

## Episode 10 - Lead Generation & Attorney Rankings with Berbay Marketing & PR [PODCAST]

Article By:

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It's our last episode of [Season 1](#)! Rachel meets with [Megan Braverman, Owner, and Principal of Berbay Marketing & PR](#). The two take a stab at public relations, post-COVID-19 changes within the news industry, and the best ways to differentiate your firm from the rest. The trick? Listen to our last episode to find out more.

We've included a transcript of our conversation below, transcribed by artificial intelligence. The transcript has been lightly edited for style, clarity, and readability.

### **INTRO** 00:02

Hello, and welcome to Legal News Reach, the official podcast for The National Law Review. Stay tuned for a discussion on the latest trends and legal marketing, SEO, law firm best practices and more.

### **Rachel** 00:15

My name is Rachel and I'm the host of Legal News Reach the official podcast for The National Law Review. Today's episode is the last of our season, so be sure to check out our other episodes wherever you find your podcasts. Today we're speaking with Megan Braverman, Principal with Berbay Marketing and PR. Megan, would you like to tell us a little bit about yourself?

### **Megan Braverman** 00:34

Yeah, thanks, Rachel. Hello, everyone. My name is Megan Braverman with Berbay Marketing and Public Relations. We are a marketing and PR firm, we specialize in working with law firms. We create the visibility and credibility that fuels revenue growth. So we, whether it's traditional PR speaking or social media, we help you get recognition and drive more business.

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**Rachel** 00:58

Excellent, I'm sure we'll have a great conversation today that our listeners find really interesting. So we've covered a few topics around the effects of COVID-19 and legal marketing- I wonder if you could just talk a little bit about how a PR has changed as the pandemic began?

**Megan Braverman** 01:14

Yeah, I think that each year brings new challenges to the media industry. We dealt with it when advertising was hitting rock bottom, and the world of fake news. And so the media industry is just like this fluid ecosystem that's constantly evolving, and so COVID I mean, that was before COVID. And then once COVID hit, it was really, lots of changes happen. And I think it's a lot of industries, a lot of businesses were affected, and people don't necessarily think of the media as an industry. And the media industry was no exception in terms of being ravaged by the pandemic. And so, a couple of the big changes is that there were a lot of furloughs and a lot of people that left. And so I think that one of the major changes we saw right off the bat was that reporters were really time-strapped. They had sometimes half the staff, if not, if not less. The massive layoffs had a big impact. So there needs to sort of plan and the stories that they have to ride, the amount of stories that they have to write is just completely different. A lot of them also took on different beats, a lot of reporters, they became healthcare reporters overnight and became- took on other of their colleagues roles who had been laid off or left. And so before, they might have been filing a few stories a week, and sometimes some reporters were reporting that they were 10 Plus stories a week, which is a massive workload you really need to work harder to stand out, it's reporters are so inundated and that that sort of time-strapped element really affected sort of how the PR industry within the media industry was operating. That's one big thing, I think, when the other real big change that we saw is the focus to stories, right? When the pandemic first hit for about a year, so many stories were COVID-related. And those were just the things that were dominating headlines for a long time. And, and journalists really only seemed to be interested in the angle that associated with COVID, or something, you couldn't be tone-deaf, there was a lot going on in the world. And COVID is just one piece. So, the shift of stories, we saw a lot now as the as the pandemic went on, for so long, you started to see that change. So it wasn't just COVID-related stories. I think, after a while people were looking for, like human interest pieces, they wanted to talk about how COVID changed everyone's lives, and they wanted personal sides of the story and more meaningful pieces. So I think today there's there is that COVID fatigue, and a lot of ways I think people are sort of done with writing the COVID stories, but you've seen that evolution of how stories have changed, and they're kind of just looking through a different lens now than they were a couple years ago.

**Rachel** 04:14

Yes, interesting. You talk about just how COVID has perforated everything. And now it's just, you know, it's almost like people are tired of hearing about like, the news cycle is such a short thing. And then it's almost like people are ready to move on to something else. But it's like, how can you move on to something else when it's still impacting so much of our daily lives?

