participate in regularly.

As the business of law continues to shift and clients demand new and different pricing models, we expect to continue to see more focus by attorneys and marketers alike on this important aspect of law firm management.

Tenure of Pricing Titles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chief Pricing Officer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 3 years</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to less than 10 years</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10+ years</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of Pricing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 3 years</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to less than 10 years</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10+ years</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Areas of Staffing Focus

While no two firms staff exactly the same, there is a strong correlation between the number of marketing/business development professionals and number of attorneys. In our 2017 study, we found that, on average, firms employ one legal marketer for every 25 attorneys.

In this year’s study, we asked about the functional areas where marketers spend their time. The data (chart below) shows a jump across functional areas when firm size reaches 300 attorneys. We took a deep dive into the data and identified the line between 200-299 attorney-firms and 300-399 attorney-firms to be the inflection point at which additional marketing and business development resources become more prevalent, especially in the generalist categories.

According to our 2017 report, firms with more than 300+ attorneys are statistically more likely to have marketing resources organized in regional or individual practice area support models. These 2017 statistics, viewed in conjunction with the 2018 findings, seem to suggest that practices and other groups within large firms may feel they need more focused support from resources dedicated to their specific needs. And, at the same time, these larger firms take on additional marketing staff to focus on specialized areas of expertise such as pricing, practice improvement and competitive intelligence.

Full-time Equivalents (FTEs) Per Function

Note: Number of FTEs is averaged and approximate and should be used only to compare relatively across functions, not as a real indicator of exact number of FTEs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of attorneys in firm:</th>
<th>6-99</th>
<th>100-299</th>
<th>300+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Development</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event Management</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Management</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development/Attorney Coaching on Marketing/BD Activities</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Relations</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice/Process Improvement</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pricing</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive Intelligence</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. How many full-time equivalents (FTEs) support each function within your firm?
Rise of the Specialties

Traditional marketing and business development functions, including attorney coaching and development, knowledge management, public relations and event management, take up the majority of time for most marketing and business development teams. However, there are several newer specialty areas that seem to be part of the puzzle, particularly within larger firms. **Practice and process improvement, competitive intelligence and pricing are coming into their own, with nearly half of all marketers reporting that their firms spend time on these activities.**

Percent of Respondents with FTEs in these Functions

- **Practice and Process Improvement**: 49%
- **Pricing**: 51%
- **Competitive Intelligence**: 57%
Marketers as Strategists

Two-thirds of both attorneys and legal marketers reported that the senior-most marketer in their firm participates in the firm’s strategic planning committee. Yet legal marketers are more likely to think they drive the strategic planning process for their firms or practice areas.

That said, at least half of both groups agree that legal marketers at their firm contribute to the strategic planning process, both firm-wide as well as within specific practice or industry groups.

Role of Marketing and/or Business Development Department in Overall Firm Strategy

![Role of Marketing and Business Development](image)

Q. Which of the following best describes the role your marketing and/or business development department(s) or functions play with respect to overall firm strategy?

- **Of respondents report that their top legal marketer participates in the firm’s strategic planning committee**
- **Of marketers say they drive the strategic planning process at the practice/industry group level**
Seat at the Table

With broader responsibilities, and more time in the C-suite, legal marketing professionals are increasingly gaining a seat at the table when it comes to making business decisions on a firm-wide level. To gauge this type of participation, we asked legal marketers and attorneys to indicate the level of involvement of their top marketer in some key decision-making bodies.

While we asked the question slightly differently last year, directionally, the lead marketer’s seat at these tables has increased in just twelve months’ time. Last year, the top areas for involvement as reported by marketers were partnership meetings (55%) and lawyer professional development (52%). This year we see a different picture that is corroborated by both the marketers and the attorneys.

Both attorneys and legal marketers agree: more than two-thirds of respondents say that in 2018 the top marketers in their firms are participating in strategic planning committees, lawyer professional development and other firm leadership meetings. Since 2017, reported participation of top marketers in diversity and inclusion committees, pricing committees and hiring committees also seems to have increased.

With this growing involvement in decision-making bodies, it is safe to say that legal marketers continue to be recognized for the value they bring and the positive impact they have on the business of law at their firms.

Firm Decision-Making Bodies in which Top Marketers Participate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision-Making Body</th>
<th>Marketing/Business Development</th>
<th>Attorney</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other firm leadership meetings</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyer professional development</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic planning committee</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership meetings</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity &amp; inclusion committee</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pricing committee/determining body</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firm-wide executive management committee</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring committee</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro bono committee</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation committee</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Direct Business Development

As business development has become a mainstay of most legal marketing departments, attorneys and marketers are working together to build and manage client relationships.

