



Legal Marketing Strategies: **International Legal Marketing Opportunities Between Israel and the United States**

By Adv. Zohar Fisher and Margaret Grisdela

Law firms looking for new business may want to expand their horizons to take on an international perspective. Just as international athletes recently competed in the 2012 Summer Olympics, this article will address how motivated U.S. and Israeli lawyers can successfully train to take home the gold, silver, or bronze of new client engagements.

The Israeli-American Legal Niche and Potential

Israel ranked first in the number of lawyers relative to the country's population according to a 2010 report by *Haaretz*, a leading Israeli newspaper. Israel's legal market presents unique competitive characteristics with an abundance of legal firms clustered in a few regions of legal activity (most offices are located in central Israel and Jerusalem).

While U.S. attorneys consider many state bar associations to be overly strict in regard to attorney advertising guidelines, Israeli law firms are subject to a very narrow pool of advertising opportunities. Israel Bar Association ethics regulations are considered to be quite limiting in comparison to common U.S. marketing campaigns (TV commercials, radio, direct mail, etc.). The Internet still offers Israeli lawyers some freedom for reaching out to clients by creative marketing techniques, especially when targeting prospects in the U.S.A.

The American Jewry comprises the second largest Jewish population in the world, where more than five million Jews live and prosper. For many of them, Israel is a central focus of their lives and they aspire to engage with Israel by creating financial investments, business opportunities and even future living prospects for their children. American Jews bring great human and financial resources to the Holy Land and therefore, require a range of legal services from lawyers who are well informed in Israeli law.

A New York lawyer once told author Zohar,

“Almost every New York attorney has at least one case that relates to Israeli law and requires legal advice by an Israeli lawyer.”

In most of the prominent American law firms, one can find two or three in-house associates or partners who hold an Israeli law license in addition to their American credentials, and who speak Hebrew up to a certain level. Dual licenses provide clients with reassurance that the law firm will

take care of one's American and Israeli legal affairs without the need to search for a lawyer in Israel.

New York, Los Angeles, Miami, and other major population centers where large Jewish communities live and do business are home to the majority of these internationally focused law firms. American law firms enjoy an advantage in serving the needs of American Jews who conduct business, own real estate, or who have other legal needs in Israel's Holy Land.

American law firms that provide legal affairs pertaining to Israel and Israeli law include "mega law firms" such as Morrison Foerster or Fulbright & Jaworski, as well as small-to-medium size U.S. firms where lawyers hold both Israeli and American licenses. The scheme is brilliant and profitable. But is it reciprocal with an Israeli firm? Unfortunately not.

It seems that only few lawyers and firms in Israel are aware of the many opportunities and needs of American Jews and their interests in Israel. Among those who respond to the American Jewish demand, just a handful of Israeli law firms hold an office in New York as well as in Tel-Aviv.

Bridging Distance and Time with Digital Communications

Despite the time differences (with Israel six hours ahead of New York City standard time), email, Skype and other forms of electronic communications remove many barriers to international business development and client fulfillment.

Calendar work schedules vary between countries as well, with the U.S. on a Monday to Friday business cycle compared to the Sunday to Thursday routine observed in Israel. Nevertheless, international business communications somehow manage to respect religious observances while giving all parties the ability to respond in a mutually convenient method.

Making use of LinkedIn, Facebook, and other social network techniques allows law firms to reach out to clients from other continents without travel expenses or wasted time. Aggressive international law firms should not be satisfied to show up only in websites and search engine results. Current Internet trends show that 2.0 websites, which allow users to interact and collaborate with each other in a social media dialogue, are among the most popular sites and generate high traffic rates.

Facebook and blogs are means with which lawyers and firms in Israel can engage potential American clients in a dialogue for networking, Q&A, and sharing new legal insights about popular themes.

Creating Israeli-U.S. Legal Alliances Online and Offline

New U.S. business opportunities await U.S. and Israeli firms willing to invest some time and effort in cross-border legal marketing campaigns. Internet marketing and personal networking minimize the cost of implementing strategic solutions.

U.S. attorneys are increasingly becoming specialized, which means that your business development campaign should target very specific markets both geographically and in regard to practice areas. For example, you might want to focus on intellectual property attorneys in Los Angeles, or the Jewish business community in New York.

A personal referral network of non-competing attorneys, accountants, bankers, clients and others is the most common way for U.S. attorneys to get business. An equally effective international referral network can be built through LinkedIn, blog posts, and international membership organizations.

Current clients are your best source of new business, so tell them that you are available to provide cross-border legal services on matters involving the U.S. and Israel. Give examples of the type of work you can provide. Spread the word far and wide on a regular basis to stay “top of mind” when a need arises.

Maximize the ability of your website to attract international attention with the right landing pages, meta tags, keywords, and frequently updated copy. A subject-matter blog will supplement your site and help you build an international following. Online ad campaigns using the geo-targeting features in Google AdWords can be highly effective in cross-border lead generation. In terms of social media, LinkedIn is the number one choice of U.S. attorneys and other business professionals.

Build your reputation for Israeli legal services among American prospects by speaking at international conferences. Webinars also offer a low cost alternative when reaching an international audience. Publishing articles is another effective way to attract cross-border clients, without the need for expensive travel. Consider co-authoring with a U.S. or Israeli counterpart to gain easier access to U.S. legal publications or trade magazines.

In Conclusion

Israeli and U.S. lawyers may want to consider that enhanced legal opportunities await them among the American Jewry. More cooperation between American and Israeli lawyers can bear fruit on both sides.

Facilitating that domain of opportunities is better pursued by Israeli and American lawyers when using the many platforms that the internet holds. LinkedIn, Facebook, and the Blogosphere are the right tools for engaging people in web-based dialogues about interesting and up-to-date legal affairs.

About the Authors



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