**Megan Braverman** 04:33

Right, exactly. Absolutely.

**Rachel** 04:36

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So you've spoken a little bit about how the industry is changing and how PR has had to pivot a little bit to account for that. So what are some ways that PR firms are reaching audiences as things are changing so quickly?

**Megan Braverman** 04:54

Yeah, so I think I had mentioned that it's really hard to stand out these days. So you, you have to do a lot more to differentiate yourself than I think you had to do even a couple of years ago. I mean, I think you've always had to distinguish yourself. And you've always had to kind of explain why you're the expert and why they should be talking to you. But now that it's through this different lens, I think it's even made it more important than ever. So I think one thing, when it comes to like, how do you adjust your media strategy? How do you get attention in this in this new world? And everybody's always saying the new normal the New World, it's like, it's because it's really true. You know, it's—we're operating differently. And so it's the same thing for PR. So I think one thing, and this is really, this hasn't changed, but it's become, again, more relevant is you have to know who you're pitching you, and who the outlets target audiences is. That's the Dutch is so important now, because for example, if you want to get the attention of the Los Angeles Times, or the Washington Business Journal, or New York Times, it has to be relevant to that area. It can't just be sort of a generic thing. And so they why should DC care? Why should Ia care? Why should New York care, understanding what's important to the outlets readers is absolutely crucial, don't talk like and really tying it to like what's going on in the rest of the world? Because you can't talk about travel when a new lockdown has just been issued, right. So you really have to be more cognizant of what's going on, especially in those local areas. And I think that's always been important to the editorial staff at outlets. It's just more of an emphasis on that. I think that you also when it when you're pitching with your you have to just clearly state what the news hook is. I mean, why should they be reporting on this? And why is it important? So, also, why are you telling the story now, right, so it could be kind of an evergreen topic, and that's great. But you have to really explain like, Why Why should I care now? And, and remember, again, that reporters and editors, journalists, are inundated. So they don't have a lot of time to sift through the clutter, you have to really state very clearly, like long gone are the four-page press releases. And they want the information but consider linking to it or, giving them the summary and then providing more information later on in your email, or if you're calling them. The other thing is, you have to be really understanding of who you're reaching out to. Like I said before, a lot of reporters sort of they shifted beats, they took on other beats, you knowing their history is really important. Like let's say they're a real estate reporter, and just recently took on a different type of beat, well, maybe they're going to need some more context, maybe some more background. So just like really understanding the reporter and the outlet. The other thing I will say is, and this, we've just seen this more and more, I think the pandemic has just emphasized this is you don't just state the obvious, add your opinion, give your perspective, people want to know what you're thinking, I think this is can be challenging, sometimes for lawyers, because it's really just more fact-based, but like, What is your perspective on the subject? What is your opinion and state that really clearly? And I think we've talked to a lot of editorial staff, and they just they say that over and over again.

**Rachel** 08:39

Right, and it's interesting, you mentioned, making you're sure your pitch is relevant because I worked as a healthcare journalist before I joined The National Law Review, and I still get press releases from healthcare companies, and it's just like, I don't really do that anymore. Right. So you're sort of wasting my time and, and your own. And as a news outlet, we get all sorts of stuff that just isn't anywhere close to the sort of things that we cover. So getting that message out there is pretty important to people looking to pitch news outlets. So, um, I imagine that that goes on to my next question, firms

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are looking to get their expertise out there. And, you know, that can be a daunting thing and like knowing how to pitch media outlets, and you know, where to start with that. So why should firms utilize PR firms such as yours?