Sixty percent of marketers say they engage in direct business development activities on some level. However, for individual activities, attorneys are much more likely to engage in most of the activities examined. Marketers are just as likely as attorneys to implement project management or process improvement initiatives and to lead direct sales and more likely than attorneys to conduct client feedback interviews.

Seemingly, senior marketers (with >4 years’ legal marketing experience) are most likely to engage directly with clients at the beginning and end of the client lifecycle by initiating client outreach (59%) and participating in pitch meetings (52%), on the one hand, and conducting client feedback interviews (36%), on the other hand. At the same time, 44% of senior legal marketers also participate in client meetings with attorneys, not limited to any single point in the relationship lifecycle.

Q. Please specify the types of Direct Business Development activities in which you have engaged.
Client Contacts

Both attorneys and legal marketers have a broad array of touch points within client organizations, interacting with in-house counsel and other business personnel. **While attorneys most often interact with general counsel (70%) and other in-house counsel (64%), marketers most often interact with the business side of client organizations.**

These business professionals include compliance/risk professionals (13%), procurement specialists (23%) and other business professionals (40%).

That said, 23% of legal marketers do have direct interactions with general counsel, and 30% interact with other in-house counsel, setting a precedent in the minds of at least some clients for direct interaction between marketers and corporate counsel.

The relationships of the two groups complement each other nicely. This tag-team approach mirrors one long known to work in sales-oriented industries: 3x3 or 5x5 relationship building. In this model, the goal is to have 3-5 individuals from the sales side build relationships with 3-5 individuals from the buy side to create a broader, “stickier” long term connection between the organizations that is stronger than a simple 1:1 relationship.

### Direct Interactions with Client Organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attorneys</th>
<th>Marketing/Business Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General counsel</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal operations professionals</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other in-house counsel</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other business professionals</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement professionals</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliance/risk professionals</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. Please indicate with whom at your client(s) you interact directly.
Trusting Relationships

Marketing professionals and attorneys agree that their working relationship in 2018 is respectful, collaborative, supportive and collegial, with nearly all attorneys relying on their firm’s marketing and business development professionals.

Attorney’s Use of Marketing

Consistently, two-thirds of partners engage marketers for help with business development, marketing or competitive intelligence tasks. Attorneys overall are statistically more likely than they were in 2016 to turn specifically to business development professionals, creating a more balanced reliance on business development professionals and marketing professionals.

Interestingly, partners are no less likely to engage with junior marketers (<4 years’ experience) than they are to engage with senior marketers. This may reflect the experience levels of the talent available to them within their firms. Or, could it signal increased confidence by partners in marketers’ professional skill set generally and their abilities to perform these tasks at a high level due to professional training?

The willingness to rely on the professionals goes hand-in-hand with the fact that, from 2016 to 2018, we have seen fewer attorneys engaging in six distinct marketing-related tasks. The tasks attorneys are doing less of in 2018 are: client service/client relationship management, direct business development, forming/managing client teams, responding to RFPs, firm strategic planning and rankings/awards submissions. Over that same time period, marketers’ involvement in these activities has not declined or increased, suggesting that either there is less of this activity happening at firms (not reflected in our data) or attorneys are simply leaving the marketing to the marketers.

Top 10 Tasks Attorneys work with Marketing/Business Development Professionals to Accomplish

- Gathering Company Info: 57%
- Content Marketing: 54%
- Industry Research: 51%
- Responding to RFPs: 50%
- Public Relations: 48%
- Rankings/Awards Submissions: 46%
- Gathering Competitive Intelligence: 43%
- Social Media: 43%
- Developing Business Plans: 33%
- Cross-Selling: 30%

Of attorneys rely on marketers to perform marketing, business development and competitive intelligence tasks rather than others at their firms

Q. Which of the following tasks do you primarily rely on your business development/marketing or other staff to help you complete?
Marketer Optimism

The relationship between marketers and attorneys is reported by both as being generally positive. Marketers are, however, significantly more likely than attorneys to characterize the relationship as having gotten better over the past two years. Marketers must be a glass-half-full group because we saw the same positivity in the 2016 report as well, and they ranked each possible reason for the improvement more highly than did attorneys in this year’s study. Their instincts might be right, though, since directionally, attorneys are now less likely to think the relationship has gotten worse than in 2016.

