

# 6 Laws of Branding that Every Attorney Should Use

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## How to Market Yourself and Your Firm

By **John Munro** and **Nate Bradford** Feb. 14, 2018

Attorneys frequently brush off the idea of building their brand, citing their reputation as the sole indicator of their image in the marketplace. The problem is that while neither reputation nor brand are physical assets, reputation is a result and thus beyond a person or organizations immediate control. Brand on the other hand, can be impacted quickly by actions such as a smart marketing campaign or a clear focus on a specialization or core practice area. Brand, when constructed correctly, can result in a significant boost to your reputation.

In the legal marketplace, every attorney holds their own personal brand and the collection of those brands often defines and outshines the brand of the overall firm. At its most basic element, a brand is a singular idea or concept you own in the mind of a prospect. This idea or concept sets the stage for what your client expects you to deliver or the promise you are making to them.

The most widely acclaimed book for marketers is “The 22 Immutable Laws of Branding” by Al and Laura Ries. The laws are simple, yet applicable to all levels of branding. Although there are twenty-two laws in all, focusing on the six laws highlighted below will assist every attorney in taking their brand to the next level.

### 1. The Law of Contraction

A brand becomes stronger when you narrow its focus. In the age of specialization, and particularly in the new legal landscape, buyers are looking for someone who understands and can fulfill their unique needs. Lawyers who market themselves as having a focus on litigation and IP Law are being passed over for lawyers who market themselves as having a focus on specific areas like pharmaceutical IP litigation. This doesn't mean that you should abandon your trade secret or employment law practice. It means that you should expand your service where you have the strongest value and elaborate on the components of this value in your brand.

### 2. The Law of the Word

A brand should strive to own a word in the mind of the consumer. This is where your reputation can fuel your brand and be used to differentiate you from the competition. If you have a reputation for being technologically sophisticated, brand yourself as “innovative” or better yet “pioneering”. If you have a reputation for performing well under pressure, brand yourself as “reliable” or “unshakable”.

### 3. The Law of the Category

A leading brand should promote the category, not the brand. Once you've defined your unique value as a “pioneering pharmaceutical litigator” or “unshakable trade secret advocate”, you should promote the category. View yourself as the leader of the category and focus on its

promotion, embracing those who follow you into the category and in turn increasing recognition for it.

#### 4. The Law of Fellowship

In order to build the category, a brand should welcome other brands. Don't just tolerate competitors in your category, welcome them. As the market for your category expands, you will benefit as the leader of the brand and will have opportunities to refine your brand.

#### 5. The Law of Consistency

A brand is not built overnight. Success is measured in decades, not years. The need for instant results is destructive to brands and causes many to shift in the wake of changing markets. It is okay to pivot and refine a brand to give it a new slant (in fact that is a core component to an attorney or firm's long-term success) but the essential characteristics of a brand should not change. This is why the creation of your brand should be well thought out and based on your core mission or "Why".

#### 6. The Law of Singularity

The most important aspect of a brand is its single-mindedness. If the market doesn't associate you with a singular concept, your brand will be weakened. Let the market know what you stand for and hold fast to that idea. Soon enough, you'll own a place in the mind of the prospect that supports your continued success and growth.

#### Reputation revisited:

Recalling that your reputation is the sum of every action OR inaction you take on behalf of your clients, your brand may clarify your unique value and communicate with the market but in the end your reputation will define your success. Ensuring that you deliver on your promises through value added consistent experiences is the only way to guarantee sustained success.

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