**Megan Braverman** 09:34

Yeah. Is it so I mean, here's the thing, it's not that PR is rocket science, right? I mean, a lot of this, you might be able to do on your own. We've seen firms very successfully do PR on their own, or they have in-house marketing folks to help them and that's great. I think there's, there's always pros and cons to each side. You know, lawyers are focused on being lawyers not necessarily marketing or being their own PR specialists. So I think an agency obviously can bring a lot to the table. I mean, one thing is that the first thing that comes to mind is bench strength. I mean, you're hiring an agency, you're hiring a team of specialists, it's like, and they're at your disposal. So you, the team of experts, is really important. They have years, we have decades of experience doing this, we do this day in and day out. And we, we have a lot of success. And so we know what works, we know what doesn't work. And I think that that is something that an agency can really provide the experience, it goes with that because we specialize in working with law firms. And so we, we know, the legal industry really well, we know, the outlets, we know, the reporters, and we just have that longevity in the industry to really help direct our strategy, and we can share insight and, and just help really guide firms into what they need to do and how they need to package their material. We have media connections because we're talking with the media all the time, again we've, we, we have relationships with reporters and editors. And we have placed many stories with different outlets. And so we have that connection, and that familiarity that a law firm might not have on their own if they haven't been doing it for years. I think the other thing is creativity. I mean, even the most creative person in the world can't be the most creative person every day. And I think that's what you get with a team of brains is that creativity? You know, I always say it's like, I think of the people who are like churning out Hallmark cards every day. Just think of like, how do they do that? You know, what, if you wake up, and you're just not feeling that creative, or you can't think of anything, and I think that the team brings that sort of creativity brain. And I also think sometimes you get bogged down in the day-to-day projects, and don't really have time to carve out to be strategic and creative. And so I think an agency can really provide that. I also think we just have more resources we have multiple media databases, which can come at a high price to make sure that we know people like you, Rachel is no longer covering healthcare. And I think we get a lot of inquiries just across our desk looking for this type of expert, so we just have our finger, that our fingers just have more opportunities that they're touching, and more things are coming across our desk that we can then present to clients. But I think those are some things that come to mind. I could I could probably go on.

**Rachel** 12:39

And that's a really great overview. Um, yeah, I think attorneys aren't always the best at telling their own stories. So I think any help they can get there is helpful.

**Megan Braverman** 12:53

That's a good point. Because it's like talking about yourself is not easy, right? If someone's just like, tell me why you're so great that I feel like a lot of people are stumped. And you have to sort of pro that's where the creativity comes in, you have to really probe for that. And like, dig in deep. But so that's a really good point you bring up.

**Rachel** 13:10

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Yeah, so going into our next point here- we sort of touched on this a little bit in terms of like how law firms can utilize PR firms. But I was curious if you could talk a little bit about what the best PR practices are for law firms, and also, like the legal industry in general.

**Megan Braverman** 13:30

Yeah, so, um, you know...There is no magic bullet. I will start by saying that. If there was, then maybe all of the marketing PR agencies would be retired somewhere on a private island, it's, there's no magic formula. But I think that there are a few things that come to mind when I think of as it relates to PR for law firms, I think one is that's really important, is you have to be consistent with your PR efforts. So don't just embark on a PR campaign for a couple of months, and then pull the plug or do it for three months. For four months. Do it again, I like to compare it to if you wanted to lose weight, it's like, okay, you can diet and you can exercise, but if you only do that for a couple of months, it's only going to get you so far. And I think that is a really important philosophy and carry you you build so much momentum and you really can lose steam if you if you're kind of turning it on and off like a faucet. And I think that consistency can help you cultivate relationships with reporters and editors because that doesn't just happen instantly. Sometimes that can take a really long time. I am or several conversations where you start to develop trust and build that credibility with that contact. So I think that consistency is really, really key. I think that you have, you know, you really have to be an advocate for yourself. I think a lot of law firms and lawyers that I speak with, get this right, they know that they have to push themselves out there in order to sort of get those great placements. And, but a lot of I think a lot of lawyers are really shy to do that. Like, they think like, Well, I'm a really fabulous lawyer. And I've been doing this for a long time. And so it should just come to me, but I think you have to, you have to be out there advocating for yourself. I mean, it's, it's like asking. I always hear all the time this is this is I hear this, like regularly, it's like, oh, Joe-Joe Smith down the street, I see him and everything I see him quoted, I see him speaking, I see him all these things. And, and I'm a better lawyer, I do much, you know, more complicated, much more high profile work, I've, I've been around longer, I just, he's a great guy, but I am just better at. And it's like, Well, Joe has someone advocating for him, Joe is like, either he's advocating for himself or someone's advocating for him. And so I think like, you just have to be comfortable with putting yourself out there and sort of getting over that fear. And then I would also say that there, there is so much about a lawyer's work and practice that it's the packaging is what I want to say it's like, I think that there's a lot of things on its face may not seem interesting, or may not be considered a trend. But if you really dig into the information and really look at the history of what this lawyer has been doing, or law firm has been doing, you can find the right angle and peace. And I think because a lot of lawyers are like, Well, I'm not really I don't have anything interesting to say, right? And it's really like, no, there's a lot there and what they think might be run of the mill could be that little golden nugget that reporters are looking for in and really, I think editorial teams, like they're looking for ideas, they're looking they're seeking ideas that is going to be relevant to their readers. And so I think that's another PR practice like, don't just believe that I don't have anything interesting to say, I think there's, you know after you really dig and uncover there's, there's a lot there.

