

Law Firm Business Development: Your Bio is Your Product Sheet

By [Silvia L. Coulter](#) on March 3, 2017

I've written about bios before and just yesterday was reminded that they still remain one of the most powerful marketing communications tools one has, and yet often seem to be at the bottom of the heap when it comes to important marketing communications resources. I've run across a few firms lately where their marketing teams will not allow the use of the lawyer's first name. Each paragraph begins with "Mr." or "Ms." This formality has long been left behind in business and by using such an old style in a bio, it puts more distance between the reader and the lawyer. Quite simply, it's just not reader friendly. Nor is it a relationship-builder. While this 1960s approach may have worked at one point, it is best replaced by a less formal approach to the reader.

As a quick aside, the age of the buyers today (we have a great chart on this if you'd like a copy) is lower end of baby boomer and mostly Gen X. The "seller" side is still weighted heavily toward the upper end of the baby boomers and even some silent generation members. So there is already a discrepancy between the buyers and the sellers. Closing some of those gaps in various ways possible is important psychologically.

While I'm on this bio rant, please stop starting every paragraph with your name. This "I" "I" "I" approach also no longer works. Here's an example of what I'm writing about:

DON'T: Sandra has extensive experience litigating patents in the 9th Circuit Court for the biotech and medical device industries.

DO: Biotech and medical device executives rely on Sandra's years of experience assisting them with litigating patents.....

In other words, make it reader-oriented to better connect with the reader.

Follow these two simple rules and your bio is already improved quite a lot. Adding representative examples after two brief introductory paragraphs will be important. Few people will take the time to read a long page of background and click the down arrow to get to page two to read about specific experience.

Last, something about what you like to do. E.g., "Passionate about helping start ups, Sandra is a mentor to young technologists at MIT." OR, "When he's not helping clients avoid curveballs, he's teaching kids how to throw one as a Little League coach."

This type of message is also controversial. Remember, building business is about building relationships and people have to be able to connect with you quickly. Your bio has to sell you when you are not present to sell yourself. Think about it. It's worth updating this valuable sales tool as soon as possible.