

Play to Win

Marketing: Capitalizing on New Developments

By [Sally J. Schmidt](#) | Jul.16.15 | [Business Development](#), [Daily Dispatch](#), [Legal Marketing](#), [Play to Win](#)



After each recent Supreme Court ruling, I noticed a common pattern. Certain law firms would send an alert within hours, advising readers of the decision. Over the days that followed, other firms' advisories would trickle in to my inbox or Twitter account. Some are still arriving.

News, of course, can present a marketing opportunity. However, the benefit you receive from informing others about it will depend on many factors, including your competition for the readers' attention, the timeliness of your message and the quality of the piece.

The activity following the SCOTUS rulings got me thinking about how some lawyers and firms are very good at capitalizing on new developments and others are not. I understand that it can be a resource issue; the largest law firms have legions of associates or staff members to help prepare materials while smaller firms do not. Still, in many cases, issues can be anticipated and, if you can anticipate something, you can be prepared to address it.

Here are a few thoughts on taking advantage of a new development.

Getting Ready to Be First

There is a huge advantage to being the first to relate news of significant developments. That's why when something important happens, certain professionals will decide to drop everything to get the word out quickly.

In many cases, however, you may know ahead of time that a development is coming. Let's say you are tracking a case, the outcome of which will be very important for your practice and your clients' industry. Any piece you write will likely include an overview of or introduction to the case; as that information will not change, it can be written at any time.

You can also go ahead and identify the outlet for your article (if it's not a firm publication) or prepare lists of recipients (e.g., industry representatives or the media). You could even draft two

endings — what are the ramifications of the ruling going either way? By preparing in advance, you will be ready to launch as soon as the decision is announced.

Showing Up Later

If you can't be one of the first to appear in people's inboxes, you should have a strategy for arriving at a later point. For example, you may still write an alert to ensure your existing clients are all informed of the development. Even if it appears a little late, it is a fine objective (although may be less of a marketing opportunity).

However, if you are hoping to [position yourself as a thought leader](#) with the news, you will need to make your message distinctive. Here are a few ways your missive might be different:

- **Niche focused.** Perhaps you can tailor the information to an industry, geographic area or type of clientele, such as the effect the decision will have on small businesses.
- **Comprehensive.** Maybe you can justify your article being late because you have taken more time to analyze and explain the ruling and what it means to clients.
- **Practical.** Another way to differentiate is to add value. For example, aside from simply reporting on what happened, you might create a five-step plan for employers on how to respond in light of the change.
- **Understandable.** If you ensure that your advisory is the easiest to read and comprehend, that would undoubtedly capture readers' attention.

Four More Ways

There are other effective ways to capitalize on a new development as well, including:

- **Webinars.** You can quickly schedule a webinar for clients to discuss the development.
- **Seminars or conferences.** You can approach a trade or industry association with an offer to put on a program for its members at an upcoming event.
- **Website.** You can write something to post on the firm's website and distribute through social media.
- **Client meetings.** Finally, and perhaps most effectively, you can schedule one-on-one meetings with clients or referral sources to talk about the change and how it applies to them specifically.

If you are paying attention, marketing opportunities will cross your desk every week. They may take the form of a litigation result, a monumental transaction, even previously unplowed issues or developments within industries, companies or jurisdictions. Your ability to use these changes effectively can contribute significantly to your business development success.

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