**Rachel** 17:42

Once attorneys sort of make the decision that they want to put themselves out there more, how can they get their needs out there to reach new clients? And to sort of tie it back to what you're talking to earlier, what are some ways they can differentiate themselves from their peers?

**Megan Braverman** 17:57

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Sure. So I think, I mean, you have to be clear about what your objectives are, like, what are you trying to achieve? What do you want people to know about you, and you kind of work backward from there. The other thing too, is who are you trying to reach? You know, what are those people read? What conferences are they attending? And what problems do they need solved? What kind of what keeps them up at night? And I think that, that you kind of have to reverse engineer it, because then you can kind of find out all right, like, this is the people that we're trying to target. And here's, here's what here's the message we're trying to convey. And then we can identify, Okay, here are the publications and the outlets that are targeting those readers, and that are interested in stories for that market. And so we always work backward, we start with the objectives and the target markets, because then it's just sort of like you're putting things out there in the wind and hoping they stick and so when it comes to differentiation, I mean, that that's always a hard question and a hard thing to pinpoint for a lot of firms. Because we talked to firms, and they say, we're the greatest trial lawyers in this county are in this state and, okay, that might be true, but how do you actually prove that and how do you demonstrate that, that capability and that expertise, and I think that kind of goes back to the no magic bullet, which is like, you really have to drill down and into what, what makes you unique and special, and, and it's harder and harder to stand out these days. You know, it's an oversaturated market, you know, there, there's a lot of clutter. And so it's, it's really trying to find beyond, okay, I'm a great trial lawyer, or I hear like we utilize technology. Okay, what does that mean utilizing your computers, I mean, what is it about tech that you're doing differently? Um, oftentimes I find that first isn't really sharing all the really cool things are doing inside their firms, four walls or their virtual walls these days. So, you know, really just trying to uncover that I think is part of the process. But those would be a couple things that I say no, it's a, it's sort of a, again, it's, there's no one size fits all.

**Rachel** 20:20

So sort of going off of that and tying it back to what we were talking about earlier. You know, attorneys often log their own accomplishments, and, you know, they say, "Oh, I'm a really good lawyer, I have all these awards, and I'm, you know, I should be in more publications and things like that." So how do attorneys work with PR firms to showcase their success to the public?

