

How Do They Measure Up? 2020 AmLaw Global 50 Websites: Ten Foundational Best Practices **research study**



**content
pilot** strategy and technology
with direction™

how do they measure up?

a letter of introduction

We have finished the 7th comprehensive analysis of the world's top law firm websites based on Ten Foundational Best Practices. The first Study in 2005 set precedent by identifying the top ten foundational things law firms must do to ensure their websites were satisfying what visitors wanted. It was the first full-scale research and report on how the legal industry was faring with its online marketing efforts based on an objective analysis of AmLaw 100 websites.

introduction

#2020Global50Websites

Content Pilot is a leading strategy, design, content and technology company headquartered in the U.S., and as such, we are constantly in search of innovations and best practices inside and outside the legal industry. Our clients are global, national, regional and local law firms, other professional services firms and progressive companies in other industries.

The majority of our clients are brilliant people who sell their brains and experience for a living. With every project (websites, proposal centers, experience databases, branding, content marketing/social media and design), our approach is a holistic focus on the “four-legged stool” of strategy, design, content and technology – it’s this that makes us uniquely qualified to design and complete this **Ten Foundational Best Practices** research, analyze and distill the results, and publish this comprehensive White Paper.

For those of you familiar with our past research, you know that our Studies in 2005, 2006, 2007, 2010 and 2013 focused on the AmLaw 100 firms. Taking a disciplined and rigorous look at then 60+ attributes of EACH of 100 law firms was a herculean effort, but we were committed to do it in our first five Studies. For the 2016 and 2019 Studies, we went “global,” as that word defines the reach of most of the world’s largest law firms. **In 2016, we analyzed 70 different attributes of the AmLaw Global 50 and in 2019, we analyzed 71 for each website.**

“ ”

More than 2,000 professionals downloaded the 2016 White Paper: “How Do They Measure Up: AmLaw Global 50 Websites – Ten Foundational Best Practices.”

Encourage others to register for the 2020 download
@ contentpilot.com/
amlawglobal50websites2020

“ ”

We have always made the results broadly available to lawyers, marketers, even our competitors inside and outside the industry.

Our goals are for the legal industry to improve (spoiler alert: mostly it has) and for law firms to get more bang for their website buck. **But our ultimate goal is for buyers of legal services and other website visitors to be happier, and for your lawyers to be more successful.**

“ ”

Even in 2020, too many websites are broken from a visitor-experience standpoint – in fact, most of them are. If you aren't convinced, check your own analytics – they just may prove it.

we have several objectives in commissioning this research:

- | Give website teams an unemotional, foundational basis for analyzing their current sites.
- | Provide marketing/business development teams and lawyers objective data to help them justify planning time, expense and any against-the-common grain-recommendations.
- | Establish standards for website project managers so they can hold their design/development teams accountable.
- | Offer professional services firms a framework for measurable improvement in design, interactivity and engagement, site search, content writing, creating an intuitive visitor experience and otherwise satisfying what sophisticated buyers of legal services want in law firm websites.

how can you use this data in discussions with firm leaders?

Beyond the enhancement of specific features and functionality that are expected today, with this data, global – and national, regional or local – law firms now have:

- | Access to data on how to create a better and more satisfying experience for your visitors.
- | A snapshot of how leading law firms are doing and an understanding of how your firm can better compete.
- | A practical road-map to view your website more strategically and to plan your website investments more thoughtfully.

Following the guidelines within the Ten Foundational Best Practices, visitors to your website will:

- | Have more fun engaging with your strategy and content.
- | Quickly find actionable information they want and need.
- | Easily see comparative differences in strategy, scope, reach and strengths between your firm and its competitors.
- | Have a desire to return to your site to find out more.

i am asking a favor of you . . .

In exchange for making this White Paper available at no cost, we ask that you talk freely about it in social media, and among your friends and colleagues (*please send them the link to register not the White Paper!!*).

please help us get the good word out!

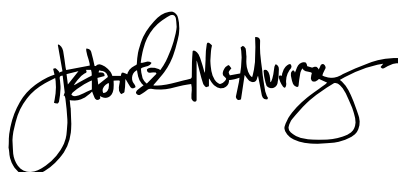
Our  handle is **@ContentPilot** – and use the hashtags **#Global50Websites** **#10FBP**. Thank you!

Please let us know if you find this Study and White Paper useful. We really want your feedback.

credits and thanks to the research and advisory team

Research Director and Writer: Deborah McMurray
Content Pilot Research Analysts, Advisors and Contributors:

Jeremy Ash	Pete Curran
Blake Davis	Kimberly Davis
Siobhan Davis	Andy Dhanraj
Linda Hazelton	Paige Herrmann
Emily King	Michael Landon
Deborah McMurray	Anita Mitchell
Sheila Sheley	Keith N. Wewe



“ ”

for more information

The websites analyzed were those live as of September 1, 2019. Any new launches after this date were not reviewed.

If you are interested in having your website reviewed based on the Ten Foundational Best Practices criteria, please contact us. This analysis isn't free, but it is definitely worth it!

If you'd like more information or would like to purchase individual **Summary Insights and Findings Reports** for any of the law firms listed here or the summary for your law firm, contact:

Deborah McMurray

mcmurray@contentpilot.com
 1+972.897.4921

Keith N. Wewe

keith.wewe@contentpilot.com
 1+972.479.9142

executive summary

Question

Budgets for large law firm websites have gone up and up over the last 3+ years. It is common to hear of a large firm spending \$1,000,000 or more on its redesign. What is driving this huge increase? Is it a well-defined strategy to connect more substantively with law firm buyers of legal services in certain markets or industries? Are they using analytics and data to make their feature and functionality choices for the new site? Are they talking to clients, potential recruits, even competitors to understand what the buying journey looks like today? Some are, but a lot aren't and it's evident in what we see in their website pages. **The ultimate question is, are these redesigns making visitors – and the plum target market of active buyers of legal services – any happier?**

Answer

According to the 2020 AmLaw Global 50 Websites: Ten Foundational Best Practices Research that we finished in late 2019, the general answer is “no.”

Our reason for establishing the Ten Foundational Best Practices (FBPs) for law firm websites, first in 2005, and then refreshing the FBPs in 2006, 2007, 2010, 2013, 2016 and now in 2020, remains the same: **help law firms spend their money more wisely, design their websites more strategically, write more compelling content, and create intuitive and informational pathways for their target audiences.**

The FBPs are refreshed each Study to consider foundational changes that we have witnessed in the broad web industry, as well as changes in visitor expectations and the behaviors of buyers of legal services. We hear the term “best practices” used so often that it often loses meaning. When designing this research, we purposely chose the term “Foundational” as a modifier, because we wanted firms to focus on the most basic and fundamental things that truly matter to website visitors and that actually improve the visitors’ experience. These are not the nice-to-have features and functionality, but the must-have things – the design, tools and content that diverse, sophisticated visitors expect from top professional services firms.

What are the AmLaw Global 50 Firms Doing Well?

The highest scoring FBP was **FBP3 - Navigation**, with an average score of 94.9 on a 100-point scale. All law firms should score 100.0 here – and 15 did. The lowest score on this FBP was 80.0 and the lowest scoring attribute was “Easy to navigate across multiple devices – navigation remains intuitive and easy to use regardless of device.”

We’re delighted to see how well **FBP6** performed in the 2019 Study – **Interactivity, Engagement + Social Outreach** – with a score of 87.0. Four firms scored 100.0, but 27 more scored “excellent” and 16 firms scored “good.” Although certain of the attributes in 2019 were different, this FBP only scored 63.9 in our 2016 Study.

The last FBP in the top three is **FBP5 - Content (Other Than Bios)** with an average score for all 50 firms of 83.0 or “good.” No law firm scored 100.0 on the 11 attributes that make up this comprehensive category, but **Eversheds Sutherland US** scored a 96.5 and both **McDermott Will & Emery** and **Winston & Strawn** scored 95.5. The lowest scoring attribute was “Video and multimedia content is featured, produced well and short” with a 51.4 – “fair.”

“ ”

Many law firm websites are broken from a differentiation and visitor- experience standpoint – in fact, the majority of them are.

continued:

executive summary

Where can the AmLaw Global 50 Firms Improve?

Positioning Strategy

Still, too many of the law firm “positioning statements” sound generic and similar. All firms who are considering a redesign would benefit from what we’ve just done – review the stated strategies of all your peer firms. For example, word pairs that include both GLOBAL and LOCAL are so prevalent, they are not distinguishing at all. **Avoid language that is so common it could apply to any of the law firms in your competitor group.**

The 16 firms that scored zero on the first attribute, “Clear and Differentiating Positioning Strategy,” had no strategy on the home page or in the ABOUT section of the website. (In 2016, 20 firms scored zero.)

Too many firms that scored 100.0 on this (26 of them) ignored the home page and instead featured strategy statements (increasingly in video) on the ABOUT landing page. Based on the analytics we track, visitors are not flocking to those pages, so your distinguishing strategy may be missed entirely. Check your analytics to see what percentage of visitors are seeing these particular interior pages compared to how many land on your home page. **Sell your strategy up front!**

The Global 50 average for this attribute in 2016 was 45.6 and in 2019 it was 62.1. So – it’s gone from “poor” to “fair.” Better, but loads of room for improvement.

Accessibility

For the 2016 Study under **FB10 - Site Hygiene + Usability**, we added “Site meets W3C Level A accessibility standards” for the first time. The average score was 87.0, or “excellent,” in meeting these basic requirements.

In the 2019 Study, we raised the foundational standard to comply with W3C WCAG 2.0 & 2.1 accessibility standards – Level A and used the Siteimprove tools to analyze the sites. (Siteimprove analyzes both Levels A and AA accessibility, so we actually tested firms on both.) This attribute was scored as a pass/fail — firms were either 100% compliant or they failed. **All 50 firms failed. All 50 firms scored zero.**

Alternate Languages

Surprisingly, 13 of the AmLaw Global 50 firms do not have any translated content on their websites. Or, it's hidden so completely that we couldn't find it. That's one firm more than in our 2016 Study.

But, the balance of the firms has done an impressive job ensuring that their non-American-English speakers can access the pages, at least on the desktop websites.

We analyzed how many firms make the translated content available to visitors on their mobile sites under **FBP9 - Mobility**. The average attribute score went from 74.0 in **FBP1** to 31.0 when testing only for mobility in **FBP9**.

This year firms either scored 100.0 or zero on the alternate languages attribute. The average of this attribute under **FBP1 - Communicating Your Message** was 74.0 – or “good.” In 2016, the average score was 40.3 – “fair.” We're happy to see a much greater commitment to proving what “global” means to these firms.

The firm with the most alternate languages is **Eversheds Sutherland US** with 19; the next highest is **Greenberg Traurig** with 11.

