

What's Your Law Practice's Value Proposition?

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April 23, 2024

When someone asks you what you do, consider the answer from their perspective. Your law practice value proposition should tell what benefits you provide.

I recently overheard a lawyer explain his practice and I walked away thinking that there was nothing in his description that gave me the slightest idea what he *actually* does for people — in other words, the outcome. The question in the minds of most clients is, how can you help me? When you describe your practice, you need to think about your value proposition. How will clients be better off?

What benefits do you provide?

Features vs. Benefits

“I’m a partner in the Minneapolis office.” “I’m a litigator.” “I work with restaurants a lot.” These are what we call features. Features may be descriptive of your practice but rarely move the ball on a hiring decision. Once clients know you meet their general criteria (e.g., location, practice, industry), they are looking for how you can help them, i.e., the benefits you provide.

Benefits are things like this:

- Helping their business achieve a goal.
- Solving a problem.
- Improving their bottom line.
- Getting them out of trouble.
- Keeping them out of trouble.
- Helping them make important contacts or connections.
- Saving them time.
- Saving them money.
- Providing peace of mind.
- Making things easy.
- Protecting their assets.
- Minimizing their risk or exposure.
- Making them look good.

Framing Your Value Proposition

When talking about your practice, you should frame your services in a way that emphasizes the value you provide to clients. Here are some examples.

- **IP litigator:** I help companies protect their “crown jewels” when someone infringes on their designs, inventions and ideas. [Protecting assets]
- **Commercial real estate lawyer:** I pride myself on turnaround time because every minute a lease isn’t signed, the owner or landlord isn’t making money. [Improving the bottom line]

- **Business lawyer:** I help clients make sure their interests are taken care of in contracts with employees, partners and suppliers. [Minimizing risk]
- **Estate planner:** I help clients ensure that their loved ones will be taken care of while saving money when the assets are transferred. [Providing peace of mind]
- **Employment lawyer:** I do a lot of HR training for companies so they can stem potential problems before they turn into expensive employee claims or lawsuits. [Keeping them out of trouble]
- **Government relations lawyer:** I am a liaison to the government for my clients to enact legislation or regulations that help them flourish. [Helping them achieve a goal]
- **Succession planner:** As a business planning lawyer, I want to help clients continue the legacy they've created by ensuring a smooth transition to their successors. [Making them look good]
- **Immigration lawyer:** I help companies get foreign workers on board quickly and fill their staffing shortages so they can operate at full capacity. [Solving a problem]
- **IP prosecutor:** I'm good at getting patents approved quickly so clients can get their products to market and start making money from their ideas. [Improving the bottom line]
- **Healthcare lawyer:** Because I work so much with hospitals and medical practices, I speak the language of the healthcare industry and can get up to speed quickly on issues. [Saving money]

The next time someone asks you what you do, think about the answer from their perspective. What benefits will you provide?

Sally Schmidt, President of Schmidt Marketing, Inc., helps lawyers and law firms grow their practices. She was a founder and the first President of the Legal Marketing Association, is a Fellow of the College of Law Practice Management and was one of the first inductees to LMA's Hall of Fame. Known for her practical advice, she is the author of two books, "[Marketing the Law Firm: Business Development Techniques](#)" and "[Business Development for Lawyers: Strategies for Getting and Keeping Clients](#)." Follow her @SallySchmidt.