

MEDIA REVIEWS May/June

FAME 101: POWERFUL PERSONAL BRANDING & PUBLICITY FOR AMAZING SUCCESS

By Jay Jessup and Maggie Jessup
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Reviewed by Attorney N. Jill Yaziji

“Remember... that every fame seeker needs a story because to the public and in the media it's the story that sells; not the person.” Does this mantra by Jay Jessup and Maggie Jessup, authors of *Fame 101*, sound familiar to lawyers? The answer is most likely a “yes.” Indeed, it is remarkably similar to Jim Perdue's message in his bestseller on effective advocacy: *Winning with Stories: Using the Narrative to Persuade in Trials*. Perdue states that “a trial is not a debate; it's a contest of stories. The strongest ... most persuasive, most inspiring story will win. Juries pick the story they want to win; they don't pick the stack of facts they want to win....” Perdue's mention is apropos in this context: as a lawyer with not just astounding professional and financial success, but also bestselling books, media presence, a professional following, and Texas Super Lawyers accolades to spare, he is the definition of a famed professional with a powerful personal brand the authors advocate.

Fame 101 is not about the professionally famous having extraordinary talents and striking it big with serendipity. Quite the opposite: The authors, both publicists and marketing strategists with A-list clients, argue that fame is a formula anchored in the know-how of personal branding, fueled by publicity, disseminated by a platform of synergy, and enhanced by personal evolution. Since fame is a formula, we all are equally able to learn it and reap the benefits. Most importantly for a

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young, driven lawyer, this formula can yield tangible results within a year and with “little or no money.”

A skeptical reader, as lawyers mostly are, is tempted to quickly set aside such claims to fame and bury herself in an imminent discovery battle or approaching trial date. But the authors convincingly chronicle how famous professionals have built financial empires on the power of their brand by following these steps. From Mother Teresa to Joel Osteen, and from Martha Stewart to the gardener with bestselling books and a TV show, this formula works every time.

To achieve fame, one must reach a wide audience and do so with a well-thought out message about what makes one's brand special, authentic, stand out. Publicity is the catalyst for fame and it's “what makes everything else work to its maximum effect.” The good news is that to achieve it one does not

have to spend six figures monthly on advertising. Widely available social media is the vehicle. One must also participate in social media, over an extended period of time, to understand its power and build a following in it. Hence, a brief bio and contact info on LinkedIn by itself won't do for lawyers. Likewise, while professional websites are omnipresent, understanding Internet geography and search engines can make the difference between prominence and mediocrity by simply enhancing the footprint of one's website, and hence one's brand.

How to accomplish all this and still meet the discovery deadline? By synergizing your brand efforts: A well-written speech for a Texas Bar seminar can turn into a publication and, with a link on your website, also develop into a blog. Moreover, a powerful personal brand translates into material gains for the lawyer's clients as well, since powerful branding lends immediate credibility to one's message.

At a time when economic realities have made it hard for young, talented lawyers to find employment and for seasoned ones to keep it, *Fame 101* both inspires readers and offers practical tips for the driven, persistent professional.

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