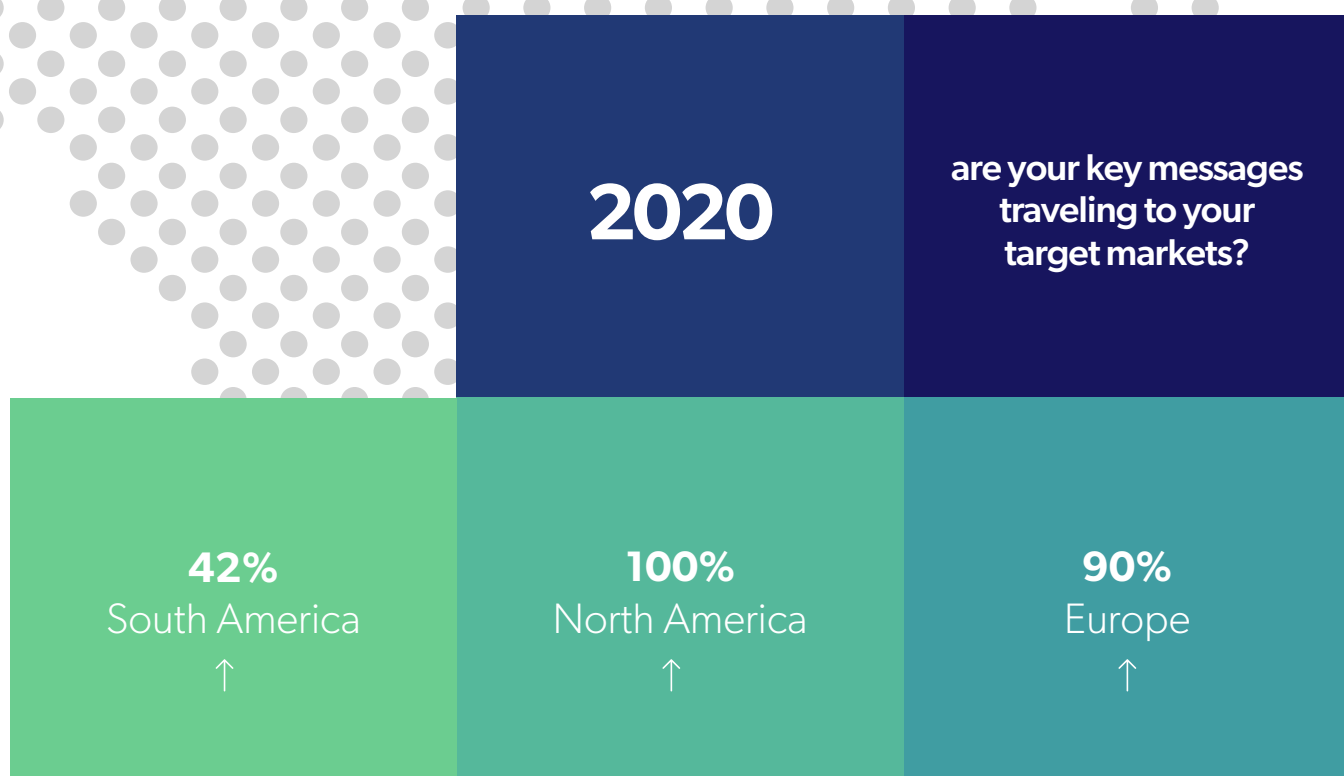
“ ”

"Negative experiences have stronger emotional impact on humans than positive experiences do. Thus, in designing the user experience, we need extra emphasis on avoiding those lows."

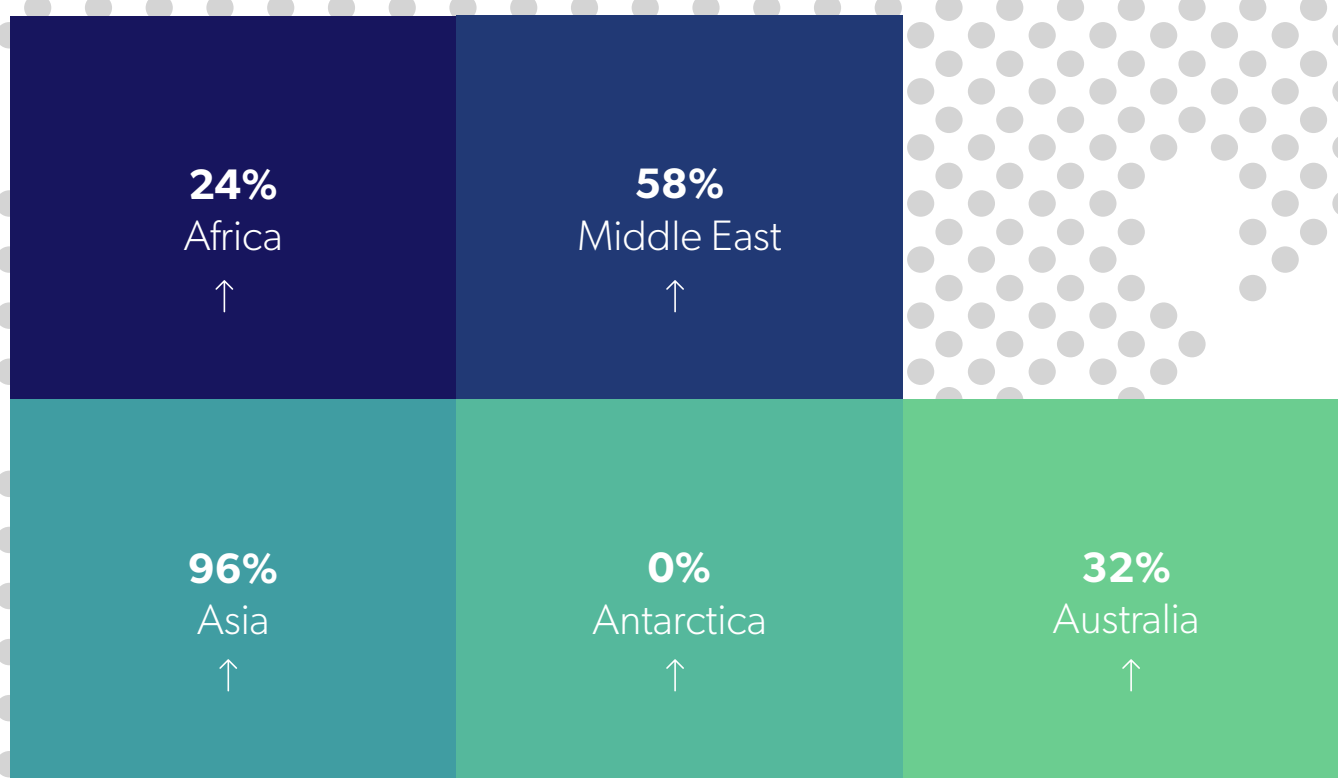
Aurora Harley
Nielsen Norman Group

how well do the AmLaw Global 50 websites...

...communicate the firms' global
positioning strategies and differentiators?



% of AmLaw Global 50 firms having offices by region



% of AmLaw Global 50 firms having offices by region

methodology + scoring

The Ten Foundational Best Practices are refreshed each Study to take into account foundational changes that have been made in the broad web industry, as well as changes in visitor expectations and the behaviors of buyers of legal services. A few core FBPs have been a part of the Study since the beginning, new ones have been added and others have been updated. **The 2020 Ten Foundational Best Practices and a brief summary of the 71 attributes are:**

the 2020 ten FBPs

| Communicating your Message

Clear and differentiating firm positioning strategy, expertise strengths, geographic reach and focus are apparent, alternate languages are present and easy to access

| Design

Bold, distinctive branding, responsive design, intuitive information hierarchy and strong imagery, your design tells your story

| Navigation

Global/local navigation are consistent and intuitive across multiple devices, pages all have unique URLs

| Professional Biographies

Detailed experience, an overview that tells a compelling story of the person, current and larger-format magazine-style photos, social media and other links, the professional's personality comes through

| Content (other than biographies)

Quality, clarity, effective portrayal of domain expertise and organization of all other narrative content, visitor-focused content (not "it's all about me and we")

| Interactivity, Engagement + Social Outreach

How interactive and engaging is your site? Access to additional content, including multimedia, blogs, social media, alumni portals and share functionality

| Site Search

Remember, it's not about searching, it's about "finding" – easy access to and quality of the multiple site-search options and intuitive search results, separate experience search

| Site Optimization + Online Awareness (SEO)

Is your site optimized for search engines? We analyze 11 critical attributes that make your Internet presence more powerful

| Mobility

Brand integrity is high on mobile devices, it's intuitive and visitors will have a good user experience

| Site Hygiene + Usability

Your site functions perfectly on the latest browsers, no error pages, spelling/grammar problems or broken links; site meets the W3C WCAG 2.0 and 2.1 accessibility standards for Level A.

scoring

Each attribute is scored on a 100-point scale and each attribute is reviewed and scored separately. For example, "Professional Biographies" has nine attributes – each has its own score. We average all the scores for every attribute to determine the law firm's score for each FBP. Once each FBP has its average score, those will be added, divided by 10 and that is the law firm's total score.

Excellent	85-100
Good	71-84
Fair	51-70
Poor	26-50
Unacceptable	0-25

How Do they Measure Up?
2020 AmLaw Global 50 Websites:
Ten Foundational Best Practices

twenty- twenty results

Only 2 firms ranked "excellent" -- **McDermott Will & Emery** - 86.8 and **Winston & Strawn** - 86.3. The lowest scoring firm (not named) received a total score of 63.3 or "fair."

the average total score of all AmLaw Global 50 firms

was 76.2 or "good." This is up from 68.7 in the 2016 Study.

forty-three

firms ranked **"good."** This compares to 23 firms in the 2016 Study.

five

firms ranked **"fair,"** compared to 26 firms in the 2016 Study.

no one.

For the 2nd Study in a row, no firm ranked **"poor"** or **"unacceptable."**

There are opportunities to easily and quickly improve – even for the top ten scoring firms:



86.8

McDermott Will & Emery



86.3

Winston & Strawn

83.3

Dentons

82.7

Sidley

80.8

WilmerHale

80.8

Morrison Foerster

80.6

Hogan Lovells

80.4

Jones Day

80.2

Herbert Smith Freehills

80.1

Morgan Lewis



FBP01

communicating your message



foundational best practice **01**

communicating your message

Global 50 Aggregate Scores + Attributes

1	62.1	Clear and differentiating positioning strategy
2	92.5	Practice and industry focus are apparent
3	89.3	Geographic reach is apparent
4	76.6	Contact information is clear and easy to find
5	74.0	Site features or links to alternate language translations

top trends + insights

| Two of the attributes – *practice and industry focus are apparent* and *geographic reach* – scored lower than they did in 2016. The other three attributes scored higher.

| In terms of featuring content in alternate languages (**attribute #5**), as a group, the AmLaw Global 50 improved a great deal in *demonstrating* their commitment to their global clients and employees. The average score this year was 74.0, up from 40.3 in 2016.

+ Yet, 13 firms still have no translated content that we could find. Of the 37 firms with translations, the average number per firm was 4.2 languages.

+ Translations are rarely as detailed as the original English site – oftentimes only headers are translated.

