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## Looking at Law-Firm Marketing Depts. in 2007

By Eva Wisnik and Jennifer Johnson

The first half of 2007 revealed some new trends in law-firm marketing, including structural shifts in departments that are yielding the addition of new job functions. This has made the quest for talent to fill these roles exceedingly difficult.

### STRUCTURAL SHIFTS

According to our research, the top position in AmLaw 100 firms is Chief Marketing Officer. Fifty-seven firms have CMOs and 43 have a Director in the top role. The discrepancies in departmental structures have led to a situation in which titles mean different things at different firms. For example, in a firm with a Chief structure, a Manager would be a third-level position, and a Director title would be the second-in-line spot.

Some firms, particularly those with the Director structure, have added a "Specialist" layer in between Coordinator and Manager positions. Specialists have between 4-7 years of experience and are ready to begin owning projects, but are not senior enough to manage people. We have seen these particularly in business development roles where they begin taking the lead on client research and writing projects, working directly, in many cases, with the lawyers. For example, Specialists may play a role in developing portions of original content for RFPs. A Coordinator may be limited to collecting and shipping materials. A Manager would lead the entire process from start to finish.

### FUNCTIONAL ADDITIONS

Operations and Project Managers are being added to many firms in order to help the top professional (whether it is a Chief or a Director) focus on high-level strategy with Partners. The Operations or Projects Manager often handles the day-to-day running of the marketing department and serves as the liaison to other departments in the firm —such as IT (for implementation of a CRM system or a new Website rollout, for example) or Recruiting (to develop collateral

for use in attracting law students). The Operations or Project Manager also handles the department's budget, manages vendor relationships, and assists in staffing openings.

In the last few months we have also seen several firms looking to hire Proposal Center Managers. These people are Project Managers who oversee the RFP, pitch and proposal process. They also track wins/losses, and maintain a knowledge center of all content that is used to ensure accuracy and consistency of information distributed to clients across the firm's offices.

The addition of PR professionals to in-house departments is a trend that started last year and continues to gain momentum. We have heard that Marketing Directors prefer to have PR people "on the ground" inside the firm so that they can keep "tabs" on the lawyers' deals and cases. According to Eileen King, Global Director of Public Relations at Paul, Hastings, "An in-house PR professional has a deeper understanding of the firm's business and strategic objectives as well as more direct access to the lawyers. This relationship allows the PR professional to be more effective in raising awareness and visibility and furthering the firm's business goals." Many of the PR people are also taking on an internal communications role to keep multiple offices of the firm in tune with each other. John Knox, Head of Business Development for Allen & Overy, says, "The addition of a high-level communications and public-relations professional is integral to the firm's business success in promoting the firm to clients and prospects, but also to promote a particular office as well as the individual practices to other offices of the firm."

## MARKET OUTLOOK

In the past year, we have been approached to fill 224 positions, and what we're finding is that as layers and functionalities are added in the departments, there are less and less people to fit the bill. To date, there are more than 2500 marketers in just the AmLaw 100 firms (according to our survey in January 2007) and there are no signs that hiring is slowing. According to Nat Slavin, President of the Board of Directors of The Legal Marketing Association, "The rapid rise of the professionalism of the marketing and business development has been embraced by the more sophisticated firms, regardless of size and geographic breadth. The modern marketing department has a greater need for specialization, and subsequently, new positions. This marketplace evolution entices professionals from other industries and countries to look more seriously at a career in legal marketing. As firms increase their reliance on their marketing and business development functions, the size of these departments begins to look more like the rest of corporate America."

## CREATIVE HIRING

We are urging our clients to think outside the box for candidates and have had to seek other resources for our clients to fill their positions. One way we have found resources is to bring people in from Australia — to date, we have placed three Australians into law firms in the U.S., and we have several more who are anxious to make the move to America. Zoë Ehrlich, Chief Administrative Officer and Chief Business Development Officer of Kobre & Kim LLP, says, "The E3 Visa offered by the Australian government is truly a path of least resistance. Other than the time it takes to fill out the application, it is cost-free for the employer. Brilliant!" Sarah Jackson, an Aussie who has been with Sullivan & Cromwell for more than a year, says, "It's been an incredibly rewarding experience having the opportunity to share ideas and experiences from the Australian legal marketing arena. I think Australians can offer a fresh and dynamic perspective, and are often recognized for their 'can-do' attitude."

In this continuously evolving legal industry, firms have come to a place where they are investing in their marketing departments. As these departments continue to expand, it is imperative that firms add the right talent so that client's needs can be served most effectively.

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**Eva Wisnik**, President of Wisnik Career Enterprises, and **Jennifer Johnson**, Director of Recruitment, specialize in collaborating with law firms nationwide to identify top-quality professionals to lead their marketing, business development and public relations departments. They are looking forward to sharing their market knowledge with you through this column. Please e-mail any topic ideas, thoughts, or questions to [marketing@wisnik.com](mailto:marketing@wisnik.com).