Among marketers who believe the relationship is getting better, nearly three-quarters attribute that to more acceptance by attorneys of the support and value that marketers provide. 

Attorneys and marketers alike agree that the relationships have gotten better due to building credibility and trust (#1), and marketers providing valuable insights to attorneys (#2) and better understanding attorneys and their needs (#3).

### Contributing Factors to Improved Relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Marketer Acceptance</th>
<th>Attorney Acceptance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building credibility and trust</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing valuable insights to attorneys</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More acceptance by attorneys of the value that marketing/business development provides</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More acceptance by attorneys of the support that marketing/business development provides</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing a higher level of service to attorneys</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better understanding attorneys and their needs</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased one on one interaction</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better visibility in the firm</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased communication</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. What are the key contributing factors to your relationship with marketing/business development getting better?
Challenging Relationships

Attorneys are more likely to use words like “Supportive” (72%) and “Responsive” (65%) to characterize their relationship with marketers, whereas marketers are more likely to characterize the relationship as respectful (67%) and challenging at times (65% marketers vs. 17% attorneys).

Unfortunately, marketers are statistically more likely in 2018 to characterize their relationships with attorneys as “Challenging at Times” than they were in 2016 (63% vs. 53%) and are more than twice as likely to use the term “Unresponsive” (18% vs. 9%).

Separately, marketers also reported a 7% drop in the ease with which they are able to obtain buy-in from attorneys. The question, though, is whether the dynamic has really changed or whether this is due, at least in part, to different expectations of today’s legal marketers. Perhaps legal marketers, who are just as likely to have come from outside the legal industry as they are to have been previously employed at a law firm and have a stronger seat at the table, also have higher expectations of getting buy-in and respect. With more expertise, experience and visibility, legal marketers may likely expect a highly collaborative relationship with attorneys that is not yet the norm. As with many things in law firms, change – and its effects – can take time.

Q. Overall, how would you characterize your current working relationship with attorneys/marketers?

Respectful  Supportive  Collaborative  Responsive  Unresponsive  Challenging at Times
**Functional Perceptions**

When asked to share their perceptions of marketers when it comes to specific tasks, the majority of attorneys gave marketers positive/very positive marks for planning and executing events, supporting client pitches, enhancing attorney reputation and recognition, producing client communications, building brand awareness and contributing to firm strategy. **This mix of traditional and more strategic marketing roles reinforces that attorneys’ perceptions of marketers may be slowly evolving.**

By contrast, attorney coaching is at the bottom of this list, with just 34% of attorneys having a positive/very positive perception of this activity. Other areas of opportunity for marketers to improve attorney perceptions include generating media coverage (35%), competitive intelligence (36%), and effectively generating new business (36%).

On a positive note, “Integrating business development into attorney daily work flow,” at the bottom of the list in 2016, has moved up four places - the largest change since 2016 - with 40% of attorneys having positive/very positive impressions of this activity in 2018.

**Attorney Perceptions of their Marketing and Business Development Function**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Very Positive</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Somewhat Positive</th>
<th>Somewhat Negative</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Very Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning and executing events</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing support for client pitches</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting the enhancement of attorney reputation and recognition</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Producing quality client communications</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building brand awareness</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing to firm strategy</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. What are your perceptions of your firm’s business development/marketing functions in terms of the following?
Unmet Needs

The vast majority of attorneys are satisfied by the support they are getting from their marketing and business development teams. But, a quarter to a third of attorneys would still like to see more from legal marketers in a few areas.

Topping the list of areas where some attorneys would like additional help are public relations, competitor intelligence, business/industry research and branding. Areas where the need has grown most significantly are writing/blogging (from 16% in 2016 to 27% in 2018) and firm-hosted events (from 12% in 2016 to 27% in 2018). We also saw directional increases when it comes to the need for more help with business/industry research, branding, speaking engagements and content marketing. With a list this long and varied, it will be important for individual marketers to engage in conversations to understand specific needs at their firm and possibly have some tough conversations about prioritization and allocation of resources.

Unmet needs is one of the few areas in this year’s study where responses differed by firm size. Attorneys in large firms are more likely than those in smaller firms to deem the following as areas where they need more help: networking (30%), company information (25%), speaking engagements (27%), writing/blogging (27%), and responding to RFPs (28%).

