**Are You a Lawyer? Here’s How to Become a Legal Pundit in the Media**

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Shy isn’t an adjective that is often used to describe attorneys, but taking your point of view out into the media is something that can feel like a daunting task even to the most brazen attorney. But have you ever been reading your morning paper or watching the nightly news, and found yourself wondering, “How did that lawyer get on TV? I could do that.” If you’ve decided you want to start putting yourself or your law firm in the public light but feel at a loss about how to start, this article is for you.

Getting yourself involved in the media may seem like an intimidating task, but there are actually several surefire, easy steps you can take to get yourself noticed in the media and even on TV. I currently work with several attorneys, many of whom had little to no media experience when they first started out on this task. Here are my nine best tips for getting noticed and making sure you and your law firm are successfully standing out against the rest of the field.

* ***Have a media-friendly website***. Post videos of past interviews or news clips front and center on your homepage. Haven’t done any interviews yet so you don’t have any videos to share? Consider investing in hiring a production team to come in and film short video clips of you and your legal team. These clips can be about anything from describing what sets your firm apart from the competition to explaining a major case you just won or even debriefing a major legal case in the news. When you have a good video collection built up, you should create a “media” tab on your site to house all of your videos and then make sure to update it periodically. One of the first things a news producer will do when considering a new guest is to search for videos on her or him to make sure he is a good “talker.” If they cannot easily find a good video of a guest, they may move on to another person they can more easily vet, so making sure you’re represented front and center is integral to your media success.
* ***Start blogging***. One of the best ways to get yourself or your law firm noticed in the media is to start blogging about trials the media is covering. These blogs will not only showcase your writing but will also prove to journalists that you are positioning yourself as an “expert in the field.” An added bonus, not only will it help your media representation, but it will also likely boost your SEO (search engine optimization) rankings. A site with a higher SEO ranking will place higher on generic searches off a page like Google or Bing, and that’s another way to bring reporters to your site and get them to notice you. An important note, when blogging make sure to try and take a stand on your point of view. Members of the media love interviewing a lawyer with a passionate stance on a case!
* ***Make sure you’re strong on social media***. After checking out your website, the first thing a journalist will do when vetting an interview is check out your social media links, especially Twitter. Social media is a great way to share the blog posts you’re writing with the world, just make sure to use appropriate #hashtags and @mentions to get more traction and clicks. More and more often journalists are finding their resources and guests via Twitter, so you don’t want to miss out on this opportunity! An added bonus, social media is essentially free press for you and your firm.
* ***Determine which type of media outlets you want to be in***. Has it always been your dream to be featured in the *Wall Street Journal*? Interviewed as a live guest on Fox News Channel? Profiled in *Entrepreneur Magazine*? Take the time to figure out which outlet would best suit your practice and then identify the appropriate reporters at each outlet to connect with. Try to find journalists who cover legal news or trials that are in your wheelhouse. A great tool for finding reporters is LinkedIn and Twitter. Many reporters will identify themselves as “legal reporter” or “business reporter” for specific media outlets. Make sure you’re contacting the correct reporter or you risk burning bridges with an outlet.
* ***Keep your pitching limited when you first begin.***Be careful to not bombard journalists at first. It’s important to position yourself as an integral resource who will make their life, and reporting, easier and more comprehensive. A generally safe approach is to weave your legal expertise into a larger trend in the field of law, or tie it back to a current trial that’s getting media attention. You’ll likely receive more media coverage that way. Also remember, when emailing reporters, to keep you emails on task and get straight to the point. Many of these reporters are extremely busy and are receiving hundreds of emails a day.
* ***Work your way up.*** Want to be a legal analyst for Fox News Channel? That’s a great goal, but be sensible and realistic about your experience. Starting as an attorney or legal analyst for local television news stations and newspapers/magazines is a great chance to practice giving succinct and smart answers in front of a smaller audience before moving up to bigger media outlets.
* ***Play to your strengths***. Were you known for your sharp and quick-witted brain but finding yourself tongue-tied anytime you had to try a case in front of a jury? Maybe you’re better suited for print interviews rather than TV or radio. Find that you do best when you’re debating another person? You might fair best in a TV legal head-to-head. Know where your strengths lie and play to them.
* ***Do your homework.*** Know the legal cases that are trending in the media so that you’re ready to assist a reporter whenever one may ask for help. Always have talking points ready for any major cases. They can be short, just a few bullets, but you have to have something to show your point of view. Don’t just prepare cases in the news, but look for interesting legal issues in other trending news stories. Think that story about surveillance of mosques is sorely missing a conversation about the rights granted to us by the First Amendment? Feel free to pitch the suggestion to a reporter. But remember, if you’re going to pitch you better have those talking points to back yourself up and showcase your point of view.
* ***Time is of the utmost importance.*** Once you’ve started to establish yourself in the media, remember how important time is when it comes to the news industry. If you want to snag that available spot in the legal panel or in a legal article, you must act quickly. Most reporters are working on a deadline, either their paper is going to print, or their show is going on the air. If you don’t respond quickly and have your point of view for them, they will move on to another option. You don’t want to lose that media coverage and you don’t want to find yourself branded as slow to reply or ill-prepared.

These tips may seem overwhelming and they do, certainly, require a significant amount of time. Are you finding yourself feeling overwhelmed by all these intricacies? Working with a PR agency that specializes in representing lawyers in the media is always a smart avenue to pursue to help guide you through the process and make your workload a lot easier.



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