



## THE MPF WEBINAR SERIES

### What Every Managing Partner Needs to Know About Lawyer Rankings, Listings & Directories

**John Remsen, Jr.** (Moderator)  
President and CEO, Managing Partner Forum  
President, TheRemsenGroup

**Toby Eccleshall**  
Editor, Chambers USA

**Vivian Hood**  
CEO/Owner, Public Relations, Jaffe

**Arielle Lapiano**  
Director of Communications & Public Relations, Paul Hastings

**Elizabeth Petit**  
Managing Editor & Director of Research, Best Lawyers

June 21, 2017

TheRemsenGroup

1020 Rosedale Road - Atlanta, GA - 30306  
404.885.9100 - [www.TheRemsenGroup.com](http://www.TheRemsenGroup.com)

## MPF WEBINAR #3

June 21, 2017 – 12:00-1:00pm ET

**Title:** **What Every Managing Partner Needs to Know About Lawyer Rankings, Listings & Directories**  
How to Make Sense of It All & Achieve Maximum Return on Investment (ROI)

**Description:** The number of law firm rankings and directories has exploded in recent years to more than 1,100 as of March 2017, according to Jaffe.

Which ones (if any) are best for your firm? What policies (if any) should your firm have in place to ensure that your firm is achieving maximum ROI when it comes to its investment of time and money in rankings and directory listings?

Join us for a fast-paced, interactive panel discussion among experts on the topic.

- Understand the proliferation of law firm rankings and directories
- How to assess which ones are best for your firm and its lawyers
- Create a strategy (and supporting policies and procedures) to best allocate your firm's marketing and business development resources
- Learn about the methodologies of Best Lawyers and Chambers

**Speakers:** **John Remsen, Jr.** (Moderator)  
President, TheRemsenGroup  
**Toby Eccleshall**  
Editor, Chambers USA  
**Vivian Hood**  
President-Public Relations, Jaffe  
**Arielle Lapiano**  
Head of Public Relations, Paul Hastings  
**Elizabeth Petit**  
Managing Editor & Director of Research & Development, Best Lawyers

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REV: June 5, 2017

## FACULTY BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILES

### **Toby Eccleshall**

Editor

Chambers USA

+44 (0) 20 7778 1662 - toby.eccleshall@chambersandpartners.co.uk

Toby Eccleshall is the new editor of Chambers USA, having taken over from Laura Mills in May 2017. He has been at the company since July 2013, starting as a researcher on the U.S. team before progressing to U.S. Deputy Editor in 2015. Toby is responsible for all research-based content in the Chambers USA guide and manages a team of six deputy editors and approximately 40 researchers, who produce its rankings and editorial. Toby graduated from the University of Birmingham in 2011 with a BA in German and Russian, before completing the Graduate Diploma in Law in 2013.

### **Vivian Hood**

President, Public Relations

Jaffe Associates

904.-220.1915 - vhood@jaffepr.com

As one of the owners of Jaffe, Vivian balances her responsibilities between managing the agency's relationships with our clients and staff and providing our clients with high-level and strategic PR account leadership, directing teams that execute and implement successful legal media relations programs. Clients rely on Vivian for her critical counsel surrounding high-profile litigation, sensitive matters, and crisis management, trusting her guidance when it matters the most.

Serving as an integral senior member of a law firm's marketing department, Vivian takes pride in developing long-term relationships with law firm clients, many of whom she has worked with for a minimum of five, 10 and more years. These partnerships have enabled Vivian to become a trusted advisor to many of the country's top corporate law firms. While some media relations programs focus on immediate results, others depend on long-range planning and benefit from working with someone who fully knows and understands a firm's culture, philosophies, history and management style. That's why Vivian's enduring relationships with her clients allow her to manage effective law firm media relations strategies that she adapts to fit each firm's evolving needs.

Vivian is active with LMA International and is a frequent speaker to lawyers and legal marketers, as well as a published author on a range of legal marketing and PR, crisis communications, and media relations topics.

### **Arielle Lapiano**

Head of Public Relations

Paul Hastings

212.318.6946 - ariellelapiano@paulhastings.com

Arielle Lapiano is a seasoned communications professional, with an extensive track-record of crafting and executing creative communications and branding initiatives for global organizations. She leads the global Public Relations team at Paul Hastings, which includes overseeing brand-building communications and activities for the firm's 21 offices. She is a former financial journalist with a Masters in International Affairs from Columbia University and a B.A. from Vassar College.

