

PR News

Building the bridge between PR and the bottom line.

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PR News Names Legal PR Stars of 2006

PR News' Legal PR Awards were designed to acknowledge the progress that marketing and communications professionals have made in the legal and crisis management arena, from creating an innovative annual report that conveys a firm's essence in a comprehensive way, to a media launch event that replicated an airplane fuselage in a conference room – complete with airline food and “flight attendants.”

The winners of the PR News' Legal PR Awards have shown that they have what it takes to rise above the crowd. One showed the role public relations can play in helping an organization win a favorable outcome in a lawsuit brought by a big tobacco firm. Another trained a spotlight on its pro bono efforts to add definition to its corporate identity. All displayed outstanding PR savvy and creativity in a challenging field. Kudos to all.

Community Relations

Campaign: Making a Mark: Mentoring

Company: Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft LLP

Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft, as one of the oldest law firms in the U.S., has a long-standing tradition of public service, including a multi-pronged pro bono and community relations program. However, the firm lacked a solid strategy to get the word out about its philanthropic efforts. By connecting the dots among the community efforts, business of the firm, current and future clients, personnel and the communities within which the firm operates, the company hoped to link its goals in the areas of charitable giving, pro bono and professional development with its marketing and communications efforts.

The company wove a thread of mentoring throughout the organization at all levels, encouraging involvement in mentoring programs targeting children and adults. Each office was empowered to develop programs and share the mission to make a difference. The firm's efforts were implemented across such organizations as Britain's BPP Law School at Holborn; the High School for Public Service in Brooklyn, NY; Manhattan International High School; and Project Teach Law.

By focusing on mentoring, Cadwalader's commitment remains relevant to the business of the firm and its people, who have been able to effect extraordinary contributions to their communities. The company has developed an approach to institutionalize the notion of its lawyers serving as trusted mentors, and the feedback has been outstanding.

Media Coverage

Campaign: Legal Change Agent: Injecting Innovation Into the Legal Industry

Company: Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft LLP

Agency: Weber Shandwick

As the world continues to flatten (and you thought it was round), companies, including law firms, are rethinking the whole concept of innovation. As one of the nation's oldest law firms, Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft saw an opportunity to emerge in front of the pack with a restructured firm and a concentration on a highly specialized, niche area of law: securities and financial services.

With a two-year turnaround communications strategy firmly in mind, the firm sought to raise its own profile in coverage at leading trade and mainstream publications; establish its partners as the experts of record in their practice areas; highlight the firm's reputation as a niche firm with expertise in the area of financial services/structured products; and elevate its profile in such key markets as Washington D.C., Charlotte, Europe and Asia.

The company used media backgrounders to educate the media, leveraged breaking news across various industries to showcase Cadwalader's expertise in certain practice areas, used bylined articles written by its attorneys to enhance its credibility and conducted local media outreach efforts to promote new hires and pro bono work.

As a result of its hard work, Cadwalader has moved from 27th in 2001 in the American Bar Association's rankings of the largest law firms in the U.S. to 3rd in 2005. It has been in the number one spot for five years in the CMBS law firm rankings. In addition, *The National Law Journal* named Cadwalader attorney Dennis Block one of the 100 Most Influential Lawyers in America last year.

For a complete list of winners, please visit www.prnewsonline.com