+ Certain firms promote themselves as "seamlessly global" with impressive strides toward equity, diversity and inclusion, yet do not equally communicate with visitors whose native language is not English.

| Many firms still use "Contact us" forms, even if they include a general email (such as info@lawfirm.com). It makes us wonder what kind of valuable queries they receive that supports them continuing to include a form. Given the nature of their clientele, we can't imagine that those buyers or even lawyers interested in working there would fill out a form.

| As noted in the Executive Summary, **the existence of Positioning Strategy has improved by 16 points but is still too generic and uninspiring**. In the 2016 Study any strategy was too fleeting with the high number of rotating carousels on the home pages – the headlines and images disappeared too quickly. We still see some of this in 2020. Thankfully, the number of carousels has decreased significantly – generally in favor of long, scrolling home pages.

+ 17 firms had no positioning strategy whatsoever. This is only four firms better than in 2016.

+ Too many firms are burying their strategy in the ABOUT section (in both text and video). **Your firm's strategy is its stake-in-the-ground – it helps us to understand and care about you. Please don't hide it!**

| Speaking more about long-scrolling . . . In our website design work, we find that lawyers either love long-scrolling or vehemently oppose it. This discussion could be limited to what follows in **FBP2 - Design**, but because **FBP1 - Communicating your Message** is largely about the first impression your website makes, we also include it here. What are the practical advantages of long-scrolling home pages?

“ ”

You want visitors' "dwell time" to be longer on your website. One of your goals should be to lengthen the time they spend on each of your pages. Build engagement into your home page by featuring your most relevant, important stories – invest in your visitors by focusing on their journey.

continued:

“ ”

Remember, when everything appears in a long alphabetical list, the weight of each practice is the same to your visitors.

Consider a more innovative taxonomy to highlight your super-strengths.



top trends+ insights

- + Long-scrolling hails to mobile – everyone does it and expects it.
- + It gives users a sense of control, which, when tested, is important for visitor satisfaction with your site.
- + Visitors navigate long-scrolling sites at their own pace, lingering on relevant content and clicking to “read more” or ignoring panels of content that aren’t interesting to them. Again – this goes to their feelings of control. Interested visitors can consume important and interesting content without having to click. This creates a more reliable and seamless experience.

The biggest challenge website planners have is answering this question: How much scrolling content is too much? Will it overwhelm? And what kind of content is best on the home page?

| Still too many firms make awards and recognition the primary their focus of their home pages – it’s not client-focused or visitor-related – at all.

- + Too much “all about me.”

| When we conducted the 2016 research, Brexit was the big news story and the majority of firms were telling the same story. The firms that stood out were those that offered fresh and unique points of view. In Q4 2019 when we completed our research, there wasn’t a comparable global-impact story — the COVID-19 coronavirus news hadn’t broken yet. But as we write this White Paper in Q1 2020, it’s covering the home pages of all major law firms. When there isn’t a global news story the home page news often relates to specific deals and cases handled by the firm. This is a very positive change – a firm’s precise experience makes them truly unique.

| The cliché of the various iterations of “global reach, local expertise” isn’t distinguishing and it is far too popular. **Take our challenge:** prove this global/local claim with actual client stories and solutions – then communicate it in a unique way.

| One more cliché is overused: other word pairs that are not clever or differentiating – **too many firms fall into the habit of using exactly the same words.**

| Website taxonomy could improve. In fact, for practices and industries it declined a few points from 2016. 21 firms scored 100.0 on “Practice and Industry focus are apparent” and several others scored 90.0. But those that scored lower were because practices and industries weren’t separately delineated or they were overly dense and hard to consume.

stand-out firms for positioning strategy

| Jones Day

While several firms have borrowed the sentiment and claim some version of it, Jones Day's tagline "One Firm Worldwide" has been distinguishing since the firm launched its last site in 2007. A video under "VALUES" in the global navigation tells clients what it means and also tells lawyers who are evaluating employment options. jonesday.com/en/values?tab=overview-91ff1290-f097-4c94-89cd-32c2f0923acb It is a powerful message that is enduring and that Jones Day pays off.

| Baker McKenzie

Good positioning under ABOUT US – "The New Lawyers for the New World" accompanied by a compelling video that reviews all their firsts - bakermckenzie.com/en/aboutus. But friends, please put this on the home page – don't make us hunt for it.

| Allen & Overy

Good positioning statement right up front that suggests how they do business – "Innovation as usual." This strategy copy follows: "The world's top companies rely on Allen & Overy to solve their most complex legal and business challenges."

| Morgan Lewis

Our #1 firm in the 2016 Study, Morgan Lewis includes solid strategy copy prominently on the home page. This sets a visitor's expectations of what the firm offers and how they do business. "At Morgan Lewis, we see our clients as partners. Whether you've been with us for days or decades, whether you're today's industry leader or tomorrow's game-changer, we're always responsive and always on." While calling clients "partners" is not distinguishing and is over-used, the rest of it stills feels fresh and interesting.

| CMS

We love "Your World First" because it's client affirming, pithy and strong. It is a missed opportunity not to have it more prominently on the home page (it lives off to the right above a "how can we help you" box). Also – there is a video in the ABOUT CMS mega-menu cms.law/en/int/about-cms/about-us/cms-corporate-video that is really good and that tells a great story.

| Quinn Emanuel

They put their stake in the ground on the home page via their rankings, which isn't unique, but the firm has been committed to this approach at least since the 2016 Study. However, this is actually less compelling than the large, bold text on **The Firm & News** landing page: "Litigation Is A Zero Sum Game. There Is A Winner And A Loser. We Know How To Win." (Note to the firm: Zero-sum should be hyphenated in this use.)

| Milbank

While we believe this unique statement should be on the home page, at least it appears at the top of the WHO WE ARE page: "The merger of excellence and grit." Countless firms talk about "excellence," but we've never seen it combined with something quite as earthy as "grit." Good one, Milbank.



stand-out firms for the other FBP01 attributes

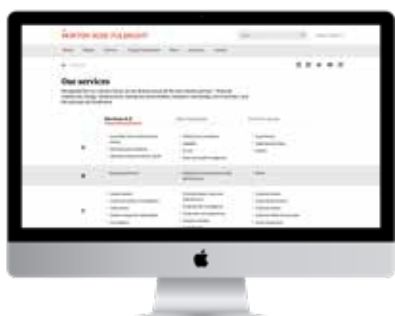


| Cooley

We love this quippy video about Cooley's centennial: **Cooley 100**. One might think it's a traditional blah-blah about firm history, but instead a bunch of people say what their favorite numbers are. It's brimming with personality and is clever and fun. cooley.com/about/cooley-100

| Norton Rose Fulbright

This website doesn't just separate practices from industries, it lets the visitor choose how they want to search for them on the SERVICES landing page. They offer three options. nortonrosefulbright.com/en-us/services



| Eversheds Sutherland US

The firm offers 19 languages, the highest number by a long shot. The only firm that offers Slovakian, Czech, Latvian and Lithuanian translations.

| Covington

There is no home page positioning, but under ABOUT (which is at the top left in the secondary navigation), there are three short videos that tell smart stories. We hope site visitors will be curious enough about the firm to find these and view them.

cov.com/files/videos/global-legal-needs.mp4

cov.com/files/videos/covington-culture.mp4

cov.com/files/videos/unique-law-firm.mp4

All three videos are spoken by Timothy Hester, the firm chair.



| Goodwin

Notice the sticky navigation on the home page. We saw very little of this among the Global 50 firms. Also called "persistent navigation," it is a fixed navigation menu on a web page that remains visible and in the same position regardless of where the visitor is on that page. As the visitor scrolls down and changes location on the home page, where you are in the sticky navigation changes right along with you.



communicating your message

do's + don'ts

	Do comply with your state or country's advertising regulations. Do they permit you to use words like "successes, results, wins?"
	Do tell compelling stories – use infographics to help build your brand and tell firm stories, successes, global reach, awards, etc.
	Do a better job of presenting practices and industries. Simplicity is best – users want clarity and an intuitive list that's well organized by the top services you provide. Organize by what clients buy from you, not how your firm is structured.
	Do make it easy to toggle among languages on any given page.
	Do include interactive maps on the "locations" or "offices" page – these are a helpful and engaging way of visually displaying global reach.
	Do share your strategy right up front – it should be clear – not hidden in the footer or on an ABOUT page.
	Do make your home page welcoming. Ensure that your home page content lingers long enough before changing (such as in a carousel) for visitors to scan and grasp it. Let them get their bearings on your site (three to five seconds) – help them feel at home.
	Do include a general email (info@lawfirm.com) instead of insisting on long, tedious contact forms.
	Don't fall in love with a positioning strategy without first analyzing what your peer and competitor firms are saying. In many cases, they are saying the same thing.
	Don't forget to program your copyright notice in your footer to change each January 1 to the new year.
	Don't use the word "international" or "foreign" when describing your office locations outside your home country. This is a we-aren't-really-global trip-up that depicts your firm as too U.S. or Europe-centric.
	Don't rely on your awards and rankings to differentiate you. At the level these firms are competing, unless it's a pro bono, diversity or charitable/community award, they often aren't differentiating at all.

FBP01

communicating your message top ten performers*

Total Score
79.1

Highest Score
99.0

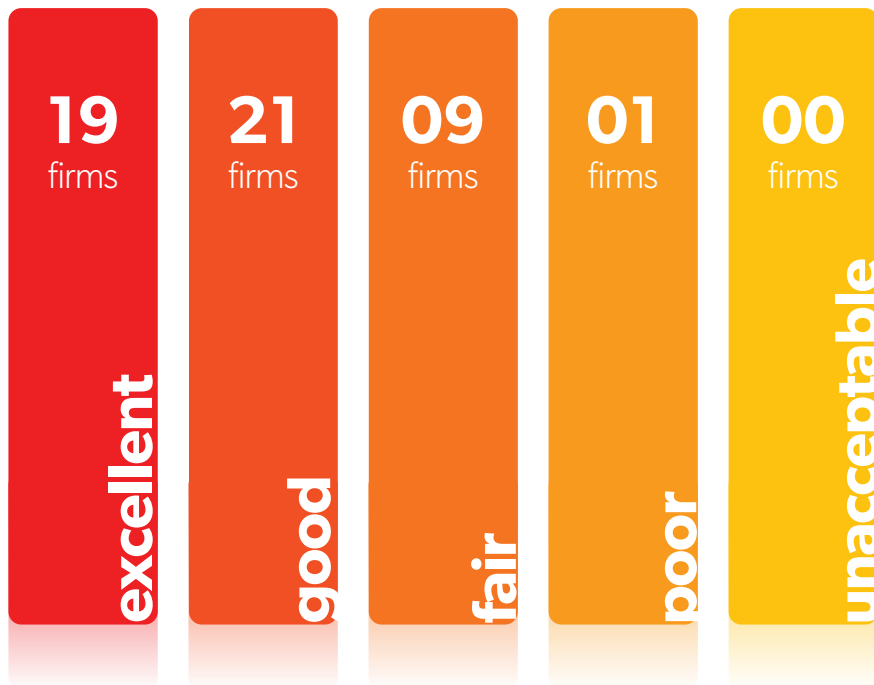
Lowest Score
50.0

99.0 Quinn Emanuel	98.0 Allen & Overy	97.0 Ropes & Gray
97.0 CMS	95.0 Reed Smith	94.0 Greenberg Traurig
94.0 Winston & Strawn	93.0 Morgan Lewis	93.0 McDermott, Will & Emery
90.0 Dentons	90.0 Mayer Brown	