**Elizabeth Petit**

Managing Editor and Director of Research  
Best Lawyers  
803.644.1681 - [epetit@bestlawyers.com](mailto:epetit@bestlawyers.com)

Elizabeth Petit is Managing Editor and Director of Research & Development for Best Lawyers, a position she has held since 2012. Although Petit considered studying law after graduating from college, and even worked briefly in the legal industry in Houston, her home town, she eventually returned to art history. Petit received a Bachelor of Arts in Art History and Classical Studies from Tulane University before receiving her Masters of Art in Art History and Non-Profit Management from the University of South Carolina.

It was as an art historian and as a project manager that Petit joined Woodward/White, Inc., the parent company of Best Lawyers, in 2010 to oversee the final research for Van Gogh: The Life, the biography of the great Dutch artist written by Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith, founders of Best Lawyers and Pulitzer Prize-winning authors of Jackson Pollock: An American Saga. She also serves as an Adjunct Faculty member at the University of South Carolina, where she continues to teach art history to this day. When Petit completed her work on the Van Gogh biography, she became Director of Research & Development for Best Lawyers. In that capacity, she has drawn on her extraordinary gifts in research and management to oversee the ongoing research that is the core of Best Lawyers and to serve as its Managing Editor. She oversees the Editorial Department, which has largest staff in the company, including both the U.S. and international listings for Best Lawyers and the listings for Best Law Firms.

**John Remsen, Jr.**

President  
TheRemsenGroup  
404.885.9100 - [jremsen@theremsen.com](mailto:jremsen@theremsen.com)

John Remsen, Jr. is widely recognized as one of the country's leading authorities on law firm leadership, management, marketing and business development. Since 1997, TheRemsenGroup has worked with more than 350 law firms to help them develop and implement long-term strategic objectives to improve cohesiveness, performance and profitability. John is a frequent speaker and author on law firm leadership and marketing topics. In 2002, he created The Managing Partner Forum, a highly-acclaimed conference series for managing partners and law firm leaders. More than 1,100 managing partners from 850 law firms in 43 states have participated. In 2013, he was inducted a Fellow in the College of Law Practice Management. A native of West Palm Beach, Florida, John holds an MBA degree from The University of Virginia (1985) and a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the University of Florida (1980).

# MPF Webinar Series

## Lawyer Rankings, Listings and Directories



**Managing Partner Forum**  
**WEBINAR**  
**What Every Managing Partner Needs to Know About Lawyer Rankings, Listings & Directories**  
**How to Make Sense of it All & Achieve Maximum Return on Investment (ROI)**  
June 21, 2017  
TheRemsenGroup

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**Welcome to Today's Session**  
**Lawyer Rankings, Listings and Directories**  
In this fast-paced, interactive session, we'll discuss these and other topics:

- Understand the proliferation of law firm rankings and directories
- How to assess which ones are best for your firm and its lawyers
- Create a strategy (and supporting policies and procedures) to best allocate your firm's marketing and business development resources
- Learn about the methodologies of Best Lawyers and Chambers

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**John Remsen, Jr.**  
President, TheRemsenGroup  
President & CEO, Managing Partner Forum

Current	Strategic Planning, Firm Retreats, COO/CMO Searches More than 350 law firms since 1997
Previous	Gunster, Porter Wright
Speaker	American Bar Association, Association of Legal Administrators, Legal Marketing Association, MPF Annual Conference, Law Firm Networks
Education	MBA – University of Virginia (Darden) BSBA – University of Florida

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# MPF Webinar Series

## Lawyer Rankings, Listings and Directories



**Toby Eccleshall**  
Editor, Chambers USA

Current	Editor, Chambers USA
Previous	US Deputy Editor, Researcher, English Teacher
Experience	Manages deputy editors and researchers who produce Chambers rankings and editorial
Education	GDL – Brunel University BA – University of Birmingham

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**Vivian Hood**  
CEO/Owner, Public Relations Jaffe

Current	CEO/Owner, Public Relations, Jaffe
Previous	Vivian Hood Consulting
Experience	Strategic Public Relations including Media Relations Programs, Frequent Speaker and Author
Education	BA – University of Maryland

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**Arielle Lapiano**  
Director of Communications & Public Relations Paul Hastings

