

8 Ways to Increase Your Perceived Stability & Credibility

By Trey Ryder

Prospects form perceptions about you long before they walk into your office. Marketing is a battle of perceptions. These tips will help you build positive perceptions and increase your credibility.

1. Make sure your documents look attractive. Even before your prospect reads the words, your lines, borders, white space, fonts and photographs create the document's first impression on your prospect's brain.
2. Use understated graphics. I've seen lawyers' documents that looked as if the lawyer bought a new graphics program, then used one of everything: A star. A lightning bolt. An arrow. Before long, the document looked like a bad newspaper ad. Graphics should support your message, not interfere with it.
3. Consider buying engraved stationery. When properly designed, it's clean, neat, elegant and high-end. When a lawyer sends me a letter on engraved stationery, I know immediately that he is a "good lawyer."
4. Make sure your address label and envelope look clean and crisp. Prospects instantly and subconsciously evaluate what they see, even before they open the envelope.
5. Make sure your fees seem fair and reasonable. In practice areas where contingent fees are common, they are generally accepted by clients. But now lawyers in other areas of law are trying to get a percentage of the action. Watch how your prospects respond to your discussion of fees. You must be able to explain how you charge so it makes sense to your prospect and seems fair to both parties.
6. Get powerful phone numbers. When the phone company opened a new exchange in Payson, I quickly secured 928-468-1000 and 928-468-2000. You look more stable, important and influential when you have good phone numbers.
7. Set up a web site. Today, if you don't have a web site, prospects and clients wonder what's wrong with you. So if you still haven't built a web site, choose a provider, hire a marketing person, and get busy.
8. Get your own law firm domain name for your web site and e-mail addresses. Lawyers who do not have their own domain names appear to be lightweights. Often, prospects and clients infer that the lawyer is "between assignments" and will get a his own domain name when he gets a job.

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