The Top 15 Marketing and Sales Tricks Law Firms Use to Get You to Work There

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Conceptually, most law firms are very similar places to work. You are expected to sit down at a desk, bill hours, not get in trouble (or make trouble), and complain as little as possible.

There is nothing more important for law firms than appealing to the right sorts of attorneys to get them to go to work there.

Here are the marketing and branding messages law firms use to get people to work there.

The best marketing piece for a law firm I ever saw was written by Quinn Emanuel in 1996 when it had just 40 attorneys. It was written on cotton firm stationery, bound at a Kinko's, and handed out at law schools and mailed to potential recruits. The law firm wanted to grow, and it had put together a 50-page document that set it on a meteoric growth path that is still going on. The brochure highlighted such aspects as:

- Most of the firm's attorneys were on law review at top law schools and had done federal clerkships.
- There were several women partners and people of color at the firm.
- The law firm was the only one in the country to have no dress code.
- People could make partner quickly at the law firm -- one just did in three and a half years.
- The law firm represented the largest and most influential clients in the country.
- Most of its partners were from Cravath and other top law firms.
- All young attorneys went to court and did trials -- "they were trial lawyers, not litigators."
- The lawyers were casual with one another, and there was no hierarchy.
- Lawyers worked directly with clients as soon as they started and did not have to wait years to do so.
- The law firm did retreats together each year; everyone got together for drinks on Fridays.
- The firm had several students from Harvard Law School who had been at the very top of their graduating class.
- The majority of the attorneys had gone to Ivy League law schools and done well there.
- People could make a great deal of money at the firm (as much as in major firms).
- The law firm was called on to handle the biggest "bet the company" cases.
- The law firm had so much work; you did not need to bring in clients to make partner or advance.

All of this was true. The law firm had done a brilliant and effective job of positioning itself for growth and success. It appealed to the sorts of attorneys it wanted -- people who were very smart but did not necessarily want to go to the largest law firms. After the law firm grew, it started saying other things about itself to appeal to a different demographic, one wanting "established" and "international law firm," the "largest pure litigation law firm," and other things; however, at the time, this worked -- and it was all true. Identifying many things about a law firm that makes it unique is how you sell the firm to attorneys and get them to work there. If a law firm is going to make money and grow, it needs to get people to work for it and do so enthusiastically.

Conceptually, most law firms are very similar places to work. You are expected to sit down at a desk, bill hours, not get in trouble (or make trouble), and complain as little as possible. In return for this, you will get paid a certain amount of money.

There is nothing more important for law firms than appealing to the right sorts of attorneys to get them to go to
work there. It needs to look like the best option for the kinds of attorneys the firm wants to hire. A law firm will do all sorts of things to appeal to attorneys to get them to work for it and stay at work billing hours. To do this, law firms need to portray themselves as different from the competition and better—and speak to you in some method. They need to look like the best option among the thousands of firms out there in the market you can choose from. In reality, attorneys decide where to go to work for a limited number of reasons. Law firms need to figure this out when they are interviewing you and marketing themselves to prospective law students and laterals because the "best" marketing pitch is what gets most attorneys to go there.

Over the past twenty-plus years, I have been in this business. Attorneys have given me all sorts of reasons for either taking or not taking offers, interviews, and applying/not applying to various law firms. Here are the marketing and branding messages law firms use to get people to work there.

1. The Money the Law Firm Pays Will Determine Whether Attorneys Go to Work There

Without a doubt, money is one of the most critical factors in an attorney's decision about whether or not to join a law firm. If the pay is right, many attorneys will ignore numerous other factors to take a position there. This can be a good thing and a bad thing.

When I was practicing law a few decades ago, most law firms in Los Angeles, including the largest and most prestigious law firms, paid $85,000 a year to third-year associates. A few other law firms -- Dewey Ballantine and Skadden Arps among them -- were on a New York scale that was $155,000 a year.

While I enjoyed myself at Quinn and had a good experience, the salary differential between what I was offered at Dewey and Quinn was too much to pass up. The cultures were also incredibly different. Dewey was formal and hierarchical, and Quinn was open and fun. Quinn had a ton of work, and Dewey had hardly any. When I arrived at Dewey, I did not have anything to do for three weeks because the firm did not have any work! Going there was a huge mistake, and it would continue to worsen with partner defections, botched mergers, partners getting let go, and more. It was not a great place to work, and being guided by money was a huge mistake. At the time, the law firm was throwing off crazy amounts of profit in New York and subsidizing its Los Angeles efforts with this -- but I could never have known it then.

Money is significant to attorneys in deciding which firm to work in, and it can convince the young and nave (like myself) to leave good firms and make disastrous career decisions in pursuit of it. In fact, for many attorneys, it is one of the most critical aspects of their employment with a law firm. Partners, associates, and everyone are very concerned about:
- How much associates are paid at each class level (how much do salaries increase year after year).
- Whether or not the salary is lockstep or based on hours and performance.
- How law firms compensate attorneys for business brought in.
- Whether participation in committees, pro bono, and business development is counted towards hours billed.
- What salaries mean and equate to in different markets (for costs of living purposes, a salary in New York needs to be almost twice of what it would be in Chicago to be equal and nearly three times what it would need to be in Austin, Texas, to be the same).
- Do law firms pay year-end bonuses or bonuses throughout the year.
- Do law firms offer bonuses for attorneys doing clerkships.
- Does the firm pay longevity-bonuses.
- Factors that determine bonuses.