Current	Director of Communications & Public Relations Paul Hastings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 900 lawyers</li> <li>• 21 office locations</li> </ul>
Previous	Celent, Incisive Media
Experience	Crafting and executing creative and strategic communications and branding initiatives
Education	MA – Columbia University BA – Vassar College

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# MPF Webinar Series

## Lawyer Rankings, Listings and Directories



**Elizabeth Petit**  
Managing Editor & Director of Research  
Best Lawyers

**Current** Managing Editor & Director of Research, Best Lawyers

- Since 1996 in 65 Countries
- Partnership with US News & World Report

**Previous** Univ of South Carolina, Adjunct Faculty (Art History)

**Education** Museum Curator, USC Faculty  
MA – University of South Carolina  
BA – Tulane University

**WEBINAR** **TheRemsenGroup**

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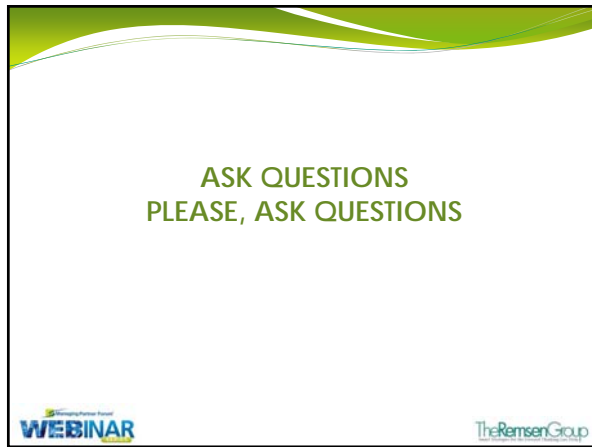
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**ASK QUESTIONS  
PLEASE, ASK QUESTIONS**

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**HOW MANY RANKINGS  
ARE OUT THERE?**

**WEBINAR** **TheRemsenGroup**

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## MPF Webinar Series

Lawyer Rankings, Listings and Directories

WHAT ARE THE "TOP FIVE"  
FOR BUSINESS LAW FIRMS?

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TELL US ABOUT  
CHAMBERS USA AND BEST LAWYERS

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CAN A LAWYER OR LAW  
FIRM INFLUENCE THE PROCESS?

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Lawyer Rankings, Listings and Directories

WHAT ARE THE  
BIGGEST MISCONCEPTIONS?

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HOW SHOULD A FIRM  
DETERMINE WHICH ONES TO PURSUE?

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IS MARTINDALE DEAD?

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**MPF Webinar Series**  
Lawyer Rankings, Listings and Directories



YOUR ADVICE TO LAW FIRM  
MARKETING PROFESSIONALS?

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YOUR ADVICE TO  
LAW FIRM MANAGING PARTNERS?

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**Additional Resources**

Managing Partner Forum – [www.managingpartnerforum.org](http://www.managingpartnerforum.org)

TheRemsenGroup – [www.theremsegroup.com](http://www.theremsegroup.com)

Jaffe – [www.jaffepr.com](http://www.jaffepr.com)

Best Lawyers – [www.bestlawyers.com](http://www.bestlawyers.com)

Chambers – [www.chambersandpartners.com](http://www.chambersandpartners.com)

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# MPF Webinar Series

## Lawyer Rankings, Listings and Directories

**Thanks to Our Panel**

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 **Elizabeth Petit**  
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**Please give us your feedback!**

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**Contact Us**

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## Why Do Law Firm Rankings Matter?

*By Carlos Arcos, Senior Vice President, Public Relations*

I had the wonderful opportunity to attend the 2016 LMA annual conference in Austin. This year's conference had a record-breaking number of attendees from 46 states and more than a dozen countries.

As a publicist for Jaffe, I often assist clients with drafting and submitting awards submissions. As most of us in legal marketing know, the number of annual award and ranking opportunities is staggering – and it can be extremely time-consuming to prepare these submissions. Therefore, I took the opportunity to attend an LMA session entitled “Qualifying and Driving the ROI in Legal Directories and Awards Submissions.”

Although the session didn't provide any magical answer that will make these submissions any easier, the presenters did provide some interesting statistics on legal awards and rankings and recommended formulating a sound strategy with which to approach submissions.

### Allocating Resources

It seems many firms will continue to commit significant resources to submissions.

