

5 ways to raise your profile

Feeling sluggish in the practice department? Dust off your profile and learn how to stand out from the crowd with this refresher guide

It is a difficult topic to broach with many members of the Bar. The thought of raising one's profile can seem at odds with many of our long-held traditions. Times are changing and in order to move your practice in a different direction, seek judicial appointment or be kept in mind while you take extended leave, it may be necessary to employ active strategies that will enhance your profile.

Every year more barristers qualify to enter an already busy market. Is it time for the Bar to take a more corporate approach to marketing our individual practices and expertise? Here are five recommended ways to set yourself apart from the rest, gleaned from discussions at a recent seminar.

1. YOUR WEBSITE ENTRY

Your web profile has become increasingly important in recent years. It is your shop window, seen by solicitors and clients alike, so put some imagination into its content and design. Gear your input so that it shows how you add value. Include points that distinguish you as a practitioner and

Women in the Law UK events

This article is based on a Women in the Law UK event hosted at 33 Bedford Row entitled How To Raise Your Profile on 28 March 2019 with a keynote speech by Mrs Justice McGowan and advice from other speakers including a senior partner at Russell Cooke. This event was attended by both male and female barristers and solicitors. Women in the Law has a full calendar of professional development and social events held in Manchester, London, Leeds and the Midlands. All events include time to socialise and meet new people in the legal profession. Membership is open to counsel, solicitors and those that work in and with the legal profession. See: www.womeninthelawuk.com

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highlight why you are the better choice for the solicitor or client. This can include articles you've written, reported cases or an unusual niche that you have developed eg representing grandparents, charities or expertise in a particular group or community such as travellers. Consider adding something unique and specific about yourself such as a sporting interest, singing in a choir or long-distance cycling. These are points which make you memorable, demonstrate that you have other strings to your bow and make

you seem more human, which is always a useful quality!

Remember to refresh and update the content so that it remains current and relevant. All too often we as counsel fail to add new items and allow our web profiles to become stale and dated. It may be possible to engage the assistance of one of your clerks to upload and update on your behalf if this is something that you think you may not get around to doing.

2. MEET AND GREET

The first step to raising your profile is to raise your standing or, in other words, up your game. The pursuit of excellence at all times in terms of keeping up to date with your areas of expertise and consistently demonstrating that you are committed to doing a good job is the starting point.

It is important, also, to get out and meet people in your current field or the area that you would like to move into. There is no substitute for face to face contact. If you are not naturally outgoing and recoil at the mere mention of the word 'networking' it may be of some reassurance that it is not as bad as it at first appears. Think about where your clients and solicitors come from. Most work comes from warm connections rather than completely cold links which are much harder to develop into meaningful work. The most useful events to attend are specialist group events held by those practising in the area. This will

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hopefully assist in getting relevant professionals to know who you are and what you do.

3. WHAT IS YOUR MOTIVATION?

Who are you and what do you want to achieve? This could be, for example, more instructions in a particular area of law or a judicial appointment. What compromises are you willing to make to get to that point? Often it is your own perception that limits what you can achieve. It helps to have a notable feature which is unique to you but this must obviously be underpinned by being consistently good at what you do. Confidence, success and repeat clients come from establishing a good reputation and playing to your own strengths.

4. KEEP YOUR HAND IN: EXTENDED LEAVE

Those of us at the Bar taking extended leave such as maternity leave or caring for elderly relatives can become preoccupied with not being forgotten while we are away. We are, after all, self-employed and a certain amount of nervousness is ever present about being away for too long. One recommended way to raise your profile while on extended leave is to agree to speak at a conference or event. This will require a fixed period time commitment only. Writing articles for publications which are read by your target group or reviewing recent case law not only keeps you up to date but gets your name out there. It can be done at any time such as evenings or in between child care. Consider how any articles can be distributed electronically to your target groups.

5. SOCIAL MEDIA

LinkedIn and other professional-based platforms can be useful to maintain connections with members of the Bar and solicitors that move on to new firms. It is worth subscribing to premium services on LinkedIn for example if you feel that your target market can be found on this or similar platforms. Other forms of social media such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram should be approached with caution. The independent Bar is still a conservative profession therefore rules have to be adhered to when using social media. The consequences of pushing these boundaries can be serious. Advice given by senior lawyers and members of the judiciary include not posting pictures of your children on social media and not oversharing personal details. ●



About the author
Deborah Bryan is Joint Deputy Head of Chambers at 33 Bedford Row, a mixed common law set, and a specialist family practitioner specialising in public law cases involving children and complex private law disputes. Deborah is also one of the London ambassadors for the Women in the Law UK.