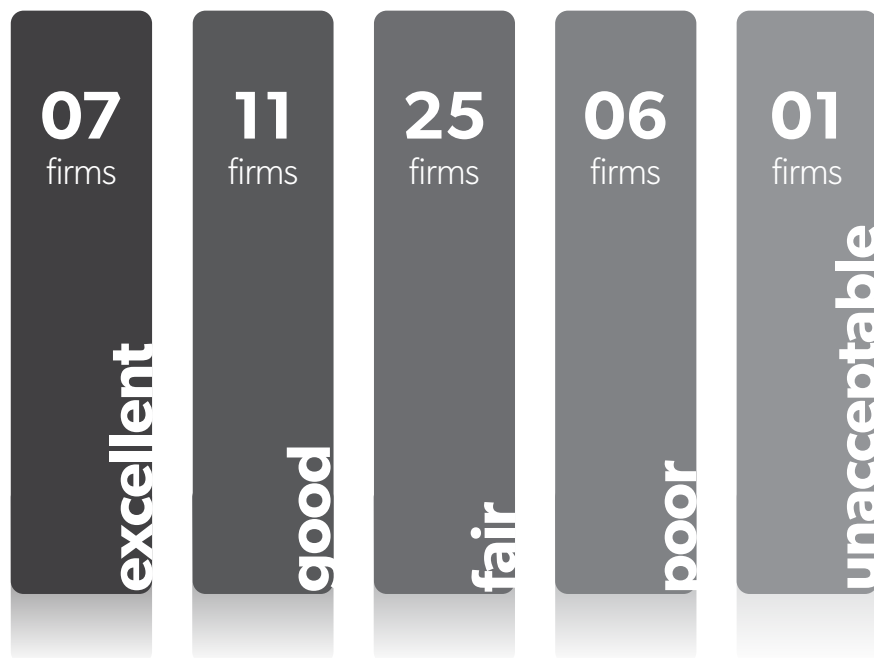
*Two firms tied for 10th place so we are including both of them here.

communicating your message

the results



2020 FBP 01
communicating your message



2016 FBP 01
communicating your message



FBP02 |
design

foundational best practice 02

design

Global 50 Aggregate Scores + Attributes

1	76.0	Bold, distinctively branded layout and style
2	74.0	Strong imagery reinforces and advances firm brand and "story" – it's fresh and unique
3	84.0	Site is responsive with deliberately designed views for phones, tablets, desktop
4	81.0	Design is uncluttered and presents an intuitive information hierarchy

top trends + insights

| The 2019 Global 50 firms were much improved on **FBP2 - Design** over the 2016 Study. The average of all 50 firms was 78.8 compared to 54.8 in 2016.

+ The redesigns have dramatically improved the scores for **attribute #1** – “Bold, distinctively branded layout and style.” The average went from 61 (“fair”) in 2016 to 76.0 (“good”) in 2019. There is still plenty of room for improvement, though.

| Most redesigns have adopted the “magazine-style” layout that gives visitors a lot of readily available content choices. (See the note about balancing images and fonts/content below.)

| **Design on mobile devices has significantly improved.** In 2016 we called it a missed branding opportunity when the mobile version is an inferior skeletal version of the desktop site. But in 2019, the average of the Global 50 firms was 84.0, “good,” (compared to 41 or “poor” in 2016). Only one firm in this Study did not have a responsive website compared to 20 firms in 2016.

| Rotating carousels are far less ubiquitous now than they were in 2016, but those that still have them present too much “it’s all about me” content. Meaning, mostly firm awards and rankings.

+ If you are tempted to favor a carousel in your website redesign because you believe it can showcase all your practice and industry areas (and awards), **resist**.

+ Scrolling home pages are proven to be negative in three significant ways: user experience, SEO and consuming too much page real estate with content perceived as unimportant.

| Carousels have been mostly replaced by the increasingly popular long-scrolling home pages. In our website design work, lawyers either love the long scroll or vehemently oppose them, but there are practical reasons to consider them:

+ In usability and user-experience focus groups and tests, visitors claim they want a greater sense of control. The scrolling home page gives them this, enabling them to travel at their own pace and consume more content without clicks.

+ Scrolling home pages increase visitors’ “dwell time” and potential engagement with your content. They pick and choose things that interest them.

| **Information hierarchy for the Global 50 websites is stronger, better planned and executed.** The score for this attribute went from 64.0 (“fair”) in 2016 to 81.0 (“good”) in 2019. Imagery is also much improved. The litmus test is how well your imagery advances your brand and tells your story. In 2016, firms were not doing a good job – too many images looked like royalty-free generic clip art. They scored 53.0 then (“fair”) compared to 74.0 (“good”) in 2019.

“ ”

Website planners and designers must anticipate what visitors want to see based on who your buyers are. Since visitors don’t read (they scan), the magazine-style layout gives them more choices and control over what they choose. Based on the analytics we track, this multiple-story layout on your home page (try it on interior pages, too) results in longer engagement and “dwell time” on your website.

continued:

“ ”

Homepage carousels are known to have a negative impact on Google's ability to crawl a site.

They can also slow down site speed and don't render well on mobile devices.

“ ”

Respect your visitors' time and elevate the clarity and authenticity of your own messaging and content.

“ ”

Use this cheat-sheet to confirm how comprehensive your choices must be: **Age / gender / gender identification and expression / race / ethnicity / native language / culture / accessibility / disabilities / skill sets / religion / weight and height / sexual orientation / physical features.**

top trends+ insights

| Be careful to balance the size and style of imagery with font choices. We noticed several firms that had beautiful images, but they dwarfed the actual words on the page. The balance was way off.

| Don't fall so in love with your font choices that you miss problems they may present. Be careful that all your fonts render well in all browsers. We encountered several that didn't display well in Firefox.

| The same comment goes for design – don't fall in love with it unless you know for certain it is accessible to visitors with disabilities. See **FBP10 - Site Hygiene + Usability** for a deeper discussion of W3C WCAG 2.0 & 2.1 compliance.

+ All 50 firms failed to comply with the Level A accessibility standard.

+ Design is one of three critical areas for accessibility testing. Pay attention to colors and contrast of text, links and any text that appears on top of images. Also watch font styles and weights – the thinner the font, the harder it may be to read.

+ Confirm that any caption or text that appears on top of an image is highly readable from an ADA and accessibility standpoint. **There were a lot of AmLaw Global 50 offenders.**

+ Ensure that every image (yes, this will number in the thousands) has alt-text associated with it. There is an alt-text compliance standard offered by W3C for what they call "decorative images." Quoting W3C: "Decorative images don't add information to the content of a page. For example, the information provided by the image might already be given using adjacent text, or the image might be included to make the website more visually attractive.

"In these cases, a null (empty) alt text should be provided (alt="") so that they can be ignored by assistive technologies, such as screen readers. Text values for these types of images would add audible clutter to screen reader output or could distract users if the topic is different from that in adjacent text. Leaving out the alt attribute is also not an option because when it is not provided, some screen readers will announce the file name of the image instead."

| A lot of the images chosen by the Global 50 firms are not captioned or identified in any way and don't differentiate one firm over another. Certain U.S. bar associations prevent the use of "stock" images showing stock people who are not the law firm's lawyers (check with your bar associations before you lock in any imagery with people other than your own personnel). A group of stock people around a conference table tells us nothing about your firm and how it does business.

| Speaking of images and design, **beware of unconscious bias.** When working with your designers, consider ALL your audiences and ensure that you are presenting your firm as open to all of them.

| Still, too many home pages are not communicating firm strategy and other differentiating messages to the visitors (see the results and advice for **FBP1 - Communicating your Message**). You have 2-5 seconds to get your home-page message across – avoid throwing spaghetti-messages against the wall with the hope that something sticks.

| Too few firms offer well-designed “print to PDF” options throughout their websites. On these sites, visitors are forced to use the browser-print for the page rather than dynamic, presentation-ready PDF pages (e.g., especially for lawyer bios, practice/industry and news/articles pages). Buyers of legal services *do* print the bios of lawyers they are evaluating, and often compare them side-by-side. Great design helps elevate the impact and memorability of your content.

+ In 2019, **26 firms scored zero on offering the print-to-PDF functionality**, which is worse than the 19 who received a score of zero in 2016. The remaining 24 firms scored 100.0 on offering print to PDFs.

| Hamburger menus are more popular on desktop sites than ever before and it is a trend we fully support and see continuing. The mobile tail is clearly wagging and influencing the desktop dog. We counted 11 of the 50 firms that either use a hybrid navigation (hamburger plus other global navigation titles) or just use the hamburger.

+ More-conservative lawyers are still hesitant to believe that “their” clients will like the hamburger menu (or know what to do with it). These lawyers are underestimating the currency and adaptability of “their” clients.

+ We don’t recommend avoiding this now popular and streamlined menu trend. Jump on board!

| We measured site speed and load time as a separate attribute under **FBP 8 - Site Optimization and Online Search**, but it also factored in here. It is proven that visitors abandon sites that take too long to load.

+ The average page-load score on desktops for all 50 firms was 84.7. The fastest AmLaw Global 50 firm websites on desktop were **Covington** (99.0), **Cleary Gottlieb** (99.0), **King & Spalding** (99.0), **Dechert** (98.0), **Baker McKenzie** (97.0), **Arnold & Porter** (97.0), **Squire Patton Boggs** (97.0).

+ And for mobile page-load speed, only two firms scored “excellent,” **K&L Gates** (94.0) and **Covington** (86.0).

| Some mega-menus don’t work smoothly — they are jumpy, overly sensitive, disappear at inopportune times and often hide important page content. These are less prevalent with the increasing use of hamburger menus, but the firms that have them must ensure a positive user experience.



An important design choice to make relates to light mode v. dark mode (or what we might call “text reversed out of a dark background”).

In 2020, dark mode is very popular and preferred by (at least) designers in various industries, but particularly the entertainment industry.

“In the scientific field, bright text over a darker background, which we call ‘dark mode’ nowadays, is referred to as ‘negative polarity’. Conversely, dark text over a bright background, which we refer to as ‘light mode,’ is known as ‘positive polarity.’ A study conducted by A. Buchner and N. Baumgartner back in 2007 argues that the human brain is predisposed to favor positive over negative polarity when it comes to focusing speed, concentration, and proofreading ‘performance,’ which has huge implications to our digital lives nowadays.

