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Expertise is a hygiene factor allowing you to trade, but it won't make you memorable



Unforgettable you

SCOTT BROWN, THE MEDIA MIND

In a crowded market space, you need to stand out and have a point of difference to get noticed. Easy to say, but not easy to achieve.

Memorable brands are seldom born overnight unless they're outrageously different or controversial – the legal sector has never felt comfortable doing this, probably for all the right reasons. So, what can be done?

The most important thing to consider is that people only know what you tell them. Carefully planning your course of action and having sight of your end goal is the starting point. If you don't know what you want, then how are you going to get it?

Positioning yourselves as experts in a competitive market is generalist and undoubtedly what nearly every law firm across the land professes to be, but it's not enough. You need to not only prove it, but consistently achieve results. And more importantly, you need to tell people about it.

A solid brand needs its core – the staff, the offer and its promise. Each component needs to be fed the right information. Your staff are your ambassadors – they need to know everything. Without a shared vision, and knowing how you intend to achieve it, how can they contribute? Without their buy-in, you've stumbled at the first hurdle.

Think long and hard about your offer. Just because you've always done something doesn't mean you need to continue. If you fail to deliver something in an exceptional manner, then you shouldn't have done it at all. Here's a simple rule for brand management – be remembered for not only being experts but for being the best. Expertise is a hygiene factor allowing you to trade, but it won't make you memorable.

Make sure that cultural habits across the firm are customer-focused and add benefit to their

journeys with you. Reliability needs to be ingrained – for example, always make sure that enquiries are followed up with a speedy response...and not next week.

There's an old adage that awareness plus delivery equals reputation (A+D=R). If you fail to make people aware then they will never know; if you fail to deliver, they will always know. This impacts your reputation, so communicate clearly when promoting your firm to both colleagues and clients, but never promise something you can't deliver. Consistency without compromise to achieve your brand positioning is where weaknesses can creep in; under pressure it's easy to settle for a quick solution. Insist that every single piece of the jigsaw is 'on brand' – delivered to the standard decided from the outset. This contributes to achieving your end goal or vision. Everyone in or around the firm needs to live and breathe in the same manner; they must want to associate with your vision and brand.

With all that said, engagement is key, even once you think you've succeeded. Keep in front of your audience (staff and clients) as we all forget things and will need updates. Image association is also important, so make sure that the image you portray every day will get you followers – loyal staff and, more importantly, clients.

One final thought: the 2019 John Lewis Christmas advert wasn't perhaps as consistent as previous years. I hear you saying 'I don't remember it that well' or 'did I even see it?'. Compare these responses to previous years, where it was difficult not to see or hear about it. This past Christmas and New Year period saw John Lewis suffer one of the worst trading times they have had in years. Brexit coincidence? I leave you to ponder the reason. **LPM**

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