The reasons attorneys give for choosing law firms based on the amount of money attorneys are paid.

"The firm made me the best offer."
"I can make more money there."
"They pay much more than I am making now."
"I could not resist the offer and the amount they are paying."
The reasons attorneys give for not choosing law firms based on the amount of money attorneys are paid.
"They do not pay enough."
"I have student loans."
"I need to make more money."
"The law firm does not pay big bonuses."

How law firms use and market the money they are paying to get you to work there.

If a law firm pays a lot and offers large bonuses, everyone in the market finds out about it quickly anyway. The law firm does not need to say very much about it publicly at all. Once word gets out, attorneys will flock there like parched animals to a waterhole in the middle of the desert. After I got a job at Dewey Ballantine, all of my friends from Quinn started sending me their resumes because they wanted to get jobs there, paying as much as I was making. All a law firm needs to do is spend a lot of money, make that evident in offer letters and word quickly gets around about the law firm’s generosity and how much it pays.

In the case where the law firm does not pay a lot, it will do and say numerous things to convince you that money should not govern how you think about things:
"We do not pay as much, but everyone here can make partner."
"We are a lifestyle firm, and people do not work as hard as in the large law firms."
"Other firms require you to buy into being a partner, but our buy-in pays you a lower salary until you are a partner."
"We do not pay as much, but there is more employment security."
"Our salary and bonuses are "merit-based," so you can make more than at bigger firms if you work harder."
"Our work is more interesting than at the higher-paying law firms, and our attorneys give up money in exchange for that."
"You will get a better early experience than at the higher-paying law firms and become a better attorney."
"You will get more client contact than at the higher-paying firms and be responsible for your matters."
"We do not pay as much, but we also do not lay people off when the market slows down."

See also:
How to Become Extremely Rich Practicing Law
Why Money Is the Dumbest Thing Any Attorney Should Focus on When Joining a law Firm: How Attorneys Destroy their Happiness and Legal Careers by Focusing on Money

2. The Reputation of the Law Firm Will Determine Whether Attorneys Go to Work There

Attorneys are very aware of the reputation of law firms. There are various rankings of law firms in the market that attorneys review before deciding where to work. The law firm's reputation is typically the second most important aspect of it that attorneys consider before going to work there. Attorneys base their understanding of the reputation of law firms on:
The opinions of their peers of the law firm.
What people on law firm opinion sites say about the firm.
Where the students with the best grades get jobs.
How much the law firm pays.
The sorts of clients the firm represents.
The firm's reputation for being a difficult place to work.
How accomplished the attorneys working at the firm are in terms of their educational achievements.
The age of the firm.
If people know about the firm all over the country.
The size of the firm.
Whether or not former Supreme Court clerks and other top attorneys choose the law firm as a place to work. How much money partners in the law firm make. The law firm's reputation in your practice area. The absence of scandals affecting the firm. The reputation of the firm for laying off or not laying off associates. Famous people who have worked at the firm. BCG Attorney Search Top Law Firm Rankings. Vault Rankings. Chambers Rankings. US News Rankings. Local city and market rankings. What the law firm says about itself in its promotional brochures. How others will perceive you if you take a job at the law firm.

The reasons attorneys give for choosing law firms based on their reputation.

Most attorneys choose law firms based on the law firm's overall reputation in the market. If they get an offer from the law firm with the best reputation, they will take this. Even many older attorneys who have been practicing 30+ years try and gain positions in the best law firms. The reputation of a law firm reflects on the attorney and their presumed worth in the market. Lawyers believe that going to a better firm with a better reputation means:
Access to better quality work.
More money.
The ability to more easily move laterally later on (either to another law firm, in-house or to the government).
Better training.
A better long-term resume if they work there.
More prestige and respect in the legal community.
The ability to become a better lawyer by those you associate with.
More significant long-term potential if you become a partner.

However, a law firm is a "tribe" of sorts, and most attorneys want to be in the best tribe they can be associated with. It is as simple as that. Incredibly, most attorneys will consider leaving their jobs if they get an offer from a firm with a much better reputation.

The reasons attorneys give for not choosing a law firm based on its reputation.

When an attorney does not choose a given law firm based on its reputation, he often does not explicitly say it is due to reputation. Instead, he says he is not interested in the law firm for trivial reasons. While most attorneys are interested in the most prestigious law firms, many are not.
"I heard some bad things about the firm."
"I do not think working there would help my resume."
"I am nervous about how it would look if I went to work there and wanted to work somewhere else."

How law firms use their reputation to get attorneys to work there.