“After all, the majority of things we do on our devices revolves around reading and writing text. Buchner and Baumgartner find that this is true regardless of ambient lighting, so no matter if it’s day or night, light mode interfaces will allow you to focus faster on the text and display elements, whereas dark mode interfaces will make it a bit harder to distinguish text and visual interface elements, thus hindering your reading performance and ultimately straining your eyes.” (Source: phonearena.com)

standout firms



| DLA Piper

A site with great organization and clear information hierarchy. DLA also stood out in the 2016 Study.



| Dentons

Similarly, Dentons has designed a clean site with a focus on making it easy for visitors to navigate and find what they want. The dominant use of purple sets them apart. No hamburger menu here, but smart use of cascading mega-menus.



| Allen & Overy

A highly approachable site, the home page is a stunning example of large panoramic images combined with large panels featuring geographic shapes. The large Chinese-red circle travels to most sections of the site as a recognizable link to Meet our People, Meet our Lawyers, etc. This site was the highest scoring site for FBP2 - Design.

| Sidley

The persistent global navigation on the left with the well-organized content and straightforward scrolling on the right is effective and easy to access. The bright colors against the gray work beautifully. Note how the story tombstones go from light mode to dark mode on hover. A good use of the dark-mode trend without sacrificing accessibility.



| Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer

Beautiful use of large images that add interest to their stories. One of the best "Our Thinking" sections in terms of presenting a lot of well-presented relevant stories and letting visitors peruse and choose. The images have energy (partly because of their consistent format and size) and uniformity. The combination of the vertical page scroll and horizontal feature scroll builds engagement.

| Goodwin

Also called out in the 2016 Study, Goodwin's site offers a smart use of the hamburger menu and navigation that cascades to the right (think of pulling out a "drawer" of information – and then another "drawer" for more detail). The bold, bright color palette is impressive and continues to electrify.

| Winston & Strawn

Good interactivity and bubbles that engage the user – it's graphically entertaining. Also a very good transition to tablets and phones from the desktop and laptop. Winston was also called out in the 2016 Study.

| White & Case

This is a good example of a mostly dark-mode design. They have taken great care to ensure that most of the text is easy to read. (The only text that wouldn't score well for readability is the light-mode panel on the home page, "Find a Lawyer.") The details page design for the service pages is one of the best – engaging, appealing, comprehensive – with the large, color anchoring image that is stationary and the other image (black and white photos for related people and color images of other related material) and text columns that scroll.

| Herbert Smith Freehills

Easy to navigate, scroll and understand the information hierarchy. Effective, clean bio design with the large black-and-white portraits, clean layout and featured "Related Latest Thinking" underneath. The contrast of the black-and-white portraits with the bright pops of color and the color images accompanying news articles work beautifully.

| Milbank

A simple, clean site with a (mostly) two-thirds / one-third grid. The use of boxes and containers presented in light mode but distinguished by a light gray background or a white background is elegant and effective.

“ ”

Do consider usability if you place your logo anywhere but on the left of the page. According to Nielsen Norman Group research, "Users are 89% more likely to remember logos shown in the traditional top-left position than logos placed on the right." Brand recall improves if your logo is on the left.



design

do's + don'ts

	Do choose fresh, unique imagery that builds your brand and helps you tell a better story – and is more evocative for your visitors.
	Do aspire to simplicity — it works in your favor. Visitors want easy and clear access to information, and they want it fast.
	White may not formally be a color because it is the sum of all available colors, but in the context of your design, it is. Do treat the “white” (or unfilled) space as you would any other design element. Is there too much? Does it look too empty? Is there too little? Does it make the page look out of balance? The right balance of white space enhances comprehension of your important content.
	Do focus on information design . What is most important for you to convey? What is next most important? This design rigor will help your visitors feel at home on your site, regardless of the sections they visit. They will more easily find and better comprehend your key messages.
	Do design “consumables” on each of your pages. That is, use containers and boxes to effectively organize information. Callouts, sidebars, infographics, video and podcast features, and containers will get more attention than the long narrative text – the smaller bits of information will be easily consumed. Use them.
	Don't be afraid to choose and use bold colors – they add energy, personality and excitement to your brand .
	Don't change the page layout and grid from section to section. It is jarring to visitors and creates a bumpy user experience. Typically, the two sections that are exempt from this best practice are Careers and News/Events.
	Don't forget that all 50 AmLaw Global 50 firm websites failed the W3C WCAG 2.0 & 2.1 Level A accessibility – in part because of poor design choices. Alt-text on all images, appropriate contrast for text and links, and ensuring readability of captions/text on images are the place to start.
	Don't discount longer scrolling home pages just because you (or certain lawyers) don't like them. Focus on your visitors and what they need and want – and they want control. Give it to them.

FBP02

design top ten performers*

Total Score
78.8

Highest Score
93.8

Lowest Score
33.8

93.8
Allen & Overy

90.0
Skadden

90.0
Clifford Chance

90.0
King & Spalding

88.8
Norton Rose Fulbright

88.8
Herbert Smith Freehills

88.8
Cooley

88.8
Milbank

87.5
Sidley

87.5
Linklaters

87.5
Goodwin

87.5
Squire Patton Boggs

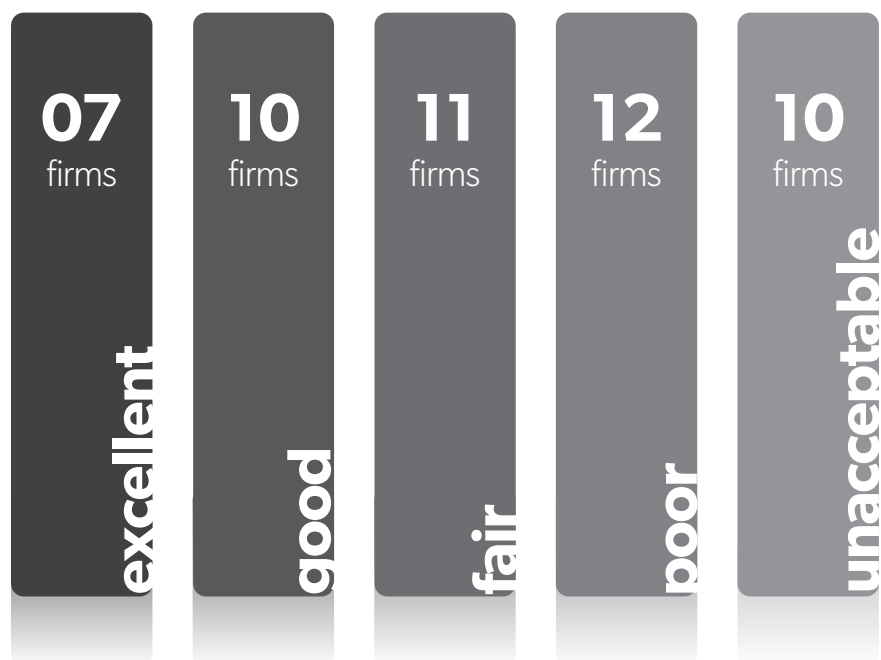
87.5
Winston & Strawn

*Five firms tied for 9th place so we are including all of them here.

design the results



2020 FBP 02
design



2016 FBP 02
design

7 days with Premium features are over

GO PREMIUM

Solebaystraat

s103

Livornostraat

FBP03
navigation

Amsterdam



10:32
(3min)

1.9
km

43
km/h



foundational best practice 03

navigation

Global 50 Aggregate Scores + Attributes

1	98.0	Global and local navigation styles are consistent. Visitor does not have to relearn new styles throughout site
2	88.1	Easy to navigate across multiple devices; navigation remains intuitive and easy to use regardless of device
3	99.8	Each page has a unique URL and enables visitors to go back to the immediate past page
4	93.6	Navigation titles, links and buttons describe exactly what's inside after a visitor clicks

top trends + insights

| 17 Global 50 firms scored 100.0 on **FBP3 - Navigation**, with 26 more firms scoring “excellent.” The seven remaining firms scored “good,” with 80.0 being the lowest score. Since the early days of our AmLaw 100 websites research in 2005, 2006 and 2007, this Foundational Best Practice has improved more than any other. **Your visitors are grateful!**

| Consistency of global and local navigation styles improved considerably over the 2016 Study, where firms scored 84.0 compared to 98.0 in 2019.

| In the latest round of redesigns, it is much easier to navigate across multiple devices and have a seamless and intuitive experience. Firms scored 88.1 (“excellent”) in the 2019 Study and 64 (“fair”) in 2016.

| With the proliferation of hamburger menus, we are observing a trend that local page - specific navigation is disappearing – not a good trend in our view. Eliminating it prevents visitors from traveling horizontally through your site. In other words, it means they have to jump vertically to the hamburger menu, open it and then click to the next global navigation title, rather than easily careening across your site to another practice page or news item. **Is this a reason that visitors are viewing fewer pages per visit than they did in 2016? It's perhaps a contributor.**

| **Attributes #3 and #4 for FBP3 - Navigation** were added in 2019, replacing two others that were no longer critical as a Foundational Best Practice. We are pleased to see that all the Global 50 firms scored well on them.

| Navigation on most sites was consistent from desktop to tablet to phone, but several firms had design issues with over-crowding hamburger navigation buttons on phones, making easy navigation difficult.

| Another issue, which is both a design and navigation problem, relates to desktop page design that is essentially duplicated on phones. **The phone result is visual clutter and a loss of clear information hierarchy.** The phone experience should be equally clean, airy and uncluttered as the desktop journey.

| It was surprising that a few websites in the Global 50 had disappointing phone experiences because they chose imagery with a fixed size. This means that on some smaller phones, the image dominated the page to a point that it was hard to navigate beyond it. **Designers:** don't use images with fixed pixel sizes.

| Some firms cause visitor confusion (still) by choosing less common navigation titles. Designers and planners want the product they create to be “different,” without recognizing (or caring) that buyers of legal services have an expectation of what they will get on a law firm website. Don't do this. Just don't. These firms are consciously or unconsciously obstructing the visitor experience and wasting their time. **Don't delay visitors getting what they want and need to evaluate you.**



Reminder: the purpose of navigation is to help people find their way around websites – to get them from point A to point B as quickly and easily as possible.

continued:

“ ”

Whether you are using a hamburger menu or a traditional list of global navigation titles, avoid including too many.

A list of 10 across the top and 15 in the hamburger menu on a mobile site is excessive. Work on improving the information hierarchy within your taxonomy and be more critical in what rises to the top of your navigation structure.

top trends+ insights

| Mega-menus, which became wildly popular and helpful in 2010 and beyond, are rapidly disappearing with hamburger menus taking over. It's hard to argue with the fact that they are useful in short-cutting the time to find what a visitor wants. Because **CMS** doesn't use a hamburger menu, it is a terrific example of a mega-menu that works hard to deliver – cms.law/en/gbr/

| While we are seeing fewer and fewer tabs used on lawyer bios and practice pages, a critical piece of functionality for lawyer bios that do feature tabs is that each tab has a unique URL. This creates a better visitor experience for both humans and search engines.

+ The unique URL means that the content under each tab can be indexed by search engines as a separate page (meaning they can find it and link to it). A good example is this **Sullivan & Cromwell** bio - sullcrom.com/lawyers/Nicolas-Bourtin. And an excellent example of a practice page is **Mayer Brown** - mayerbrown.com/en/capabilities/practices/capital-markets?tab=overview.

| We are expecting to see more vertically sliding navigation, such as **Goodwin** masterfully uses on its home page. It doesn't always translate well to mobile, but for **Goodwin**, it does.

| Another trend we expect to see in the next round of Global 50 redesigns is persistent or sticky navigation. It's not new, but law firms have been slow to adopt it. This means that the navigation menu is fixed on the page, regardless if the visitor scrolls down the page. The navigation marker moves with the visitor so people know where they are at all times.

