

BECOMING MORE THAN A CHOWDER & MARCHING CLUB: WHAT'S IT GOING TO TAKE?

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TURBULENCE & CHANGE

“Uncertainty is the hallmark of the future for law firms. It’s hard to predict what the profession will look like in 10 years because there are so many forces at work. We know it will look very different from what it does now.”

- James Leipold, *Executive Director*
National Association for Law Placement

INDUSTRY TRENDS & THEIR IMPACT ON ASSOCIATIONS

- When attorneys sneeze, their associations get pneumonia.
 - ABA cut its budget last month by \$10.7 million, or 11%
- Firm mergers & lateral acquisitions snowballing
- Non-traditional players (e.g., ALSPs, accountancies) in traditional legal market growing significantly
- Subspecialty legal organizations proliferating
- Attrition rising & attorneys becoming less engaged
- Needs & expectations of attorneys in flux

WHAT CLIENTS WANT

- 64% Results
- 63% Quality
- 51% Experience
- 51% Value
- 44% Integrity
- 37% Client Service
- 33% Trust
- 30% Reputation
- 28% Attention to detail
- 28% Relationships
- 9% Global capabilities

Source: One North & Greentarget Global Group (2016)

WHAT'S MORE IMPORTANT?

- 41% Individual's reputation or history
- 11% Firm's reputation or history
- 48% Both equally important

Source: *One North & Greentarget Global Group (2016)*

HOW TO WIN THEIR BUSINESS

- 0% Advertisements
- 0% Rankings
- 15% Conference panel discussions or presentations
- 20% Articles, newsletters & white papers
- 21% Website
- 44% In-person contact

Source: One North & Greentarget Global Group (2016)

TOMORROW'S LAW FIRM NETWORK

- Client-centered
 - Actively solicit client feedback
 - *ALM Intelligence 2017 Law Firm Leaders Survey* found 72% of managing partners last year met with fewer than half their top 20 billing clients
- Distinctive
 - Offerings that aren't differentiated easily become commoditized & purchased solely on price
- Personal
 - More than client-centered, client relationships must be ongoing not episodic

WHERE TO NEXT?

- “Maintenance” strategy
 - Retain most elements of current network structure with addition of several new membership requirements
- “Transitional” strategy
 - Gradually change recruitment strategy to attract firms in other, more in-demand market segments
- “Transformative” strategy
 - Become entirely new entity, focused primarily, if not exclusively, on client relations, marketing & leadership development-related programs & services

“MAINTENANCE” STRATEGY

Features

- Government relations (U.S.)
- Transactional expertise (Others)
- Same-day responses
- Alternative fee arrangements
- Ongoing evaluation process
- Commitment to diversity
- Adherence to cybersecurity “best practices”
- Leadership development program
- Annual, international & regional networking meetings
- Monthly online newsletter
- Published membership directory
- Website
- *Lobbying Handbook* published annually

Benefits

- Builds on organization’s historical strengths
- Addresses many concerns of in-house counsel
- Focus remains on networking & referrals among firms
- Keeps integrity of member firms’ markets inviolate
- Approach to change more gradual

“TRANSITIONAL” STRATEGY

Features

- Many of those enumerated in “maintenance” strategy
- Standalone entity created as “landing pad” for next network iteration
- New member firms recruited on basis of “fresh” set of criteria
 - Woman and minority-owned
 - Multidisciplinary professionals
 - ALSPs
 - Regional only
- Focus on both collaboration & referrals

Benefits

- Broadens target market for services member firms provide
- Allows for gradual transition from present member base to newly emerging one
- Creates newly distinctive offering
- Puts organization on glide path to more secure future

“TRANSFORMATIVE” STRATEGY

Features

- Many of those in first two proposed strategies
- Repositions organization to become part of membership’s “sales” team
- Publications directed primarily to client audiences, not members
- Meetings held regionally or globally for member firms & their clients
- Feedback solicited from clients regarding performance of member firms
- Additional services provided member firms individually or through coordinated purchasing plan
- Client input solicited through organization-supported advisory council

Benefits

- Focuses organization’s resources on business development
- Provides means of cultivating long-term client relationships
- Features member attorneys as “thought leaders” before client audiences
- Creates “stickiness” between member firms & clients they represent
- Provides client exposure to full scope of network’s capabilities
- Assures regular, sustained face-to-face interaction between member attorneys, firm leaders & their best clients

CLOSING THOUGHT

“The world hates change, yet it is the only thing that has brought progress.”

- Charles F. Kettering
American inventor (1876 - 1958)