

Law Firm Leaders Spotlight with James Goodnow

State your name, title and law firm.

James Goodnow, CEO, Fennemore Craig.

How long have you been practicing law?

Nearly two decades ago, I started at our firm as a file clerk. I joined the firm as an attorney nearly 15 years ago. In my time at the firm, I've had the good fortune of holding different positions in the firm, including summer associate, associate, and director. Seeing the firm from all of these perspectives has been invaluable in my current role.

How have your marketing efforts evolved during the last five years?

Our marketing is evolving at a rapid pace so we can stay ahead of trends and the industry. We've come to discover that marketing and branding is at the heart of our firm's mission, vision, values, and purpose. Starting a few years ago, we engaged in a comprehensive and exhaustive effort to understand who we are, what we stand for, and where we want to go. This effort was led by our marketing team. The results formed the foundation for where we are taking the firm going forward and is part of not only our marketing and business development activities, but also our strategic planning. We're lucky to have Lindsay Moellenberndt at the helm as our Chief Business Development and Marketing officer to oversee our stellar marketing team. She's a superstar and has helped take the firm to higher levels.

How has working closely with your Marketing Department been beneficial to the firm in the months since COVID-19 began?

Working closely with our marketing department since the beginning of the COVID crisis has been invaluable. Internally, communication has been key, especially with so many of our attorneys and allied legal professionals working remotely. We've held numerous "town halls" via Zoom so everyone is on the same page as we move forward strategically through this pandemic. Lindsay and the marketing team have been instrumental in organizing key parts of these and in making them a success.

Externally, the marketing department has helped ensure we get the word out about how we can help. Our attorneys have guided our business clients through these uncertain times, and now, some seven months into the pandemic, they're helping businesses reopen and get back on their feet. As part of this, we created an online "COVID-19 Resource Center" for clients, providing updated information to help businesses and individuals alike navigate this complicated landscape.

What are some new marketing initiatives that your firm has worked on as a result of COVID-19?

We've definitely taken an "inside-out" approach, focusing on team-building and culture first. As part of this, our marketing team launched our "Doing MORE" internal email campaign, which covers training and development, health and wellness programs, diversity and inclusion awareness, and business development opportunities for our employees. It's been well received by our teammates. For the outside world, our attorneys provide a wide range of legal analysis and commentary through client alerts and virtual client webinars that are designed to help clients and members of our communities.

How does your Marketing Department drive strategic plans and lead the charge in a time of change?

As discussed above, the marketing team has played a lead role in helping the firm define its core values, mission, vision and more. The results of the team's efforts are informing everything we do – including recruiting, retention, growth, teambuilding, and more. By understanding ourselves and our place in the market better, we are better able to ascertain where we're going.

At present, our firm is in the final stages of a merger. As part of this combination, we are undertaking a rebrand that builds on all of the marketing department's efforts over the past several years. Our efforts include the visible pieces like a new logo, email addresses, and website. But it also includes how we're combining cultures of these two great organizations to create something even better.

In short, to say that our marketing department is helping to drive strategic plans in the time of change may be the understatement of 2020!

What is your firm's most effective marketing channel?

I think the pandemic expedited the use of social media and video content among law firms, but we were already using both of these mediums extensively.

What marketing and business development initiatives born out of COVID-19 will be used in the future?

I think Zoom and online webinars are here to stay, along with a tremendous rise in Podcasting in the legal space.

How do you see the legal industry changing in the next 5 years?

Working remotely has transformed law firms, and young attorneys now entering the profession may never practice in a 100% brick-and-mortar environment. Building virtual relationships will become even more critical, along with the importance of building stronger client relationships.