Q. What area would you like more help with from your business development/marketing team?
Ubiquitous Technology

Firms continue to use a variety of technologies to support their marketing and business development functions, the most common of which are client relationship management software and business intelligence. However, lack of user adoption continues to be a primary challenge.

CRM and BI in Most Toolkits

It’s no surprise that larger firms tend to use a wider variety of tools when it comes to developing marketing, business development and competitive intelligence activities. What may be surprising is that nearly three-quarters of firms with more than 200 attorneys have implemented customer relationship management (CRM) software and business intelligence systems. And, nearly one-third have implemented software for proposal management and matter management.

When we combine current usage with perceived need, CRM tops the list with 82% of marketers citing its usage/need within their firms, setting it on the path to being ubiquitous at most firms. Also at the top of marketers’ wish lists are proposal management and content generation software, followed closely by pricing management software. Significantly, more marketers are looking to engage outside consultants this year (from 5% in 2016 to 12% in 2018).

Tools/Resources Used or Needed for Business Development, Marketing & Competitive Intelligence

Q. Which of the following tools/resources do you personally use with respect to developing business, marketing your firm, or obtaining valuable competitive intelligence?

Q. What additional tools/resources, if any, do you feel you need to make your job easier?
Most Helpful Tools

The old standbys of email marketing and social media tools top both attorneys’ and marketers’ lists when asked about technology most helpful for marketing and business development.

Where there is disagreement is on the helpfulness of CRM software. While a whopping 73% of marketers see CRM as helpful, only 23% of attorneys see it the same way. Why the big difference?

Perhaps, while attorneys are most often asked to put information into the CRM system, marketers are more likely the ones pulling information out, and using it to inform client management and new business activities such as client communications, pitches, proposal responses and cross-selling initiatives. This is a classic dilemma across industries - how to make the effort of putting information into a CRM worthwhile for the individuals charged with doing so. How can firms create systems and strategies to ensure that attorneys see the benefit too?

Types of Technology Deemed as Particularly Helpful

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technology</th>
<th>Marketing/Business Development</th>
<th>Attorney</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email marketing</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media tools (organic and paid)</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Litigation analytics tools</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current awareness aggregators</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing automation software</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online advertising</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. Which of the following types of technologies and tools do you deem particularly helpful in developing business, marketing your firm, or obtaining valuable competitive intelligence?
Lack of Adoption

Lack of user adoption and effective system/software integration are the two most prevalent places where technology is falling short in the eyes of marketers. Perhaps the differences in perceived value presented in the previous section are contributing to the lack of user adoption. Telling, and showing, the attorneys “what’s in it for me” will be an important aspect of the increased adoption necessary to make CRM a successful part of the marketing and business development toolkit.

Larger firms are more likely to cite a lack of effective system/software integration than smaller firms (49% in firms with >200 attorneys, 33% in smaller firms). That is not a big surprise considering larger firms tend to use a wider array of technology solutions and therefore have more to integrate.

Marketers with more than four years of experience and those at larger firms (33% and 36%, respectively) are more likely to think that improper roll-out/implementation is an area where technology is falling short.

Working within the firm and with technology partners to improve user adoption may be one of the most important ways for firms to get more from their marketing and business development technology investments.

Areas Where Technology is Perceived as Lacking

- Lack of user adoption: 46%
- Lack of effective system/software integration: 40%
- Lack of proper training: 33%
- Cost: 31%
- Improper roll-out/implementation: 29%
- Technology not tailored to law firm workflow or culture: 24%
- I do not feel technology is falling short at my firm: 18%
- Complex/difficult to use: 14%
- Other: 7%

Q. Where, if at all, do you feel that technology at your firm is falling short in terms of business development/marketing activities?
Survey Methodology

Survey Stats

190
Marketing/business development professional participants

135
Attorney participants, 65% partners

3/4
Of participants with more than 4 years’ legal marketing experience

50/50
Half of participants from firms of ≤199 attorneys; half of participants from firms of 200+ attorneys

67%
Of participants’ primary role spanned both marketing/communications and business development

Methodology

Online survey with sponsors identified
Invitations to LMA members and social media followers, as well as Bloomberg Law’s internal panel of legal marketers

Fielded

December 18, 2017 to January 22, 2018

Statistical Significance

Margin of error at 95% confidence level for total respondents is +/- 5.8%
Margin of error for subgroups is more

Qualifying Criteria

Law firm size >6 attorneys
Marketing or Business Development as primary role
Attorneys must engage occasionally or regularly in business development activities
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