According to a survey conducted by a joint project between the LMA/LFMP and BTI, 80 percent of law firms plan to maintain or increase their use of submissions. Although many large law firms have a person, or even a team, dedicated to submissions, many smaller and midsize firms must rely on the marketing or communications manager/director or the office administrator to handle this task. The survey found only 18 percent of law firms have a dedicated staff to manage submissions. (It should be noted that this percentage was likely near zero a mere decade ago.)

### Cost of Submissions

The survey found that the average cost to develop a submission is \$2,550. Now this number may be high or it may be low, but assuming it's in the ballpark, the reality is that many firms are committing significant resources to submissions, especially on an annual basis.

### Understanding Your Goals

The survey also asked participants about their primary goal for submissions. Attorneys said the primary goal is to enhance firm recruitment and make existing clients feel better. Legal marketers indicated the primary goal was to improve morale internally and make existing clients

feel better. These goals do help build and enhance the firm's brand, which is important. But what about generating new business? Surprisingly, this didn't rank very high in the survey. The presenters noted that this may not be a bad thing since the ROI on submissions would be difficult to calculate. Therefore, they advised law firms to develop a strategy when choosing which rankings and awards to submit to. Instead of complaining about the process of preparing submissions, as many of us do, it's beneficial to take a step back and audit your process for submissions.

Here are some questions to ask yourself and your attorneys when selecting which opportunities to respond to:

1. What are you or the attorney looking to achieve?
2. Is there a better tool to achieve the objective?
3. How does this recognition help the attorney or the firm?
4. Has a client discussed this recognition with you?

It's also important to establish a budget and make sure you have the support of at least one attorney for any submission. As the presenters noted, when it comes to submissions, "It's about the journey, not the destination."

Are you interested in learning more about law firm rankings? Contact me, Carlos Arcos, at [carcos@jaffepr.com](mailto:carcos@jaffepr.com).



Adapt to change.

## Taming the Beast: How to Manage Legal Rankings

By Susan Holmes, Manager, RankingsForLawyers™

When I started working with legal rankings eight years ago, there were approximately 650 rankings and awards for attorneys and law firms. That number has ballooned to well over 1,200. (This number does not include the pay-to-play “surveys” that are popping up with regularity.)

From the attorneys’ viewpoint, legal rankings require little more than talking about their work. Legal marketers know better. This is a growing industry and, judging by the surveys that came across my desk this month, it is not slowing down. What was once a manageable endeavor for a law firm marketing staff is getting out of control.

I am constantly asked, “Is this ranking worth it?” “Should we nominate for this award?” “What about the survey I received for the ‘The Lawyers List Not to Miss?’” I’m here to share a few steps that may help you tame the legal rankings beast.

- Start with a solid business development plan. Understanding what the firm’s goals are this year and how rankings fit into those goals is key.
- Determine which rankings are credible so you do not waste your time. To determine credibility, find out how a ranking is vetted.
- Different attorney and law firm rankings serve different needs. A rankings plan is not cookie-cutter. What is right for firm A may not be right for firm B. Rankings serve to set a law firm apart and showcase where they excel. Consideration should be given to the firm’s goals. Are your goals to:
  - Attract lateral hires? Consider “Best Places to Work” or “Healthiest Employers” rankings.
  - Establish the firm’s bench strength? Consider “40 Under 40” and “Rising Star” rankings. These rankings recognize up-and-comers in the industry and increase visibility for younger members of the firm.
  - Bring in new clients? Seek out the well-researched, well-respected lists. There is a reason Chambers and Legal 500 are highly sought-after rankings – but there are others that should not be neglected, including many industry-specific rankings that will catch potential clients’ eyes.
- Consider why the ranking is important to an attorney. This is an opportunity to be recognized publicly for a job well done and to feel good about the work they did.
- Repurpose information used to complete nominations. Ranking nominations contain a wealth of information that can be repurposed for a multitude of uses. Within this submission is information that can help the firm position and cross-sell its services. “The Silver Lining of Writing Chambers Submissions” provides additional information about repurposing your legal ranking submission.

- Do not participate in pay-to-play. If you are asked to pay to be listed, it is not a ranking. By participating in these surveys/directories, you are lending credibility to them.

By following these easy steps, you can tame the rankings beast. If you would like help with developing a strategy for and coordinating legal rankings at your firm, contact me, Susan Holmes at [sholmes@jaffepr.com](mailto:sholmes@jaffepr.com).



Adapt to change.