As with salaries, most attorneys are aware of the law firm's reputation before they even interview there. However, to the extent people are not, the law firm will do things such as
Tell attorneys that those in the firm are considered the best in the city for a certain type of work.
Highlight the accomplishments of individual attorneys who work there.
Talk about attorneys who chose their firm over more prestigious law firms.
Talk about clients that chose their law firm over more prestigious law firms.
Tell the attorney that very few people can get offers and interviews there, and they are special.
Talk about how the firm is growing.
If the law firm is old and established, it can discuss this and its history.
If a law firm is having reputational issues, it can respond to that and make them look positive. If a law firm is experiencing defections, issues in the media, and more, it will make statements such as the following to counteract this:

"The people we did not want are the ones that left; now, the firm is stronger."
"No one here was involved in the scandal, and our clients are all sticking with us."
"The worst is behind us, and now we are getting stronger."
"There is young leadership here now, and they are doing everything differently."
"Our best people are still here."
"We have a lot of room for growth now."
"We have a new business model that is going to do very well."

See also:
Firms with Bad Reputations
Can You Be Trusted? Why Credibility is One of the Most Important Characteristics of the Most Successful Attorneys

3. Law Firms Use Their "Unique" Culture to Get People to Work There

The firm's culture is a difficult concept to define; however, in general, it means that an attorney will be comfortable around the sorts of attorneys working there. Culture is important. Because attorneys typically spend more time at work than with their families, the culture of the group of the people they are working with is extremely important.

Culture can be defined by things such as:

How important the attorneys consider making money. If the law firm thinks making money is important to you, it will tell you how much money the attorneys make.

How honest the attorneys are likely to be in business. Law firms will tell you they refuse to work with certain types of clients they disapprove of and always take the high road in business.

What the law firm stands for. If the law firm thinks you favor work-life balance, they will talk about this. If the law firm thinks doing the best work that can be done is essential, they may emphasize this.

For every possible cultural attribute, the law firm will have a method for "hooking" you.
How the attorneys interact with one another.
The sorts of behaviors the law firm considers necessary and important.
The sorts of attorneys the law firm considers role models.
How different attorneys fit in with one another.
The degree of hierarchy between the attorneys in the office.
How attorneys and staff address one another.
The sort of work that people aspire to do at the firm.
Whether an attorney in the firm grew up working class, middle class, or with another socioeconomic background.
How the law firm treats staff.
How fit the attorneys in the firm are.
How the law firm hires people.
Are doors of attorneys opened or closed?
What comes to mind when people think about the firm.
How attorneys dress in the firm.
The area of the country where the majority of the attorneys are from.
Whether people like to drink alcohol.
The dominant political party of the attorneys in the firm.
Whether there is an adversarial relationship with clients (the client is wrong, we need to bill as much as possible) or whether clients are thought of in a more positive way.
How important the attorneys think pro bono and helping others is.
How staff attorneys, paralegals, and others doing legal work who are non-attorneys are treated.
Whether the attorneys are the type who would have been in sororities in college.
The types of vacations people in the firm take.
How people of different races, sexes, sexual orientations, and backgrounds interact.
The dominant religion of the people working in the firm.
Whether lawyers are friendly to each other and staff or can be abusive.
Whether people in the firm smoke or vape.

**How people in the firm dress.**
Do the attorneys socialize outside of work?
How people in the firm spend their free time outside of work.
The emphasis (or lack of it) on business development and similar activities.
How intellectual (or nonintellectual) the attorneys are.
What types of jobs people have gone on to (and want to do) after leaving the firm.
How competitive attorneys seem with one another.
Whether or not the firm is composed of lots of athletes (or former athletes).
How important the attorneys think where they went to school is.
Whether or not the majority of people in the firm are married, not married, or divorced.
The sorts of music people in the firm enjoy.
Whether the majority of men there shave or do not shave.
How attorneys in the firm decorate their offices.
How attorneys treat each other when things do not go well.
Whether the law firm grows primarily through its summer program or lateral hiring.
How neat the desks are of the attorneys working there.
Whether people belong to any sort of outside clubs.
How much the attorneys in the firm care about how other attorneys perceive them outside the firm.
The neighborhood people in the office live in.
How many of the attorneys have families.
The sorts of cars people in the firm drive.
How loud or quiet the law firm seems.
What types of clients the firm represents.
How happy the attorneys in the office seem.
The part of the country where the firm is headquartered.

**The reasons attorneys give for choosing law firms are the culture when the law firm's marketing and branding work.**

Attorneys join law firms all the time based on the perceived culture of the law firm. One of the most important aspects of joining a firm for many attorneys is the culture of the firm and how comfortable they feel there. If the firm’s culture matches the attorney, they are much more likely to join and be part of the firm. If the culture feels right, an attorney is expected to choose the firm over competing offers based on this alone.

“I liked the people best there.”
"I felt more comfortable there than at other law firms.”
"The partner I would be working for drives the same car I do."
"Even though I will be working in New York, the law firm is in Texas, and I am from Texas and feel comfortable there."
"Many guys in the firm also like rugby, and I could see myself doing stuff with them."
"Many attorneys would be misfits in other firms, and I am comfortable there too."
"I'm comfortable there because there are a lot of people who follow the same religion."

**The reasons attorneys give for not choosing a law firm due to the culture.**
When an attorney encounters a law firm whose culture makes him uncomfortable, he typically will recoil from it and realize he will not be comfortable there. If someone is not satisfied with a law firm's culture, he is less likely to stay, be happy there, and work out.

"The people are weird."
"I did not feel comfortable there."
"The attorneys did not seem happy."
"All anyone does there is work."
"The people did not go to good schools as I did."

