

Simon Says Mobilize Your Lawyers with an LPM Dream

By [Carla Landry](#) on August 23, 2022

Gotta love Simon Sinek. We do. Not only because he's a great storyteller, but also because of the relevance of his stories to LPM. In both [part 1](#) and [part 2](#) of the series, we talked about Sinek's take on the golden circle, a diagram that helps identify your market strategy and positioning, among other things.

For many law firms, the story goes something like this:

- What: We are a first-class boutique law firm.
- How: We have an impressive group of lawyers from the best law schools operating in a collegial environment.
- Why: We deliver top-quality legal services to our world-class clients.

It's a familiar tale that appears on scores of websites, company brochures, and in pitches. The words are oft-repeated in beauty contests and inscribed on business cards. Yet, no matter how true these words may be, they are uninspiring and fail to differentiate one law firm from another.

So what happens when you add Legal Project Management to your positioning? LPM now becomes part of your *how*. It involves a more efficient and effective way to deliver services. But does it change anything from a marketing perspective? If, as most businesses do, your unique selling proposition begins with *what*, LPM adds nothing at first blush. You are still a first-class boutique law firm in good company.

What happens if you do as Simon says? Sinek, author of the book "[Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action](#)," advises businesses to turn the golden circle inside out and lead with *why*. So from above, we have: We deliver top-quality legal services to our world-class clients. Does this change when you incorporate LPM? Of course it does. You are now a first-class law firm that is committed to delivering legal services with the benefits that clients demand. You could stop right there and be ahead of the pack. But there's more.

LPM challenges the status quo. It facilitates a better, more effective way of providing legal services. It challenges the traditional ways of law firms. Of course, it's easier said than implemented. But, it's not such a hard sell to your clients, at all. It's what they're asking for.

But what about your lawyers? Are they eager to make LPM a success?

Have a Dream

One of the most inspiring speeches of all times was Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech. There are many theories as to why MLK was able to mobilize some of the largest civil rights events of all time, including the 1963 March on Washington. He didn't have a PR agency behind him. He wasn't the only great orator of the day. He certainly didn't have 70 million followers on the not-yet-envisioned social media. But he did have a dream.

According to Sinek, some of King's ideas weren't even very good. But that didn't really matter. As Sinek reminds us, not

once did King say, "I have a plan." He didn't need one. Because the speech that galvanized the movement was about a dream. Who can nitpick a dream? Anything is possible. King was selling his conviction in the absolute beauty of a better future for everyone. He had a dream. Never mind the details.

If you're out there trying to garner support for an LPM plan, good luck. It's nearly impossible to gain traction behind some PowerPoint documents and a Gantt chart. Lay out a vision and now you're talkin.' That vision starts with establishing the business case for LPM in the first place. You have undoubtedly thought it through already. But is the messaging around *what you do* or *why you do it*?

In all honesty, not too many lawyers respond to the need for process improvement, streamlining the workflow, or even saving the firm money. They may be more interested in having ultimate control over their day and spending less time on adminis-trivia.

Engage Your Lawyers

So how do you lead your LPM initiative? Tap into that heart-mind connection that puts a fire in the belly. Keeping in mind Sinek's inside-out golden circle, here's how your what-how-why marketing approach can help.

Redefine *what you do*.

Yes, you want to continue to deliver top-quality legal services to your clients, but you also want to do it in a way that provides value and meets their needs. If you don't give them the transparency and better control over the process that they demand, they will go elsewhere. Again, the *what* isn't simply a navel-gazing exercise. It's about value as perceived by the client.

Clearly explain *how*.

LPM can get extremely detailed but don't let your messages get lost in the weeds. Your phase one implementation should be simple, easy to understand, and provide demonstrable benefits right now that will allow you to gain traction beyond the early adopters.

Adjust your *why*.

LPM provides a framework for getting the work done. It should also provide benefits that matter. When you fail to identify and then deliver on the benefits that people care about, you become TiVo, Palm, Sony Betamax and others. Arguably, these technologies were superior to the competition. But they did not win because they failed to tap into the emotions that turn lookie-loos into purchasers.

Lead with *why*.

There will always be a reason why a plan can't work in this environment, with these lawyers, in this practice, etc. To avoid the naysaying, you'll need to inspire a cadre of professionals who proselytize the cause. People will shred your plan to pieces unless they buy into the overall vision.

Figure out the compelling dream and run with it. Never mind the plan. You'll need one, it is project management, but that's not what you lead with.