# 5 Secrets to Submission Success in Legal Rankings

April 29, 2015

**Editor's Note:** *The author of this post is the head of PR at Paul Hastings.*

By Arielle Lapiano, Senior Public Relations Manager, Paul Hastings

Secret may be a strong word, but after hearing from Chambers, Super Lawyers and a leading directories consultant at this year's annual Legal Marketing Association Conference in San Diego, it's clear that key decision makers think law firms can improve their approach to submissions. During the "Do's and Don'ts of Successful Nominations" panel, Laura Mills, Editor of Chambers USA; Cindy Larson, Publisher of Super Lawyers Magazines and Nigel Savage, Founder and Managing Director of Savage Communications and a former Legal 500 Editor, weighed in on common mistakes made by firms and some unfortunately uncommon best practices that law firms should adopt. The advice comes just in time for the build up to the start of research on Chambers USA.

Here are five secrets they don't want to keep:

## 1. Be a storyteller



The best submissions tell a story. As Mills puts it, “have a theme for your practice, which you demonstrate through your work.” It’s easy to fill submissions with marketing speak and a list of work highlights, and it’s a trap that many firms fall into. As a result, law firms are all too often saying the same thing. The most compelling submissions explain what differentiates the practice or lawyer(s) from the crowd, with the work highlights serving as proof points.

## **2. Be selective**

Larson says “highlighting too many attorneys” is one of the main mistakes firms make, a sentiment echoed by Mills, who explains that many firms spotlight too many people and include too much irrelevant information, thereby “drowning out the good stuff.”

This information overload leads to long submissions that busy researchers will not want to read. It’s challenging, but “it’s better to not let politics get in the way,” according to Savage. The best approach is to make some hard decisions about the work and the lawyers that should- and shouldn’t- be included while working on the submission. If you don’t make these decisions, the directories will, and you’ve made it hard for them to make the call that might be right for your firm.

## **3. Use the three C’s**

It’s Communications 101 to be Clear, Concise and Conversational, but according to the panelists, many firms have been skipping class. Larson, Mills and Savage all highlighted the importance of these communications tenets. It’s hard to boil down a complex deal or litigation matter into something bite-sized and easily digestible by a researcher. But researchers will not have the appetite to read long, dense, jargon-filled submissions.

## **4. Put yourself in the researchers’ shoes**

Researchers are weeding through numerous submissions, many of which are not following the tips above, and they’re often researching several disparate practice areas.

There is a fire hose of information pointed in their direction and you have the best chance of submission success when you are helping to reduce the flow.

## **5. Choose the right clients**

Mills said that often firms select the wrong clients. That high-profile General Counsel may not be your best advocate if she will be too busy to talk to a researcher or is not intimately familiar with the work your firm is doing. It’s counterintuitive-at first- but often the best references are more junior, more available and more familiar with your firm.

Photo by Michael Coghlan (Flickr/ Creative Commons (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/mikecogh/>))

## THOSE STUPID SUPERLATIVE LAW LISTS

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ROSS FISHMAN

"I'm selling ego to lawyers, Ross. I'm going to make a fortune." — *Actual quote from a marketing friend before starting a vanity directory.*

Looking back, it turns out he miscalculated. It seems like he's making closer to 10 fortunes.

### May I Make a Request?

Please let's stop the madness. Let's stop squandering precious marketing dollars on these superlative lawyer lists. Consider:

Would you hire your law firm's *accountant* based on an obvious advertorial? If not, why not?

If you couldn't find your *doctor's* ad in a "The Best Doctors in America" airline magazine, would you fire her?

I've been marketing law firms for 25 years. I've interviewed countless clients regarding their buying habits and have seen many more asked specifically about these "best of" directories. In all those years, I've never heard a single client say they pay the slightest attention to them.

Not one. Not ever.

They never think: "I need a tax lawyer in Dallas; I'm going to grab my well-worn copy of 'Splendid Lawyers' and thumb through the full-page ads."

And just because a 50-page advertising supplement is shrink-wrapped inside 20,000 copies of a prominent publication doesn't mean that a single one of the subscribers will value it. You're really busy – when you receive unsolicited advertorials, do you comb through them, pouring excitedly over every ad, or discard them as junk mail?

What I hear instead are things like: "Astounding Ohio Attorneys"? I've never heard of it, and I'd never hire a lawyer out of those things anyway."

And sometimes: "Candidly, I think less of any law firm that wastes their money advertising in them. They obviously don't know how I hire lawyers."

So why would you *volunteer* to spend \$10,000 on that?