How law firms use and market their culture to make you comfortable working there.

Law firms will tell you about how unique their culture is and show you aspects of their culture they think will appeal to you. They will introduce you to people like yourself to make you feel that you are in the right culture. If you are from a specific background, they will try and get you to speak to people like yourself. They will introduce you to attorneys who went to your school, who share the same religious background, who look like you, and who they believe you will be comfortable with. If they sense certain things are important to you, they will emphasize these with you to get you excited about working there.

I walked into an interview once, and an attorney started chewing tobacco -- in Los Angeles. I loved this and joined him and was sold on working there immediately. I could not imagine someone would be doing this in a law firm and loved it. I felt comfortable that he was comfortable chewing tobacco. He would not have done this had he sensed I would have been offended by this, and it was a smart move.

See also:
Guide to Law Firm Associate Hiring, Training, and Promoting
Why The Culture of the Law Firm You Are Working for Will Determine How Happy and Successful You Are Practicing Law

4. Law Firms Market Themselves by Making Their Firms Seem Exciting and Emphasize the High Morale of the Attorneys

Law firms go through different seasons -- and in some seasons they appear like they are doing very well and people are excited. This can be when the firm is expanding and doing everything right. In other seasons the opposite is occurring, and the firm looks like there is not a lot of work. Law firms go through periods when they are wild and fun while others seem to be going backward.

A law firm may become the "it" place to work after major media successes: a large case, verdict, or transaction.

Law firms might recruit a "star" attorney in a practice area or a group that makes them attractive.

The law firm could be growing very quickly and get on other people's radar due to this.

There may be something unusually attractive about the firm's business model that gets people excited.

I've walked into firms where people seemed genuinely angry and upset. Other law firms give off the opposite impression, and people seem happy and excited.

Reasons attorneys give for choosing a firm based on its morale and perceived excitement include.

"Everyone seems excited about working there."
"People keep telling me that it is a great place to work."
"The firm "feels" different and like a great place to work."
"People in the firm seem happy and excited."
"There is a lot of "energy" in the firm and among the people there."
"Everyone gets together outside of work."
"The law firm takes fun retreats."
"All of the people there are young."
"The firm is growing and doing stuff right."
"No one is leaving, and people stay."
"They have a plan, and everyone is excited about this and behind it."

Reasons attorneys give for not choosing firms based on the morale and excitement of the firm.

"People do not seem happy there."
"There is no excitement there, and the firm feels dead."
"The firm feels 'low energy.'"
"The law firm feels "siloed," and partners do not share clients."
"There is a lot of turnover."
"The firm feels like it is aimless."
"Everyone is old and slow."
"No one is making partner."
"There is nothing special or unique about the firm."

How law firms market themselves by making their firm feel exciting and seem to have high morale.

Law firms want to make people excited about choosing to work there. To do this, law firms will talk about things such as:

How young everyone is.
The energy of the people.
That attrition is low, and people rarely leave.
That everyone is excited.
Everyone works together as a team.
People stay here for the people.
We take trips and do stuff together that is fun.

See also:
The One Easy Fix That Will Make You Happy Practicing Law

5. Law Firms Market Their Commitment to Diversity to Get Attorneys to Work There

Diversity is significant for attorneys. When young attorneys get together and talk about firms, a firm’s diversity is something that comes up all the time. Please see my book about law firm diversity here.

When there is no law firm diversity, diverse people do not feel comfortable there and leave -- or do not join. The law firm then ends up with a feedback loop where it is hiring and bringing in the same types of people over and over again. Not being diverse hurts the ability of the firm to attract clients who demand diversity from their law firms and prevents attorneys from generating business.

Diversity is so important to law firms that most of them now feature statements about diversity and their commitment to it at the top of their websites. They have long sections about diversity that cover just how diverse they are.

Attorneys measure the diversity of firms based on such things as:
The number of people of different races, religions, and sexual orientations at the firm.
How tolerant the law firm seems of different viewpoints and different types of people.
The diversity of the staff of the firm.
Whether there are people of different political parties in the firm.
The presence of people from different economic, education, and other backgrounds.
Whether or not there are people in power in the firm who are diverse.
How comfortable diverse people in the firm seem.
The law firm's tolerance for different viewpoints.
The law firm's lack of tolerance for people who seem like they may have done something against a diverse work environment.
Online rankings about diversity in the firm.
The firm's outward statements about its commitment to diversity.

The reasons attorneys give for choosing a law firm based on its diversity.
"There are people of the attorney's race and background."
"There are good mentorship programs."
"The diverse attorney feels comfortable."
"The law firm serves diverse clients."
"The law firm is committed to diversity and being diverse."
"The law firm is not afraid to hire people with diverse viewpoints."
"People in power are diverse."

The reasons attorneys give for not choosing law firms due to a lack of diversity.
"It is not a suitable environment for diverse attorneys."
"Everyone there is white and male."
"The law firm does not care about diversity."
"All of the diverse attorneys are leaving."
"Diverse people do not do well there."
"They were sued recently for ______ (sexual harassment, racism, not making women partners)" -- and similar statements.
"I would be extremely uncomfortable there."
"The leadership of the law firm is ancient."

