

# CBA Cincinnati Bar ASSOCIATION

# Report

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## NEW CBA PRESIDENT **JOSEPH D. HEYD** RAISES THE BAR



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# Keys to Success

## Professional Development Tips for Young Lawyers



By David J. Oberly

### Rainmaking Through Personal Branding For Young Attorneys

At the heart of any attorney's marketing and business development efforts is his or her personal brand. In the ultra-competitive market for legal services, your personal brand can give you a distinct advantage in winning business by standing out and developing a visible and differentiated presence in the legal market. Conversely, a poorly defined or managed brand can hamper your ability to generate business or, at a minimum, result in significant lost opportunities to drive business growth.

Your brand is a value proposition—distinct and unique from your competition—that sets you apart and differentiates you from all of the other attorneys who provide similar legal services. Branding encompasses the psychological aspects—feelings, perceptions, opinions, attitudes—of your skills and behaviors, as well as the services that you deliver. Importantly, your brand is defined by the qualities that people think of when they think of you. Maya Angelou penned it perfectly: "... people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." That is the essence of your personal brand.

Effective branding requires a calculated, focused effort to strategically articulate and promote how your legal skillset, talents, and expertise make you uniquely qualified to skillfully resolve a client's most pressing and complex legal problems. In order to develop an effective, impactful personal brand, determine what exactly you want people to think of you, both professionally and personally, as well as what differentiates you from your competition, and then determine how you will successfully articulate and convey that message. Once you have nailed down the contours of your personal brand, strategically leverage that message by utilizing those platforms and activities which will have the greatest impact in terms of allowing you to expose and promote your messaging to your target market.

#### Your Personal Value Proposition

At the core of your individual brand is your personal value proposition (PVP) – your statement of the tangible value and benefits others receive by maintaining a relationship and doing business with you. Importantly, your PVP is a vital tool to make the case for yourself, helping you to explain why *you* are the one to choose without coming out and telling potential clients "I'm the one you want." Your PVP can be utilized across multiple marketing platforms as the foundation for building a steady stream of business.

In order to effectively employ your PVP, you should strive to weave in your personal legal victories and briefly describe some of your more successful engagements during conversations and other interactions with those you come in contact with. (Of course, at all times, and in all settings, one must be cognizant of the Rules of Professional Conduct, and not promise any specific legal results nor discuss clients or cases specifically.) In addition, to fully utilize your PVP, integrate discussion of your "soft skills" that will educate others about your work style and attributes, and exactly how you achieve results for clients. Focus on your strengths, articulate them in a way that is most attractive to your targets, and be sure to customize your message to the specific individual or audience you are engaging with.

In order to effectively cultivate and utilize your personal brand, craft and refine the details of your brand, and then use it to drive everything that is associated with your name. Communicate your brand message clearly and consistently. Infuse your individual brand across every aspect of your legal practice and your marketing and business development endeavors, purposefully and methodically injecting your PVP into the marketplace for legal services. Promote and drive home your brand by being present and visible in the community, both within the legal profession and among relevant client or industry groups. Deliver your brand message and your PVP across multiple platforms, including your personal introduction at events, the content you cultivate on social media, and how you perform in front of audiences while giving presentations. Done the right way, with a strategic, focused, and consistent effort to articulate, position, and promote how your personal makeup and abilities make you uniquely qualified to solve clients' complex legal problems, it will be an easy decision for potential clients to select you over all other options in the legal marketplace when legal services are needed.

#### Building Your Personal Brand With Social Media

In today's highly digital age, social media is a great tool that can be leveraged to promote and strengthen your personal brand. In prior times, personal branding for the most part could only be accomplished through one-on-one interactions and word of mouth. Today, social media enables attorneys to promote and publicize their own personal brands—and reach scores of individuals and potential clients—with the click of a button. Once again, however, before embarking on any social media initiatives, attorneys must be mindful of the Rules of Professional

Conduct. Social media profiles and posts may constitute legal advertising and in many states lawyer advertising rules apply to social media posts. Be sure to check in with your state bar association for guidance before becoming active on any type of social media.

Once you are prepared to dive in, LinkedIn is a vital business development tool that has become the go-to online directory for professionals. Many potential contacts will look to LinkedIn to review your professional credentials in lieu of visiting your attorney bio webpage. Your LinkedIn profile should include all of the key information that you list on your attorney bio. Perhaps the best part of LinkedIn is that it provides the opportunity to post updates on your activities and engage with your connections (much like Facebook, but for the professional world). An active LinkedIn presence can go a long way toward helping develop and refine your personal brand.

Likewise, Twitter can also be an effective legal marketing tool. Today, professionals and non-professionals alike are relying more and more on Twitter as their primary source for breaking information and news. You will find as you create an account and follow and engage with others, you will build a steady stream of followers. It is recommended to use both your LinkedIn and Twitter accounts in tandem with each other. For example, if you will be speaking at a major conference, post it on LinkedIn and on your Twitter account. Combined, utilizing major social media platforms to market and promote yourself, and to interact with your target audiences, will allow you to maximize your visibility online. Importantly, social media provides a prime opportunity to effectively communicate your unique personal value proposition that separates you from the competition and strengthens your professional reputation, which will undoubtedly assist you in generating new business.

Last but not least, do not overlook your website biography. Attorney biographies are by far the most-read section of a law firm’s website, and a robust biography is a must. Be sure to update your bio on a regular basis. Your website bio should serve as a calling card that tells potential clients exactly what you do, and educates

readers as to why they should put their trust in you and want to work with you.

### The Final Word

Success in personal branding is one of the keys to long-term success in the legal profession, as effective branding is a critical component to attracting new clients and maintaining a steady stream of incoming work. Therefore, it is imperative that you strive to make a focused and consistent effort to promote yourself and your talents on a regular basis, and infuse your brand in everything you do, both professionally and on your own personal time as well. Always aim to present yourself in the best light, effectively promoting your skills, talents, and legal expertise to all audiences with which you interact. Over time, you will be able to develop a defined, impactful, resonating brand that will come to be recognized throughout the community in which you work and live, allowing you to stand out from the competition in the competitive marketplace for legal services. Utilized properly, your personal brand can serve as an invaluable tool for landing new clients and generating a consistent, reliable stream of business on a long-term basis.

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## Welcome to YLS

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## Notary Blitz!

On March 26, the CBA YLS co-hosted a “Notary Blitz” at UC Law. 3L students enjoyed food and drinks while getting their bar application notarized. Thank you to UC Law for inviting us to help these students take the next step towards becoming an attorney!