Just because you heard that "a friend of a friend got a huge class-action case that way" doesn't make it true. I know people who swear a friend of a friend woke up in an icy hotel bathtub without kidneys.

### How Did We Get Here?

Once upon a time, there was the "Martindale-Hubbell Law Directory" and its "AV" rating. Few lawyers seemed to know exactly what AV meant, but we all wanted it – after all, there was an "A" in it, and we all liked getting A's. It was the sole professional measurement in existence; it was like your favorite teacher pasting a gold star on your law degree. And once a competitor had one, you wanted one too. An even bigger, shinier one.

And, of course, there were the "American Colleges" and "Best Lawyers." But eventually the vanity directory floodgates opened as companies found an easy way to vacuum money out of law firm marketing budgets.

The model was simple: Trademark a superlative, populate the database with all the usual suspects (i.e., the best-known lawyers in that category), so the selection methodology looked credible, and then invite lesser lawyers who'd be flattered to be included in the "Cool Club."

Selling them an ad suddenly became quite easy.

The slick salesperson promised to (a) mail the directory to 20,000 general counsel, or (b) insert it into a prominent business magazine. That is, "Tens of thousands of your hottest prospects will see your ad and possibly hire you!"

You could fly a plane through the holes in that argument. However, few lawyers have the marketing expertise to critically analyze these publications and consider, "Wait, is *receiving* it the same as opening it, reading it, and *using* it to hire a lawyer?"

("This is a tough one," says the client. "I am persuaded by the photos of the groups of old white guys in suits. Now I just have to decide whether to hire the 'Experienced. Excellent. Enthusiastic' or the 'Smart. Skilled. Savvy' firm.")

I actually heard salesmen vow, "Your best clients will see other firms' ads and not see you, and you could lose them." Legal marketers famously responded, "Oh yeah? Prove it." We're skeptical of those pitches because we see them all the time; it's our job to follow this nonsense. And so the salespeople learned to sidestep the marketers and go straight to the equity partners.

This meant that many marketers found themselves unaware of the conversation until *after* the contract had been signed by an ego-stroked senior partner. That left the marketer in the awkward position of either embarrassing the proud lawyer by telling him he'd been duped by a slippery salesperson into buying a full-page Brooklyn Bridge, or sucking it up and writing the damn check.

Most have written that check, then commiserated with their marketing friends who wrote the same damn check at *their* firm. Who wants to burst the senior partners' ego bubble?

### On Krypton, Superman Isn't Quite So Special

Eventually, *every* lawyer will have been anointed as Super, Awesome, Leading, AV, Premier, Elite, Best, Top or Who's Who, rendering the accolades meaningless. In a world where everyone is amazing, no one is.

Granted, law can be a stressful, thankless job. The hours can be long and the clients demanding. And so when someone tells us we're wonderful, most lawyers won't fight very hard to disagree.

There are just so damn many awards, and some are simply money grabs. Sure, some of the money grabs have arguably credible methodologies. But do *you* know which is which? If you don't, what is the chance that clients will?

I have a copy of the 2014 issue of "Leading Lawyers" magazine's "The Top Business Lawyers in Illinois." It is an astonishing 596 pages. Nearly all of them are full-page or nine-per-page business card-sized ads, plus endless alphabetical practice-area lists of lawyer names. And that's just the Business Lawyers edition. There are other issues exclusively dedicated to litigators, women lawyers and more.

To those who are already dashing off a furious email to tell me about that huge case they got that one time strictly because of their ad, don't bother. I'll grant you that maybe I'm wrong; this is just my opinion. It's not outside the realm of possibility that *someone* could eventually use one of them to find and hire a lawyer. But then *you* must admit that if you spent that same \$10,000 on beautifully engraved business cards and systematically threw them off the top of Willis Tower, someone might pick one up and hire you. Okay?

Hey, it could happen.

###

#### About the Author



**Ross Fishman, JD**, is CEO of [Fishman Marketing](#), a marketing firm focusing on strategy, branding and websites for law firms and other professional services firms and associations. A former litigator, marketing director and marketing partner, he helps law firms worldwide stand out from the competition and generate revenue. He is a Fellow of the College of Law Practice Management and inaugural inductee into the Legal Marketing Association's Hall of Fame – but has never bought an ad to proclaim these honors. Contact him at [ross@fishmanmarketing.com](mailto:ross@fishmanmarketing.com).