How law firms market their diversity to potential recruits and current attorneys.

Diversity is vital to attorneys and clients. Law firms will do everything they can to market this. They will participate in diversity fairs. They will create diversity sections on their website. Many law firms have diversity directors. They will highlight all of their diversity in marketing materials. For existing attorneys, many law firms have special diversity-related training. Diverse attorneys will be introduced to other diverse attorneys in interviews. Law firms will make sure that recruits and others understand their commitment to diversity.

See also:
Helpful Diversity Resources
Law Firm Diversity: How Race, Gender, Age, Social and Economic Division Impact the Hiring, Retention and Advancement of Law Firm Attorneys

6. Law Firms Use the Advancement Potential of Attorneys Working There to Market Themselves

Most attorneys joining law firms are concerned about getting ahead. Many attorneys do not take this seriously when they are younger but take it more seriously when older.

Attorneys judge advancement potential based on such things as:
How easy or difficult it is to make partner.
How easy it is for partners to advance within the firm and increase their compensation.
Whether or not the attorney can get more responsibility in his practice area.
Whether most partners are hired laterally or come from within the firm. Whether attorneys need to leave once they reach certain seniority (or whether they can stay). What advancement looks like (what sort of compensation will you make if you advance).

**Reasons attorneys give for choosing law firms based on advancement potential.**

"It is easy to make partner there."
"The law firm does not let people go if they do not make partner."
"It is a smaller firm, and I will be able to advance compared to working in a big firm."
"I will have a lot of opportunities to grow as an attorney."
"I can make partner there without getting business because the firm has so much work."
"The firm will teach me how to bring in clients."
"I will have a budget for client development that is unlimited."
"The partner I will be working for is close to retirement and needs someone to take over his business book."
"There is a younger leadership, and I will be able to be part of this."

**Reasons attorneys give for not choosing firms due to a lack of advancement potential.**

"It is difficult to make partner there."
"Everyone leaves after a few years."
"They do not need any partners."
"They have not made a partner in this branch office ever."
"Everyone is asked to leave when they have about eight years of experience."

**How law firms convince attorneys to grow based on advancement potential.**

"If you stay, your odds of making partner are excellent -- most people leave, though."
"Our partners earn a lot of money, and you can do very well here."
"If you do good work, you will be made a partner."
"We make more partners than any other similar firm in this market."
"You actually can make partner here compared to a larger law firm."
"We will show you how to generate business."
"We will take you out on client pitches."
"We will give you a client development budget."
"We have large institutional clients and do not need you to bring in work to become a partner."

7. **Law Firms Market the Fact that they Have a Lot of Work to Get Attorneys to Work There**

Law firms often promote they have a lot of work as a competitive advantage when recruiting attorneys. There are many reasons that it is useful for attorneys if their law firm is busy.

If a law firm is very busy, that means attorneys will typically have some measure of employment stability there. The law firm needs people to do the work.

Busy law firms are also most often doing something correctly in the market from a business standpoint that keeps them busy.

Busy law firms have upward mobility for their attorneys if this work is throwing off enough money.

Busy law firms also often have a lot of learning, training opportunities, and attorneys' ability to do a lot of different types of work.

Busy law firms also rarely lay people off.

Busy law firms can give attorneys experience doing a lot of different things.

Busy law firms most frequently pay bonuses to hold on to attorneys and keep them working.

Busy law firms frequently have better support staff.

Busy law firms most often pay bonuses, and people make their hours.

Busy law firms frequently pay their partners more.

Busy law firms typically pay the most.

**The reasons attorneys give for not choosing firms because they are busy.**
Although the busiest law firms most often have the most opportunities, attorneys frequently do not choose the most active firms and, instead, run from them. Attorneys often do not want to work in busy firms because they believe busy law firms:

- Are sweatshops with inhuman working conditions.
- Attorneys are only needed to do the work and not be valued for their future ability to bring in work.
- There are few opportunities to make partner because the law firm already has enough work.
- Personal relationships are not valued with partners because there is so much work to go around.
- Do not value your personal life outside of work.
- Will crush their spirit.
- Will negatively affect their health.
- Will expect them to leave after they get senior.

**How law firms convince attorneys to go there based on being very busy.**

Typically, a busy law firm will make statements such as:

- "Being busy means it is easier for attorneys to make partner."
- "There will always be work to do."
- "We are growing, and this is exciting."
- "You will be able to make your bonus."
- "All of our work means you will get better and more early experience."
- "You will get more experience doing lots of different types of work."
- "You will be able to make the hours needed for your bonus."

See also:

Is Lack of Work on Joining a New Firm Common?

8. Law Firms Market Their Expertise in Certain Practice Areas to Get People to Work There

Many attorneys choose firms based on the law firm's reputation in a given practice area and its rankings there:

- The dollar volume of a specific type of deal.
- A reputation for exclusivity in a given practice area.
- The perception in the market that the law firm is the "go-to firm" in a given practice area.
- The number of attorneys in a given practice area.
- The quality of attorneys in a practice area.
- The awards of attorneys in a certain practice area.

How the firm compares to other attorneys in the market in a certain practice area.