**Megan Braverman** 20:45

Yeah, so um, I think when it comes to, one of the, the things that we find is the most overlooked piece is touting their successes, like they have a lot of great wins or deal successes, or clients general client successes that aren't known to the public. I have a lot of conversations with lawyers, and they tell me all these different matters and deals that they've worked on and transactions that they've worked on. And then when you go to their website, or where you read their bio, it's just not reflected online anywhere. So if you know the unknowing person went to their website, they just wouldn't, they wouldn't understand that. So I think that lawyers could do a lot. I mean, some do a great job with this. But there's a lot that I think, could do a much better job, which is just showcasing their, their successes online, whether that be through their website, through their bio through social media, also attorney rankings, it's, it's great when you see the rankings from let's say, best lawyers or other publications, like National Law Journal or, you know, lottery system. I mean, there's, there's a host of attorney rankings. And, and I think a lot of times we see like, this law firm, or this lawyer has been ranked in XYZ publication on XYZ list. But it actually doesn't really say why that why were they selected, as those are great coveted inclusions, but what about your work caught the attention of that outlet? And I think that's really, really important is talking about that, and really expanding upon magnifying those results if you get ranked in a list, or if you have a media placement, it's it's extending the shelf life and really talking about that, that specific placement. And let's say you're talking about NFTs, which is a really hot subject right now. Okay. There are so many headlines on

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NFTs like what if, what about your expertise is important? What about your experience in that with NFTs should the public know about, and I think you see a lot of real sort of generic descriptions or nothing at all. And I think that there's so much that attorneys can do to sort of magnify those results. And the caveat is, I know a lot of lawyers, some of this is confidential, some of it is sensitive, they can't tout it, and there will be those situations. So you have to dance around that a little bit. Sometimes you can tout something that is confidential or sensitive in a generic way. And just talk about your expertise. Sometimes you can just talk about the issues at play in a matter or in a deal and talk about how others are facing a similar situation. So you don't always have to explicitly state who you're representing, or who you are working with. And so there's ways to go around that.

**Rachel** 23:40

So moving on to our next topic here. In terms of lead generation, what are the best ways that you've seen law firms generate leads? Were there any tips you can share with our audience about that?

**Megan Braverman** 23:52

Sure. Well, again, I mean, I sound like a little bit of a broken record. But there isn't a magic bullet for this either. I think there's a couple of things to think about. One is it this is so dependent on the law firm, right? Because I think if you're talking about a plaintiff trial law firm versus you know, a, an IP defense firm, the ways that those firms are going to generate leads are going to be different. I think you have to have the right combination of tactics, you know, you have to, it's not just having the social media, it's not just having a great website, it's or it's not having the great PR campaign. It's really a combination, because many, many, many years ago, those things sort of happened in silos, it was in a vacuum. And now all of those things really work together, and they and they propel each other. So it's just the several spokes on the wheel that really helped and also, you know, you don't etch your marketing and your PR plan in stone. It's like those things are very much evolutionary, you know, you check in every quarter every six months and look back to see what's working and what's not working. And I think Two things, I'll note that just based on doing this for a really long time that I see kind of as, as the weaknesses is, one is a lot of law firms that we talk with they, they don't have a database, they are not building their network of people in any place. So whether it is great referral sources who have kind of disappeared for whatever reason, because they haven't stayed in front of them, or clients that, you know, maybe would be great as a reoccurring client, or great as a referral source you really need to build your database, I think it's the foundation of any business is to really have to start building your network, because you need to be communicating with your network. You know, it's like, they forget to remember you, the whole, the whole point of this is so that people think of you when there's a need, right? They, they might have known you several years ago, but then when something happens, you're not top of mind. And that just, that's what you're trying to build toward that top of mind awareness, I like to compare it to like a billboard, when you see a billboard, you're not going to remember it. But if you pass it, like 15 times, or 20 times, you could probably memorize everything on that billboard, you might not have a need for whatever it is, it could be a real retail company or something. But that consistency and that sort of it's etched in your brain. So when you do have a need you think of that firm first. And I think that's really what the point of a marketing and PR campaign is that top of mind awareness. So, so the database is really important. The other thing I will say is that a lot of firms are not tracking where their business and where their leads are coming from. So, you know, will talk with a lawyer and they say, Well I think it's about 50% I get from here and 20% from here, but they're not really sure they're also not sure where sort of the most lucrative business is coming from like, where are they? Are they getting their most complicated matters or the matters that they really want? Sometimes if you're a litigation shot, general commercial litigation is sharp, it can come from all kinds of places, I think that there needs to be some tracking in place to analyze that

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and to gain some insight from it, because then you can really say, Okay, wow, like, we're getting this percentage from here and this percentage from here, and wow, this other this co-counsel referred us three pieces of business in the last three years. And then they said, you can really start to gain some insight. And I think the firms that aren't tracking that. It's just like, kind of all lives in their head. And it's, it's not really the information you need. So, those are the couple of ways that I would say.

