

An After-Placement Plan Maximizes Legal Content's Potential

By **John Hellerman** (August 27, 2025)

In the competitive world of legal marketing, every dollar spent on public relations must deliver measurable value. So, what can law firm marketers learn about PR from the emir of Qatar?

In May, media outlets reported on a Foreign Agents Registration Act filing by a PR firm working on behalf of Qatar that revealed monthly payments of \$180,000, apparently resulting in a single interview with Tucker Carlson. While some dismissed the news and others took issue, it's a moment worth pausing on — not for political reasons, but for what it reveals about the true value of high-impact media placements, and what law firms can learn from it.



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So, why would any organization — even a sovereign state — drop that kind of money on a single appearance?

The goal wasn't virality. The value wasn't the size of the host's enormous audience, or even his celebrity within certain conservative political circles. It was all about the specificity of the targets Qatar wanted to reach and the value of their attention.

This is true strategic PR, and the lesson is clear: You don't measure a media win by how many people saw it. You measure your success by what the content helps you do next.

And that's the lesson law firms should internalize — especially midsize and smaller firms with limited budgets for strategic content campaigns. Stop chasing prestige, and instead pursue purpose. Prioritize precision, creating and placing content designed specifically to resonate with specific, high-value audiences for specific reasons.

Ask yourself: What is the placement for? Is it to influence a regulator or key government body? Is it a calling card for a lateral hire you're pursuing? Is it ammo for your pitch to a Fortune 100 legal department? Is it validation for your current clients to keep choosing you?

Enter: The After-Placement Plan

Most law firms overvalue the moment the article goes live and undervalue the weeks that follow. Earned media is not a lottery ticket. It's a business development asset. You're not paying for press — you're investing in influence and manufacturing credibility. Therefore, it's not enough to hope clients or prospects stumble upon your article or interview. Only a deliberate strategy ensures the placement achieves its full potential.

We call it an after-placement plan, or APP — and it should be an essential tool in everyone's content-fueled business development effort. It starts by asking the question most firms forget: What will you do with the content once you have it?

Consider these use cases and examples for your APP.

Client Engagement

Co-authoring a byline or any piece of content with a client or other important stakeholder

transforms a passive relationship into an active partnership. It credentials the firm, strengthens the reputation of the collaborator, deepens trust and creates shared visibility. It also gives the relationship a purpose beyond the actual work — making the firm not just a service provider, but a platform for their clients' voices.

In practice, for example, the APP might look something like: "After co-authoring with this industry influencer, we will use their network to target these four new prospects" — and then name four.

Award Submissions

Award submissions often require third-party validation, and a media placement does just that. Referring to a published interview or quoting from it adds proof of impact. It shows the lawyer's influence is recognized externally — not just internally — and gives judges a concrete example of leadership and expertise in action.

For example, a firm might plan to get a junior partner interviewed in a legal publication to use it as a reference point in the partner's "40 Under 40" submission.

Speaking Opportunities

When an attorney speaks at an industry event, they're competing for attention. Citing their published byline reinforces credibility and authority. Even better, offering the article as a follow-up takeaway — especially if gated behind an email — turns audience applause into actionable leads. This isn't vanity PR; it's a lead generation strategy.

An example APP here might be for a partner to reference a byline he wrote during an industry talk — for additional credibility — and offer the article as an incentive to get attendees' email addresses for follow-up.

Business Development

A strategic placement is a way to comfortably brag about one's influence and credibility, and it is a useful tool to open doors or keep key relationships buzzing. The content becomes a reason to check in, reignite dormant conversations or reinforce existing loyalty. When leadership shares content with strategic intent, it signals alignment from the top.

Here, a partner might share the article with five key clients and ten high-potential prospects. And the managing partner could share it with the firm's top client.

Presentation Assets

Clearly, a strong byline doesn't have to be used once — it can become a core narrative to weave and repurpose through multiple other pieces of content, especially client presentations and internal training that arms the next generation with firm-sanctioned thought leadership.

The APP here might look something like: "The article will be repurposed into a partner's upcoming industry speech and turned into an internal training deck for her new associates."

Lateral Recruiting

Lateral recruiting is a marketing promise — lateral candidates want to know what a firm will

do for their reputation and career. Sharing a media win signals that your PR machine works, and that it's selective and effective. It also subtly promises the lateral a spotlight if they come aboard, without needing to overpromise during negotiations.

As part of its APP here, the firm could show the coverage to lateral prospects as a demonstration of what the firm can do for their practice and personal branding once they lateral over.

Associate Recruiting

Today's law students are digital natives. A polished media feature is more impactful than a brochure or talking point, especially when sliced for short-form social content. It shows the firm as modern, active in the marketplace and committed to showcasing its people. In a sea of firms, it offers a competitive edge.

An APP in this context might look like, "We'll pin the video feature to our recruiting page, cut it up into clips for TikTok and Instagram, and loop it on our monitors at the upcoming law school recruiting fair."

Internal Politics and Morale

Not every win needs to be external. Featuring a firm leader or group in the press can also serve as internal currency. Whether it's for morale, budget asks or internal jockeying, media can be wielded to grease organizational gears. If getting coverage gets the firm's managing partner to open the firm's wallet, that's return on investment, too.

For instance, a firm might offer a managing partner an extravagant budget for the team's holiday party.

The Bottom Line: From Placement to ROI

An APP ensures every piece of content serves a purpose, whether it's landing a new client, securing a speaking engagement, helping recruit talent, enhancing your firm's reputation or even making things a little more pleasant around the office. By articulating why you're creating the content and how you'll use it in advance, you control resources, avoid waste and align PR efforts with measurable business outcomes.

The Qatari PR case highlights a universal truth: Strategic content placement and content-fueled business development are about influence, not volume. A good placement can open a door. A great APP makes sure someone walks through it.

So, next time your firm lands a quote, a feature or an interview, ask yourself: Do we have an APP for that? If the answer is no, you're probably leaving value — and revenue — on the table.

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