**Reasons attorneys give for choosing law firms based on the practice area.**

- "The firm is the "only game in town" in my practice area."
- "The firm does nothing but my practice area and is the best place for what I do."
- "The firm is strongest in my practice area."

**Reasons attorneys give for not choosing law firms based on the practice area.**

- "There are only a few attorneys in my practice area there."
- "The firm does not have an excellent reputation in my practice area."
- "The firm does not get the best work in my practice area."
- "My practice area supports other practice areas in the firm and does not generate work of its own."

**How law firms market their expertise in a given practice area to get attorneys to work there.**

- "If you want to get public company work, we are the best place to do it."
- "We are the only firm that does serious private equity in town."
- "The largest and most sophisticated companies use us for their patents."
- "There is no other firm that will give you as much trial experience."
"We get all of the best cases."
"There is no better place to get experience in your practice area than here."

9. Law Firms Market Connection, Mentors and Other Forms of Support to Get Attorneys to Join the Firm

Many attorneys are persuaded to join law firms when they believe that they will get the opportunity to work with certain other attorneys, or there are attorneys there who will protect them. They also are lured in by the fact:

- There is someone very highly regarded at the firm they want to work with.
- Another attorney recruits the attorney to the firm and takes an interest in them.
- The attorney believes certain people in the firm will protect them.
- The attorney feels that they are welcome at the firm, and people in power will help them.

**Reasons attorneys give for choosing law firms based on their perception they will have support, mentors, and other forms of support to work with a certain attorney at the firm.**

- "I am going to get to work for the attorney considered a huge expert in my practice area."
- "If I work there, I will be working with a couple of my friends I know will have my back."
- "I feel that if I join this firm, people can train me in aspects of practice that I am not getting where I am now and make me a better attorney."

**Reasons attorneys give for not choosing law firms based on mentors and getting to work with certain attorneys at the firm.**

- "I do not feel like I have anyone who is training me on what I need to succeed."
- "I do not feel like there are people who will go to bat for me."
- "I feel completely alone at the firm."

**How law firms use mentors to get people to join.**

To get attorneys to believe that someone in the firm will be in their corner, many law firms will do such things as:

- Have them interview with older attorneys who might take them out for drinks or a meal to bond with them.
- Recruit people the firm knows or has worked with in the past to create a bond.
- Have attorneys give other attorneys advice about other law firms they may be interviewing with during interviews.
- Promote mentorship and programs when attorneys are interviewing.

The most common tactic law firms use is to have the prospective attorney go out with an older attorney he will be working with and have a one-on-one meeting over drinks or a meal. This is a very effective strategy. During these meetings the older attorney will ask questions about the younger attorney’s hobbies, tell the younger attorney something about himself and get to know the other person much better. This makes the younger attorney feel like there is someone in his corner. This strategy is used by both large and smaller firms alike and works very well. Most young attorneys need this connection to feel comfortable and supported and join firms alone.

See also:
**Taking Charge of Your Mentoring Experience**

10. Law Firms Market their Office Location to Get Attorneys to Work There

The location of the office is critical to many attorneys. This is especially so in sprawling places such as Los Angeles, where firms are so scattered around the city it could take two hours driving in traffic one way to get to the office. I hear attorneys turning down offers and not even going on interviews when they do not like where the firm's offices are. This happens all the time.
"Is the office in the city or a suburb?"
"Is the office in the best part of the city?"
"Is the firm in an area where there is often a lot of traffic?"
"Is the firm close to public transportation?"
"Is there parking near the firm?"
"Is the firm in a fun part of town?"
"Is the firm near restaurants, bars, and other things?"
"Are there places to live near the firm?"
"How far is the firm from my house?"

Reasons attorneys give for choosing law firms based on the office location.
"The office is close to my house."
"There are a ton of things to do near the office."
"There is a train stop right in front of the office."

Reasons attorneys give for not choosing law firms based on the office location.
"The office is too far away."
"I will have to move."
"There is nothing near the office."
"The office is in a bad part of town."
"There is no way I would want to work in that location."

How law firms use office location to get attorneys to work there.

Law firms market their office location all the time to get people to work there. Some law firms’ location is so important to them that it becomes part of not just their marketing DNA but overall DNA. Some examples in Los Angeles that have colossal marketing draw:

There are a few major law firms in Los Angeles with offices in Santa Monica and the beach! Lawyers love this and turn down offers at even better firms to work there. I used to live and work in Pasadena, a suburb of Los Angeles. There were a few law firms there that paid much less than those downtown. Rather than make a traffic-clogged commute to downtown, many attorneys preferred to work in these firms because there was no commute.

Offices in certain Los Angeles locations are very desirable (Beverly Hills, Century City) for attorneys who live on the westside of Los Angeles, and they would much prefer to work there than downtown.

There are law firms in Aspen, Colorado, and other places that appeal to skiers and other outdoor enthusiasts. There are law firms in Montana, Idaho, and other places that appeal to certain people.

See also:
The Benefits to Leaving and Working in a Smaller Market

11. The Benefits and Perks a Law Firm Has Are Used as a Marketing Tool to Get Attorneys to Work There

There are numerous types of benefits that contribute to how much money attorneys can make working at a given law firm.