**Rachel** 27:43

Moving forward from that, in terms of, you know, where these lawyers practice and what their presence is within their own community. Why do you think it's important that firms have that community involvement, from a PR perspective?

**Megan Braverman** 27:55

I mean, I think that giving back and being a part of the community is really important. You can't fake that, I think it's really important. It's like, it really should be a natural extension of what that firm and lawyer does. I think, from a PR standpoint, people want to see the humans they want to see, not just the lawyer, they want to see these people are humans that care about their community and care about others other than themselves. And so I think anyone can agree when you're hiring a lawyer, you just want to make sure you're hiring someone that really cares and is generous, and is not just in it for themselves. And I do think you one of the things is like, when people ask me this question, I really, I don't think you can fake that I think it comes across as like they're just checking the box. And it should really be natural. And maybe that's not you, but maybe there are others in your firm that can take over that initiative, and be a little bit more organic than let's just tick the box of giving back to the community.

**Rachel** 29:04

Right. And it's interesting, you bring that up something that we've talked about on this podcast series before just how it's important to make yourself as a lawyer seem like an actual human being and be really relatable. And I think that's also a way that if attorneys are looking to differentiate themselves, to their clients, or potential clients or on social media, I think talking about the great things that firms are doing in terms of pro bono or your own projects or things like that is a really good way to do that.

**Megan Braverman** 29:33

Absolutely. And it shows that you're just it's more interesting that way too. I think. I actually just did a poll on LinkedIn. It was a little different but it was about you know, whether you share some of your personal information on on LinkedIn like whether you share things about your family or your personal life a little bit different from giving back and nonprofit work, but it was interesting to see the results I think it is still like a dance. I think a lot of people might not want to see their lawyer posting photos on a yacht or sailing the seas or whatever. And I think you have to be cautious about what you do. But I do think that's like, people want to know the human behind the lawyer. And that's, that's really important.

**Rachel** 30:19

Right. And so sort of in that same vein, we've also spoken about on this podcast before on the importance of diversity, equity, inclusion and diversity at law firms. And I was curious if you could speak a little bit about how has that helped with PR efforts? Or how can law firms really showcase



those initiatives, things like that?

**Megan Braverman** 30:39

Yeah, I mean, diversity is really important. From a PR perspective-- I mean, just at the most basic level, people who often look the same, think the same. And so diversity is so important, because people from diverse backgrounds, they bring a different perspective, and they bring a different voice. And that is what the media is looking for, they're looking for a different voice, they don't want just the same thing over and over again. So I mean, from a PR standpoint, diversity is really, really crucial. There's, you know, there's so I kind of go back to the same thing that I said about the community, you can't fake diversity, I think clients see right through that. I was at a conference recently, where there was a panel of general counsel, and we were talking about diversity. And one of the things that they said is, it's very clear when the firm is actually diverse, or when the firm is just checking the box. And clients see right through that they see right through that. So you have to be really careful about how you present that to the public and, and make sure that you're really transparent about your diversity stats, and the importance of diversity, you can't fake that you just you have to be you are who you are in the place you are now you could have a path to be more diverse and talk about that if you're not as diverse as you'd like to be. I think you need to be transparent about that. And like what you're doing to make your firm more diverse because there's a lot of firms that just don't have that yet. And don't really tell that story and why it's important to them. So, I think that that's got to be really organic, or it just comes across really poorly.

**Rachel** 32:33

Thank you very much to Megan Braverman for remarketing for joining us today. It's been a great conversation.

**Megan Braverman** 32:39

Thank you so much, Rachel and everyone at National Law Review for having me. I really appreciate it.

**OUTRO** 32:47

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*Rachel Popa and Jessica Scheck contributed to this content.*

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