

From the Editors

Taylor's Perspective ...

New Book Offers Marketing Advice Via Engaging Anecdotes and Examples

Deborah Farone has done her homework, and the legal profession is much better off because of it.

Last month I experienced an odd-in-a-good-way coincidence. I had called Jon Lindsey, a partner at the recruitment firm Major, Lindsey & Africa, for help with this issue's lead article on law firm leaders. I missed him but he called back and left me a voice-mail message with answers to my questions—insightful answers as usual. And then, apropos of nothing, he recommended two books—one about a libel case against Teddy Roosevelt by Dan Abrams and David Fisher and another about law firm marketing by Farone, calling it “very, very good.”

The coincidence? The next person on my to-call list that day was Deborah Farone to ask for a review copy of her book, *Best Practices in Law Firm Business Development and Marketing*. I smiled at this “synergistic convergence,” (something one might have heard 50 years ago at Woodstock) and said

to myself, “Well, if Jon likes the book, it must indeed be ‘very, very good.’”

Best Practices offers practical advice from one of the nation's most experienced and talented law firm marketing gurus—it could be a textbook for a marketing class, a lively textbook at that. Lawyers and other professionals at firms of all sizes can benefit from the book. A sentence on the back cover succinctly describes its content: “Each chapter is filled with information that can be scaled to apply to a single-person law practice or to a large international law firm.”

But it's also a book of stories. The many anecdotes draw in the reader, beginning with Chapter 1 in which Farone recalls her first day on the job in 1989 as a 26-year-old serving as the first-ever marketer for prestigious Debevoise & Plimpton. (She ultimately became the firm's chief marketing officer, a role she also performed for Cravath, Swaine & Moore.) Read that opening narrative—with just the right amount of colorful details needed to create a

scene that's set in the early days of law firm marketing—and you quickly realize that this person can write and write very well.

Consider this sentence that recounts the firm's HR director depositing Farone into her office, a windowless, former “storage closet for firm-related memorabilia” filled with packing boxes; here she finds an old photo of name partner Francis T.P. Plimpton: “He was distinguished in a Christopher Plummer sort of way, with a dusting of light grey hair, properly lined crow's feet at his temples and glasses resting on his forehead, as if he were getting ready to inspect the inner workings of a watch, or a tiny insect that had fallen on top of a document.”

After that robust, multisentence paragraph, Farone punctuates her prose with a one-sentence graph that sets the course for the book: “I was off to the races with a career in law firm marketing.” The first-person account in this chapter works well.

Five Dozen-Plus Interviews

The marketing philosophy and tips emerge by example through anecdotes from a host of legal-industry professionals. In one of the best chapters in the book, entitled “Culture and Pursuing New Business,” Farone underscores the importance of cultivating the right work environment and describes the many things, some of them nuanced, firms do to create their own culture.

At one fairly new firm in New York and New Jersey, for example, the leaders wanted to inspire creative thinking so they lined the office walls with photos of musicians such as John Lennon, Deborah Harry, and other icons, taken by the famous rock-and-roll photographer Bob Gruen, one of the firm's clients. Not only does the artwork subtly encourage innovative thinking, it showcases a client's work. That's a smart move and Farone's smart to include this example.

While the writing sails along smoothly with clear, compelling, and concise prose, what's just as impressive are the many interviews Farone conducted—the above-mentioned homework. With more than 60 interviews with experts in a range of legal-profession positions both inside and outside of law firms, this may be one of the most thoroughly well-sourced books of its kind.

In addition to the culture chapter, two others really resonated with me. Chapter 8, “Traditional and Social Media,” demonstrates once again that Farone knows her stuff and talks to the right people to validate or supplement what she already knows. Here's some advice she offers: “Reporters want to call experts they respect” for insight. “Just as important though, they need sources who will respond promptly. Chances are the reporter is under a deadline.”

Thank you, Deborah. While I've been fortunate over the years with lawyers calling me back for my articles, occasionally one will fail to return a call or respond in a way that's really a nonresponse. I won't reach out to him or her again. By the way, during Rodgen Cohen's tenure as chair of Sullivan & Cromwell, I called him often, and he always either picked up the phone himself or called me back very promptly. Of course, *Of Counsel* is clearly not *The New York Times* but Rodg made me feel like I was just as important as a *Times* reporter.

The other chapter that's particularly thought-provoking, helpful, well-sourced, and well-written is “Women and Marketing.” It chronicles the challenges women have encountered and continue to face both in their marketing efforts and in their practice. Importantly, Farone also articulates both the special skills women possess and how to make the most of them and the obstacles they face and how to navigate around them. She ends the chapter with advice from business strategist Bonnie Ciaramella, who works with law firm partners. The tips are called “Ten Things Women in Law Can Do to Build Their Practice,” and they are quite valuable.

For years, Farone has built a well-earned reputation as a stellar legal marketing expert with a career that's decorated with many distinctive honors—and yet she maintains a genuinely modest personality. The profession should be grateful she's shared much of what

she's learned in *Best Practices*. Read it and you're instantly smarter and better equipped to succeed. ■

—Steven T. Taylor

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