+ A sticky header operates the same way, but stays at the top of the page as the visitor scrolls down to scan it. Once again, it means that visitors can access the header navigation without scrolling back up the page. It's a time-saver and usability boost.

View the pages below to see various examples of how sticky navigation works.

Greenberg Traurig / gtlaw.com/en/professionals/a/achi-ejim-peter
WilmerHale / wilmerhale.com/en/people/debo-adegbile
Skadden / skadden.com/professionals/a/aguiar-lauren-e
Reed Smith / reedsmith.com/en/professionals/a/achilles-jennifer-l
Morrison Foerster / mofo.com/people/chiraag-shah.html
Arnold & Porter / arnoldporter.com/en/people/a/abramowitz-laurie
McDermott Will & Emery / mwe.com/people/alexandre-mary-m
Goodwin / goodwinlaw.com/professionals/a/abate-mark

| Bottom line advice: Err on the side of simplicity. If you need multiple layers of navigation to accommodate your content, you are over-complicating things for your visitors.

standout firms

| Cleary Gottlieb

The firm has two equal levels of global navigation separated by its logo in the middle and a terrific, yet traditional use of mega-menus that expand to reveal what's inside. It is all intuitive and makes it easy to navigate and search specific sections (Professionals and News & Insights) – all from these cascading menus.

| Goodwin

We called them a “stand-out firm” in the 2016 Study and noted the 2019 website above, but we are mentioning Goodwin again here. Kudos to them for its vertical-sliding navigation design on both desktop and mobile. Land on the home page and you’ll see two layers of global navigation: **1)** a persistent vertical navigation structure with news, case studies and more and **2)** the hamburger menu, which is organized by more expected navigation titles, such as Our People, Services, Publications, etc. As a visitor hovers over one of these sections, a “drawer” pops out to the right to reveal the “child” pages (i.e., it’s a like a drawer opening to the right). Some of the Services, for example, have another layer or drawer that pops out to reveal “grandchildren” sub-practice pages.

| Akin Gump

We applaud the simplicity of this design, color palette and information hierarchy and how this beautifully transfers to mobile devices. From a navigation standpoint, the full-screen hamburger menu display is a winner – they plucked the desktop hamburger menu design and copied the look and feel exactly on the phone. Smart – this approach is well suited for the visitor that seamlessly uses all devices at the same time to find lawyers.

| Mayer Brown

This is an excellent example of the “sticky header” on both desktop and mobile. We seldom see it on either and it is a strong anchoring element for visitors trying to get their bearings. It subtly acknowledges that we are all distracted, if not ADHD-afflicted, and it subconsciously calms us by saying, “It’s ok, we understand. We’ll make it easy for you to find what you need.”



navigation

do's + don'ts

	Do remember that navigation should be intuitive and designed to get a person from point A to point B. You are creating important journeys for your different visitor personas – guide them, make it easy for them to find their way.
	Do create the simplest taxonomy possible. If a visitor needs the equivalent of planes, trains and automobiles to access relevant content, you're making it too hard. Be more critical of your taxonomy and content structure, then simplify.
	Do maintain navigation consistency across multiple devices. Your navigational menus should be blessed with great design.
	While hamburger menus on desktops are more popular than ever, do consider that vertical or horizontal mega-menus and cascading navigation can still play an important role in your strategy and design. There is a place for them – especially to display practice and industry lists, as well as locations.
	Do include global footers that include helpful and substantive info – these are easy ways to maximize the impact of important content that you want to appear on every page.
	Do include breadcrumb trails – it's the modern-day GPS of your website and proves Hansel and Gretel were right. It's the easiest way to know where you are and where you've been – especially for those visitors who use all devices interchangeably to search for lawyers and firms.
	Do use navigation and link titles that are easily understood. Include tiny intros of content when the links alone may not provide infinitely clear direction on what the visitor will receive when heading that way. This no-surprises approach will lead to website stickiness by encouraging additional clicks to that next piece of relevant content.

“ ”

Do use navigation titles or labels that are descriptive – each title must successfully and instantly communicate what's inside. Descriptive labels are good for both search engines and for humans.

	Don't include the word HOME in your global navigation. It hails back to the earliest days of website development before the logo on each page linked back to the home page.
	Don't include more than seven primary global navigation sections. If you want to include several secondary options, be clear about the hierarchy of those compared to the primary titles and inform your visitor by designing them differently.
	Don't get cute with your global navigation titles. Your titles are not the place to be unique; buyers of legal services want to view professionals, services, offices and maybe some trending news. Make it easy for them to intuitively navigate to these pages.
	Don't use format-based navigation titles. What's this? Navigation terms, such as videos, white papers, articles, etc. Visitors today aren't searching for how information is formatted; they are seeking answers and relevant information. The use of these is evolving – we'll see less and less format-based titles in new redesigns.
	Don't forget that local navigation enables visitors to move horizontally through your website. When they are on your practice pages, in addition to "related" links or tabs of lawyers and news/publications, include links to all the sub-practices and industries. Designers are increasingly pushing back on including these today, instead favoring a cleaner page. There is a visitor-experience and cross-selling cost to not including them, however.
	Don't forget the importance of FBP2 - Design when thinking through your navigation. Keep it simple and especially designed for each of the devices. (For example, ensure that phone navigation has space enough to accommodate large adult fingers.)
	Don't forget that each local navigation page (especially tabbed content) should have a unique URL. This ensures that website visitors who use the "back button" in the web browser will be able to reverse in the same order they advanced and that your content on every tab is indexed by search engines. It's just good rearview-mirror etiquette.

“ ”

The Nielsen Norman Group, the world leaders in research-based user experience, say, “Your users rely on link text to navigate through your site. These small and unassuming bits of UX copy contribute substantially to the findability, discoverability, and accessibility of your content.”

FBP03

navigation top ten performers*

Total Score
94.9

Highest Score
100.0

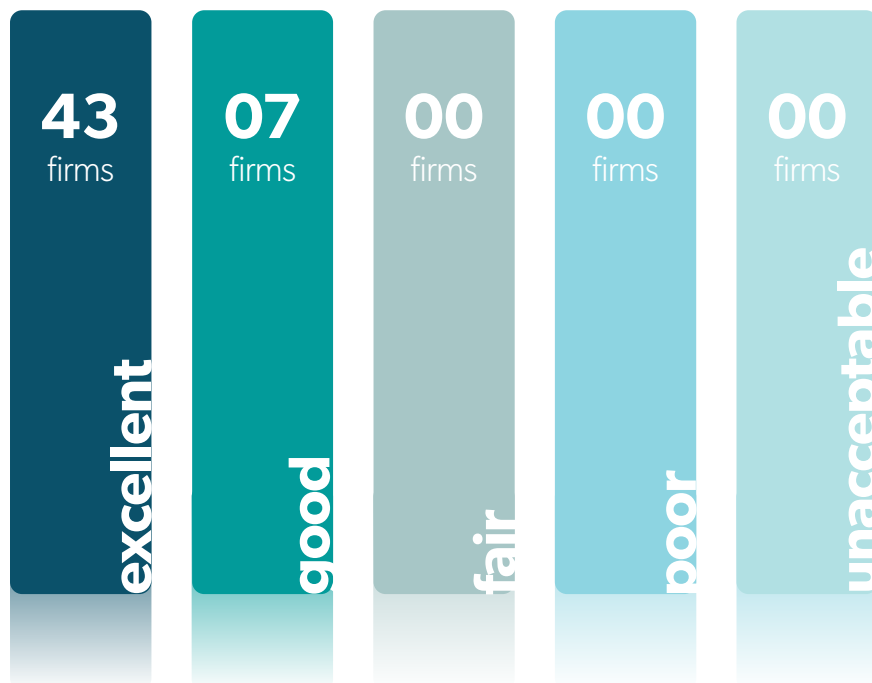
Lowest Score
80.0

100.0 Kirkland & Ellis	100.0 Baker McKenzie	100.0 DLA Piper
100.0 Norton Rose Fulbright	100.0 Greenberg Traurig	100.0 Mayer Brown
100.0 Davis Polk	100.0 Cleary Gottlieb	100.0 Herbert Smith Freehills
100.0 King & Spalding	100.0 Reed Smith	100.0 King Wood & Mallesons
100.0 Akin Gump	100.0 Winston & Strawn	100.0 Arnold & Porter
100.0 Shearman & Sterling	100.0 Milbank	

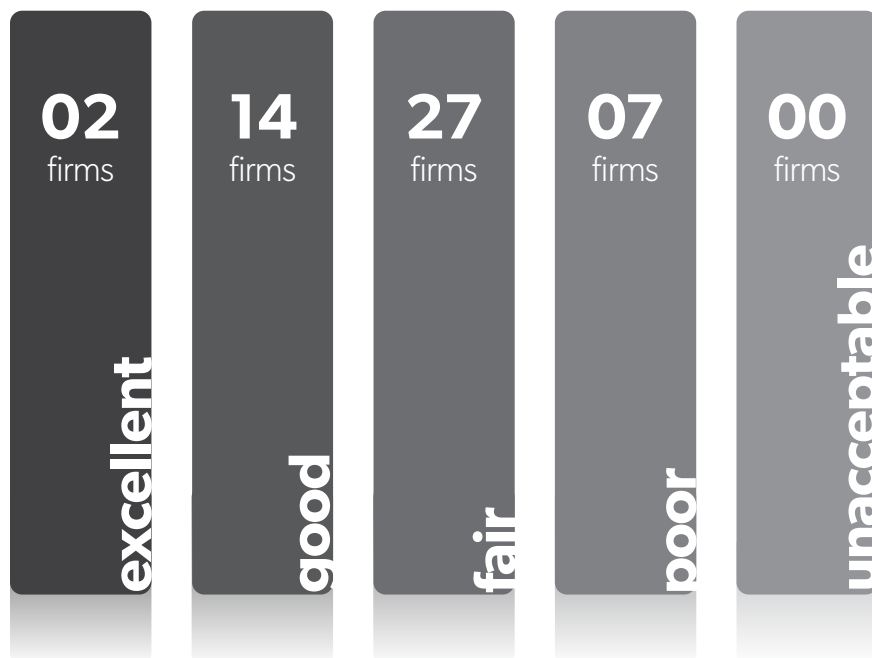
*17 firms tied for first place so we are including all of them here.

navigation

the results



2020 FBP 03
navigation



2016 FBP 03
navigation



FBP04

professionals' biographies

foundational best practice **04**

professionals' biographies

Global 50 Aggregate Scores + Attributes

1	87.5	First 2-3 sentences of overview are descriptive of lawyer's practice, type, size and industry sector of clients represented, plus geography of practice
2	70.0	Bio uses the professional's first name or nickname (not Mr. or Ms.)
3	48.0	Photos are larger format, "magazine-style" and consistent; they convey the professionals' personalities
4	87.0	The professional's full contact information is easy to find
5	57.2	The professional proves s/he/they is highly accessible: a) social media links, b) email this page, c) print, d) vcard, e) they list their assistant's contact info
6	81.8	Bios crosslink to practices/industries/news-events, etc. Firms get points off if they list items that don't link
7	74.9	Lawyers' bios include detailed experience/matter lists that are well organized with line breaks, sub-heads, etc. Avoids repetition of words and phrases, particularly at the beginning of bullet-points: e.g., represented, advised
8	72.6	Page design supports elegant content organization that enables visitors to quickly scan and consume what they want – e.g., easily "consummable" containers, boxes, headers, sub-heads, bullet lists, etc. No long, dense, unbroken blocks of text
9	71.8	Associates and professional staff (such as CFO, CMO, COO, etc.) have full biographies, which are accessible from the People landing page

top trends + insights

| If you're seeking a tutorial on how to dramatically improve your lawyer bios, listen to this 28-minute podcast with Deborah McMurray. **Moderated by Scott Love with the Attorney Search Group, it is practical and proven advice.** hwcdn.libsyn.com/Deborah_McMurray_Podcast_Interview.mp3

| The bio photo may be the bane of a lawyer's professional existence, but it remains a critical element in shortcutting the pathway to trust. By today's high standards, too many of the Global 50 firms scored poorly on their professional photos – the average of the 50 firms was 48.0.