An attorney I was once working with accepted an offer at a lower-paying and less-prestigious law firm because the other firm had a free lunch during the week. I have seen partners with multi-million-dollar books of business take offers because they get larger business development budgets than competing offers. Some attorneys can be enticed by technology reimbursement and the quality of technology.

When I was in law school, a firm in Detroit (Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn) gave $35,000 down payment assistance to attorneys who wanted to buy a house. The potential of that made the firm seem as attractive to me at the time as large law firms in New York and Los Angeles. This down-payment assistance certainly made it more attractive than other Detroit firms.
Another firm in New York, Wachtel, Lipton (where I never got an interview because the University of Virginia Law School was 100% off their on-campus interview radar), offered associates messengers to run errands during the day so they did not have to leave their desks (I thought that was an incredible perk and would have been interested in working there).

Skadden Arps in Los Angeles had a shirt closet you could go into and get a fresh, new shirt if you worked all night -- for some reason, I thought this was cool as well.

I have seen people come to work here in our own company because they liked that we had Blue Cross as an insurer and not an HMO. You just never know what will appeal to people.

I once saw someone leave a significant law firm and go to a competitor because he was upset that the firm he was at made associates park in an open lot across the street from the law firm’s office while partners got covered parking in the office building.

Some of the benefits and perks law firms offer include:
- Relocation expenses if the attorney is joining the firm from a different part of the country.
- A 401(k) plan (and possible matching of contributions).
- Health, dental and vision insurance.
- Sick leave.
- Parking reimbursement.
- Vacation leave.
- Domestic partner benefits.
- Tickets to sporting events.
- Vacation condos or other places attorneys can stay.
- Same-sex partner benefits.
- Health savings account.
- In-house CLE, or CLE reimbursement.
- Business development expenses the firm reimburses for.
- Firm-paid retreats.
- Maternity and paternity leave policies.
- Home down payment assistance.
- An onsite gym or payment for offsite workout facilities.
- Payment for dry cleaning and shoeshines.
- Free messenger service to pick up prescriptions and do similar tasks.
- Free laptops and reimbursement for cell phones.
- Onsite childcare.
- Life insurance.
- Disability insurance.
- Free meals for the staff once per week.
- Free use of car service to get home at night.
- Profit-sharing.
- Firm cafeteria.
- Reimbursement for food if working late.
- Bar association fees paid for.

**The reasons attorneys give for choosing law firms are based on benefits.**

For many attorneys, the benefits a firm offers are among the most important reasons they give for joining a firm. Some attorneys are "sold" on the quality of the benefits they receive. I’ve heard of many attorneys taking offers due to benefits on numerous occasions.

"Health insurance is critical to me."

"The firm has an awesome in-house gym."

"The firm sets no cap on how much it is willing to reimburse me for business development."

**The reasons attorneys give for not choosing law firms are based on the benefits.**
"The law firm's benefits are horrible."
"The law firm is cheap and does not reimburse for business development."
"I have to go out of pocket every time I go to the doctor."

How law firms market their benefits to get attorneys to work there.

To get attorneys interested in working there due to their benefits, all the law firm has to do is write down its benefits and list them. Many attorneys will get offers and then come to the firm, asking specifics about the benefits. The law firm just needs to answer questions about the benefits and talk about them in glowing terms. Benefits and perks are huge to some attorneys.

See also:
Perks vs Work: Do Wine Tastings and Weekend Retreats Sell Summer Associates on Law-Firm Life
12. Law Firms Market Themselves Based on the Ability of Their Attorneys to Control Where and When They Work

The ability to have control over their time and where and when they work is essential to many attorneys, especially younger ones. Many attorneys choose where to work based on:
- How often they have to come to the office.
- Whether or not they can work at home.
- How important face time is.
- Whether they are expected to work at specified times or not (do they have to start work at a certain time).
- How much they are expected to be available during the day.

I see countless attorneys on an ongoing basis make the firm’s flexibility to work at home a condition of employment. Often mothers will demand a day or two home per week with their children, even when working full time. I know of one man who needed to be home two days a week to take his wife to the doctor. Because of the virtual nature of work, attorneys often take jobs in cities far from their home and work a few days a month in the office and stay in hotels or with friends during this time. As law firms adapt, virtual work is becoming increasingly popular and a must for many attorneys.

Reasons attorneys give for choosing law firms based on the ability to control where and when they work.
- "The law firm allows me to work remotely."
- "The law firm does not care about face time."
- "As long as I bill the hours I am supposed to and meet deadlines, the law firm does not care when I work."
- "I need time with my kids, and the firm allows me every Friday at home."
- "I moved outside the city, and instead of taking the train to work each day, I am allowed to work at home three days a week."

Reasons attorneys give for not choosing law firms based on the ability to control where and when they work.
- "All the law firm cares about is face time."
- "Everyone is in the office all the time -- it is suffocating."
- "I will never get ahead at the firm because time in the office is significant to it."
- "It is a waste of my time spending so much time in the car commuting."

How law firms market work flexibility to get attorneys to work there.

Law firms that allow people to work virtually talk about this a great deal and make sure attorneys know that they allow working virtually. Some law firms have built names for themselves by being entirely virtual. Attorneys like the idea of having independence and being able to choose when and where they work. If a law firm is flexible with this, it uses it in its marketing materials and tells attorneys about this when interviewing them.