+ Several firms use the phrase "one-firm" in their ABOUT section descriptions, yet we will see lawyers in different offices using different colors, backgrounds and image styles. Consistency in photo style is key in promoting "one firm" and a memorable firm brand. (**NOTE:** This doesn't mean that the lawyers' poses and expressions should be exactly the same. "Tone" and format of the images should be consistent – that's what we're looking for.)

+ Only four firms scored 100.0 on **attribute #3** – "Photos are larger format, "magazine-style" and consistent; they convey the professionals' personalities" – **White & Case, Cooley, McDermott Will & Emery** and **Proskauer**.

| The attribute with the second-lowest score in **FBP4 - Professionals' Biographies** was #5 relating to the person's accessibility (not to be confused with WCAG accessibility compliance discussed in **FBP10 - Site Hygiene + Usability**). The average for the Global 50 firms was 57.0.

+ The highest score awarded for this attribute was 80.0 – 12 firms were leaders in including links to their social accounts, as well as other sharing options.

+ If you believe this is important (as we do) and you want to give your lawyers examples of Global 50 firms that are doing this, we are listing all dozen of these firms by name: **Latham & Watkins, DLA Piper, Skadden, Dentons, Jones Day, Freshfields, White & Case, CMS, Herbert Smith Freehills, Morrison & Foerster, Goodwin, Winston & Strawn**.

“ ”

Analytics continue to prove that the reason visitors come to a law firm website is to view the bios. 50-75% of all visitors on the analytics we track view lawyer biographies. ***They must work harder for you.***

continued:



**Buyers of legal services
want to know four things:**

what have you done, for
whom have you done it,
how will you do it and what
can you do for me?

top trends+ insights

+ **Why should lawyers care about this?** To create relationship stickiness and to eliminate any communication barriers. When competition is increasingly tough, the person who makes it easier to do business with them just may come out on top.

| 15 firms scored 100.0 on “full contact information is easy to find.” You wouldn’t think this would be hard, but in some redesigns such foundational things are slipping. Firms scored a 99.0 on this in 2016 – but they have slipped to 87.0.

| 13 firms scored zero on **attribute #2** – “Don’t use Mr. or Ms. Use the person’s first or nickname.” **Please stop doing this.** With the ease of casting aspersions and judgment today, you are creating a barrier to entry and intimacy. It doesn’t set you higher on the professional ladder – it just makes you seem remote and unapproachable.

| **The lawyers/firms that do a good job with their experience do a very good job.** There were no firms that scored zero, but two scored 10.0 (“unacceptable”) and several others scored 60.0 or below. Too few sites turned experience details into a reader-friendly illustration of the lawyer’s practice focus and strengths. Don’t forget to teach associates how to master presenting these details. Associates’ experience details were often non-existent or light. A shout-out to **Kirkland & Ellis** for consistently sharing excellent detailed experience (even on associates’ bios), as well as **Skadden, Jones Day, Dentons**, which did a fine job with subheads and non-repetitive titles for each entry, and **Sullivan Cromwell**. All these firms scored 100.0 on this attribute.

| With the redesigns since the 2016 Study, firms have done a better job organizing bio pages so they are more consumable. **We are looking for smart design that presents an intuitive and accessible information hierarchy**, the use of containers, headers and subheads, bullet lists and otherwise ways to better present bio information.

+ 12 firms scored 100.0 on this attribute, with several other firms scoring 90.0.

+ The most engaging sites more effectively used headers, different font sizes and styles to capture the visitor’s attention.

| Professional staff and associates too often do not have bios (if they do, they are lacking in information that could be relevant to your visitors). Most often, sites feature either administrative professionals OR associates – not both.

| Strangely, professional staff and associate bios are often not the beneficiaries of the website's full search features. Rather, they are merely listed on a page of firm management without full bios. When associates are billed to clients at U.S. \$500 or more per hour, they deserve full bios.

| Experience lists are almost always too long, randomly organized and don't adequately answer a prospect's short-list questions.

+If they have experience at all, too many are extensive bulleted lists of blandly written accomplishments with too much jargon and not enough meaningful specifics. **Remember:** buyers' short-list questions include *what have you done, for whom have you done it, how will you do it — then, what can you do for me.* **You must answer these questions first to have any chance at being hired.**

| Professionals are mostly wasting the rich opportunity offered by the bio **Overview.** Too many merely re-state their title, office location, practice group membership, academic credentials and other obvious data (that are listed elsewhere on the page) without differentiating the professional or the firm. The first two sentences of your bio (another way of saying this is the first 140 characters) are the most important online real estate most lawyers will ever own. This is critical for search engines (because few firms take the time to write good meta-descriptions on a page by page basis) and human visitors alike.



Learn how to be a good storyteller
in 140 characters to 2 sentences.



As a truly global photography agency, we asked GittingsLegal leaders to comment on what they are seeing today and anticipating in portrait photography during this decade. They've been photographing lawyers and other law firm personnel since 2011 and have photographed nearly 60,000 lawyers in all 50 states and more than 228 cities around the world.

"A resounding and consistent request we receive when working with a firm is that they want their lawyers to look 'approachable.' But in Deborah McMurray's podcast about website bios, she mentions how lawyers can shortcut the pathway to trust. **Trust goes much further than mere approachability.**

"There are several ways that trust (or trust-worthiness) can be conveyed in a portrait.

"It's the initial impression that a visitor has when seeing the lawyer's image for the first time. Research is clear that we all make a judgment within milliseconds of viewing a photo of someone. Are they nice? Could I work with this person? Are they smart?
Can they get the job done? Can I TRUST this person?

"As the photo is unconsciously processed by the viewer, a deeper evaluation occurs. Is this a genuine expression? Is this person self-conscious, egocentric or down to earth? Do they care more about themselves than they would about me, my challenge or company? **Would they have my back? Can I TRUST this person?**

"Upon meeting the lawyer for the first time, this person's now 'second' impression tries to reconcile the new impression with what the website visitor saw in the photo on the bio page. Does this look like the same person? Just a different haircut, or is it something else? Does the photo portray a 10+ year younger version of this lawyer? A markedly thinner or heavier appearance? Why haven't they updated their photo? Do they not like their appearance today? Are they too busy to get a new one taken?
Will they have time for me? Can I TRUST this person?

"Having the lawyer look simply 'approachable' isn't sufficient anymore. Approachable is nice, welcoming and safe, but we see that as table stakes. As buyers, we want more – to be able to trust our lawyers, to know that they will be there for us. The right portrait can set the stage for this to occur." (Source: Greg Lorfing, Creative Director, gittingslegal.com)

standout firms

| White & Case

Came in first on **FBP4 - Professionals' Biographies** with the best bios we've recently seen. The page organization is intuitive and visually appealing, the photos are large, magazine-style and show personality. The descriptive copy and experience are very good across the board, even for associates and staff. Crosslinking is well populated and draws your eye with imagery and placement, within a "related content" area. Tab structure is kept simple (biography and experience). Good page tools, social and sharing.

| Greenberg Traurig

Came in second with strong written content and large format pictures. The page organization is outstanding with consumable containers that one can navigate according to preference (scroll or click), with transition effects that make the page feel engaging and modern. Experience is well populated and organized. Good crosslinking with options to filter insights by type.

| McDermott Will & Emery

Tied for third with very good bios, both in terms of content and structure. Large, magazine style photos. Persistent navigation that allows for scrolling or clicking, with the ability to expand individual content areas. Crosslinking is well populated, displayed attractively and organized with filter options. Experience is substantial and found on most partners' bios. Nice button-less search with progress bar showing it's working. Full bios for associates and staff.

| Cleary Gottlieb

Also tied for third with strong content that is well organized and consumable – both in terms of how it's organized and the styling – scanning feels easy. Good photography that shows personality. Full bios for associates and professional leadership. Experience is robust on almost all partners, and when long, it's broken into subheads and includes a "Read More."

| King & Spalding

Tied for third with well-organized pages that are easy to scan and attractive blocks of a different color. **Suggestion:** It could improve if the visitor experience were more consistent when you click the "More" links within each block – sometimes it expands down, sometimes a pop-up window appears, and other times it opens search results and you've left the bio. Good photography and bios for both associates and the team of other professionals.

| Morrison & Foerster

The final firm that tied for third includes quotes from the lawyers, which are good, but we wish more people had them populated (seems about 3 in 10 partners). Intros are mostly good, and the photos are appealing. Social, sharing and page tools are easy to find. For the partners that include it, experience content is good and utilizes expand/contract to show more details. **(We urge more MoFo partners to complete their experience profiles!)** There is an interesting effect with how the header gets smaller as you scroll down, but keeps the contact info visible. Associates and staff have full bios.



professionals' biographies

do's + don'ts

	Do immediately engage the reader in your most relevant content: your first 140 characters should be keyword rich and relevant enough to compel visitors to click on this snippet in a Google search for your name.
	Once on the bio details page, do focus on your first 2-3 sentences – they should describe what you do today , the type, size and industry sector of clients represented, and the geography of your practice.
	Do provide an easy and intuitive search tool for finding professionals – this is one of the most important features on your website (make it easy to find your lawyers in multiple ways). According to the analytics we track, the alphabet search for Professionals is still the most-used search feature.
	Do provide full contact information (including your snail-mail address), accessible without scrolling and accessible without having to download a v-card.
	Do prove that you are accessible. Include social media links and visitor-friendly page tools, email this page, print to PDF, v-card and assistant's name and contact info on the professional's page.
	Do cross-link everything that is listed on the professional's page (articles, events, blog posts, practice and industries, etc.).
	Do organize bios so they are easy to consume – with containers, boxes, headers, subheads, bullet lists, etc.
	Do ensure that associates and professional staff such as CFO, CMBDO, COO, etc., have full bios and are retrievable via the same search tools as your lawyers.
	Do answer the all-important 4 questions: <i>What have you done? For whom have you done it? How will you do it? And, what can you do for me?</i>
	Do prove that you are client-centric. Ponder the question: “what sells you?” – this will help you determine what visitors in your unique markets/industries are looking for from you.
	Do humanize your professionals through magazine-style, current photos and client-facing content.