13. Firms Market Themselves Based on the Amount of Early
Responsibility their Attorneys Will Get

Attorneys often want to get lots of early responsibility in their careers. This includes things such as:

- Going to court.
- Running deals.
- Meeting with clients.
- Being the primarily responsible attorney on matters.
- Supervising paralegals and younger attorneys.
- Taking depositions.
- Writing briefs.
- Putting together deal documents.
- Going on pitches to bring in clients.
- Being responsible for writing patents.
- Doing trials.

Attorneys often leave firms because they are not getting responsibility and feel they will never get it. I saw one talented woman not too long ago who started her career at Sullivan & Cromwell and was running deals and doing very sophisticated work in her second year. For family reasons, she moved to an area of the country where the firm did not have an office, and she joined another large national firm. Partners were doing all of the work that she was doing at Sullivan & Cromwell at the new firm, and they were not giving her work that she felt she could do. She was angry and left the firm.

### Reasons attorneys give for choosing law firms based on the amount of responsibility they get.

- "I must develop my skills as quickly as possible."
- "The law firm will give me many things to do that I would not normally get to do."
- "I will get to go to trial."
- "I will run deals."

### Reasons attorneys give for not choosing law firms based on the amount of responsibility they will get.

- "I am doing work as a seventh-year attorney that I did as a first-year."
- "I'm never going to get trial (deposition, court) exposure at the firm."
- "The law firm has me doing grunt work and tasks that I should not be doing."
- "None of the partners in the firm have even done trials."
- "The firm is not getting sophisticated work and is doing stupid stuff that anyone could do."

### How law firms market the fact that they give lots of responsibility to attorneys.

If a law firm senses that an attorney wants early responsibility, it will bring it up early in interviews:

- "One of our first-years just did a trial."
- "I hate going to court. I want my associates to do this."
- "This is the only firm where you will run your deals early."
- "I need someone to do everything this client gives us and do not need to be involved."

Law firms that offer early responsibility make sure attorneys are aware of this and publicize this as much as they can.

### 14. Law Firms Market Themselves Based on How Nice their Offices Are and the Quality of the Building

For some law firms, the quality of their offices and their location are everything. I've visited law firms where I spent an hour and all the law firm did was show me around the office and impress me with how nice they were -- and I was impressed and wanted to work there (even though I was visiting in my capacity as a recruiter)! If a law firm is in a nice office, this is a great recruiting tool and works. The best law firms typically
have the nicest offices.
How attractive the offices are.
How recently the offices were completed.
How nice the attorney's office would be at the firm.
How nice is the building the office is in.
The furniture in the office.
The size of the offices the attorney would work in.
The floor of a building the firm is on.

Reasons attorneys give for choosing law firms based on how nice the office and building are.
"They have brand new offices -- they are nice."
"Their offices are in the nicest building in town."
"My office at the firm would have an amazing view."

Reasons attorneys give for not choosing firms based on how nice the office and building are.
"The offices are drab and dated."
"They are in this lousy old building."
"I would have to share an office there."
"There is all this crappy furniture everywhere."
"I would feel like crap working there every day."

How law firms market their firm based on the quality of their offices.

Law firms are very proud of their offices. Most law firms put pictures of their offices on their websites as well as photos of their buildings. If an attorney is in one of the best addresses in town and the offices are very nice, it is a point of pride. Nice offices are very effective recruiting tools.

15. Law Firms Market Themselves Based on the Size of the Firm and the Number of Offices the Firm Has

The law firm's size and the number of offices it has are significant to many attorneys. Some attorneys are very nervous about working in a law firm that is only local and does not have many national offices. Other attorneys are interested in potentially relocating to a different area of the country later in their career. Some attorneys believe that being in a larger firm with more attorneys equates to being in a better law firm. Whether the firm has lots of national and international offices.
How large the firm's offices are in other cities and markets.
The total number of attorneys in the law firm.
Whether attorneys in different offices work together.
Whether the attorney would have the opportunity to move to an international office.

Reasons attorneys give for choosing law firms based on the size of the firm and the number of offices the firm has.
"If I want, I can work in another office later if I want to move."
"I am more comfortable working in a firm this size because of the number of opportunities."
"I have clients in several markets, and they require me to have an office in the markets the firm has offices in."

Reasons attorneys give for not choosing law firms based on the size of the law firm and the number of offices the firm has.
"The firm is too small, and I would not be happy there."
"The firm is only located in a few cities and is limited by that."
"I would prefer a much larger law firm."
"The firm has been shrinking, and I want to join a larger law firm."

How law firms market themselves based on their size.
As law firms grow, they typically point to their size as proof that they are desirable places to work. Law firms discuss their size constantly and use this to demonstrate that they are formidable and strong. If a law firm is very big, they let recruits know this, and people believe there is strength in numbers.

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See also:
- Which Type of Law Firm Is Best for You and Your Career: Main Offices of Large National Firms, Branch Offices of Large National Firms, Midsized Firms, Boutiques, or Newer Fast-Growing Firms?
- Should Your Law Firm Open a Branch Office?
- Small Law Firm vs Large Law Firm