Don't refer to yourself as Mr. or Ms. – it's old-fashioned and unfriendly. (Do you really expect someone to call you this?) Use the professional's first name or nickname, and maintain consistency.



Don't clutter your bio by listing articles/events, etc. that aren't cross-linked.



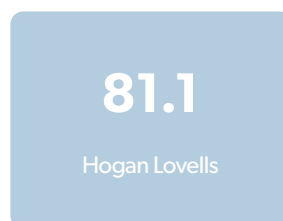
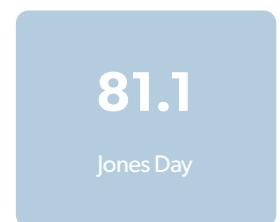
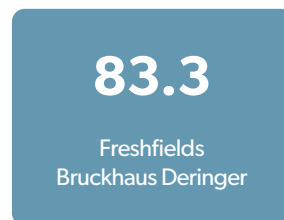
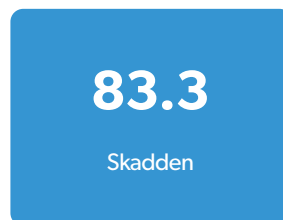
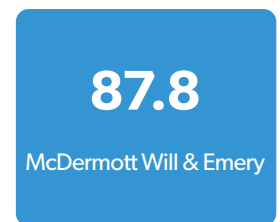
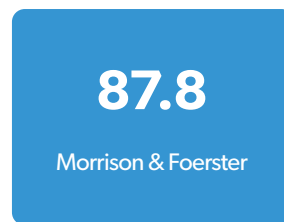
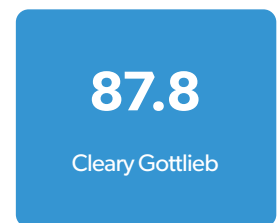
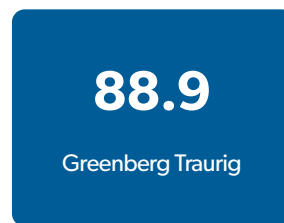
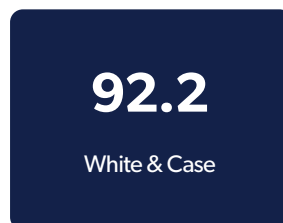
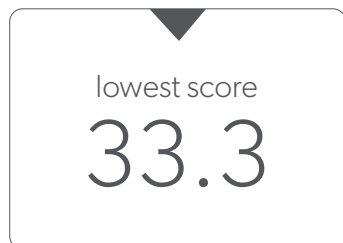
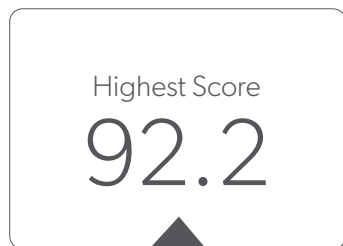
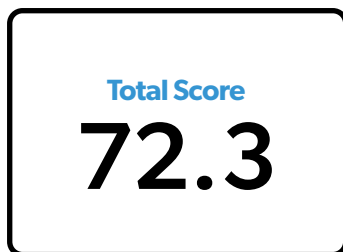
Don't repeat words and phrases over and over, especially at the beginning of your experience bullet lists (e.g., represented, advised). Vary your narrative choices to better engage your visitors – **be a storyteller and present what you've done in a more interesting light.**



A colossal don't: Don't stay in love with your 10-year old photo, where you were 20-pounds thinner and had more hair. Be proud of your current appearance and update your photos every time your looks significantly change. We know it's expensive to reshoot thousands of professionals around the world, but given that these pages are driving the future revenue of your firm, it's worth the investment. **It's a trust thing. Your prospect wants to know who you are today.**

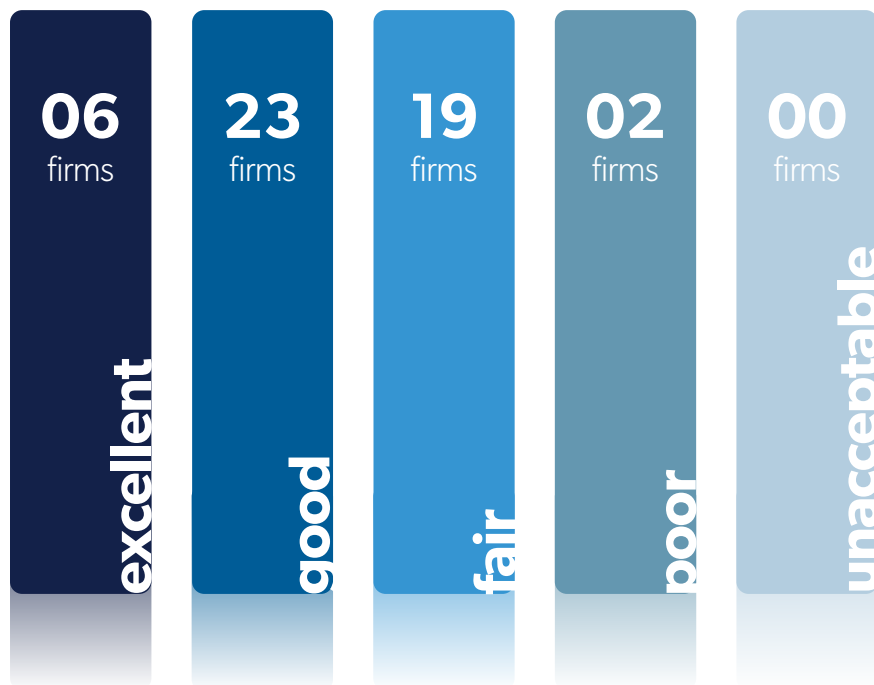
FBP04

professionals' biographies top ten performers*

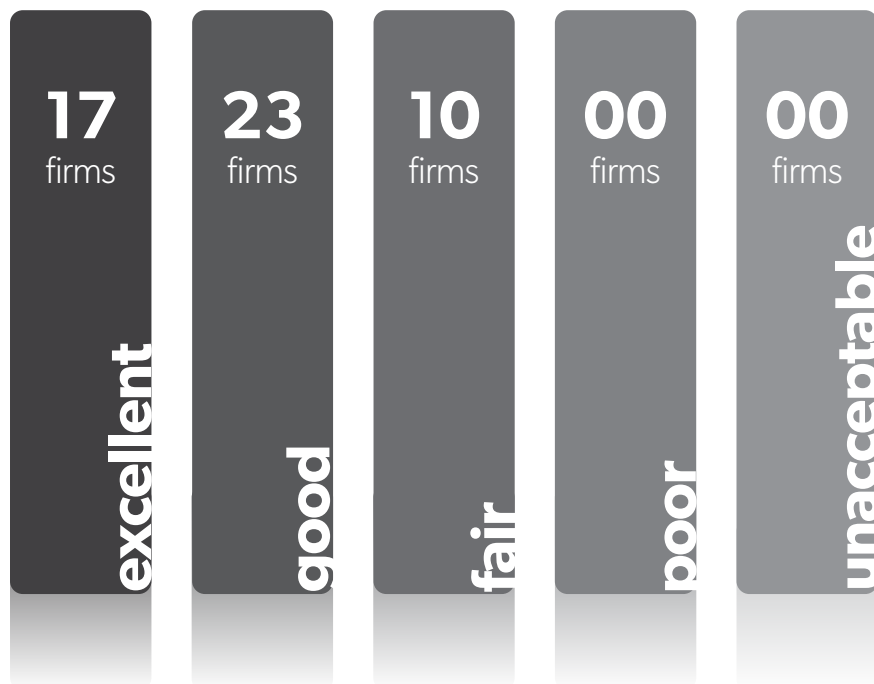


*5 firms tied for 10th place so we are including all of them here.

professionals' biographies the results



2020 FBP 04
professionals' biographies



2016 FBP 04
professionals' biographies



FBP05

content (other than biographies)

foundational best practice **05****content**
(other than biographies)**Global 50 Aggregate Scores + Attributes**

1	76.9	Content is visitor focused (not “all about me”) and is available in multiple languages
2	88.7	Page content has a clear information hierarchy and is well-organized for today’s scanning reader (i.e., uses subheads, bullet lists, containers and boxes, etc.)
3	84.6	Practices and industries are broken out separately — by services that clients buy. Geographic regions is a bonus. Extra credit if firm uses captioned photos or other images to support and illustrate its industry or practice group content
4	83.3	Service descriptions include experience specifics, including client locations, names or alias descriptions of clients (answering the questions: what have you done, for whom have you done it and where?)
5	51.4	Video and multimedia content is featured, produced well and short
6	89.4	Landing page for news/articles/events, etc. is well organized and easily sorted by topic, author, date. Nothing is listed that isn't linked to a details page.
7	81.3	The site has a statement of core values that relate to clients, the profession and the markets the firm serves
8	95.5	Site highlights the firm’s commitment to diversity and inclusion
9	82.0	Charitable and civic commitment is described and evident. Does it highlight the leadership shown by the firm and its lawyers?
10	96.2	Pro bono commitment is described in detail, highlighting stories and specific matters
11	30.0	Sites have a statement relating to the Modern Slavery Act

top trends + insights

| The attributes in **FBP5 - Content (other than biographies)** have been slightly updated since the 2016 Study. The only new **attribute** is **#11** "regarding including a statement relating to the **Modern Slavery Act**."

| The total score of all 11 attributes on **FBP5 - Content (other than biographies)** in 2019 was 83.0 ("good") – up just a hair from the 2016 total of 81.2. The lowest score in our latest Study was 61.0 ("fair").

| Only one law firm scored 100.0 on the first attribute with a visitor-focused eye to its content – **Eversheds Sutherland US**. The 2019 average score for the Global 50 firms on this attribute decreased to 76.9 ("good") over the 80 received in the 2016 Study. **Advice: Your content is more engaging and interesting if it's not always about you. Eversheds Sutherland US** also ranked #1 on **FBP5 - Content (other than biographies)**. Congratulations!

| Seven Global 50 firms scored 100.0 on **attribute #2**, "Page content has a clear information hierarchy and is well-organized for today's scanning reader (i.e., uses subheads, bullet lists, containers and boxes, etc.)." The average 2019 score of the Global 50 firms was essentially the same as it was in 2016.

+ **Why should law firm lawyers and marketers care about information hierarchy?** Based on the analytics that we track, visitors are spending less time today on law firm websites than in 2016. Here's how this breaks down: 1) their overall "dwell time" is less, meaning fewer total minutes per person; 2) they are spending less time than ever consuming practice and industry pages and 3) are consuming fewer pages per visit than our analytics showed in 2016.

+ We analyze the information hierarchy of content and pages in several sections of the Ten Foundational Best Practices – it's that important. To learn more about how you can succeed at it, read more in **FBP2 - Design**, **FBP4 - Professionals' Bios**, **FBP8 - Site Optimization + Online Awareness** and **FBP9 - Mobility**.

| **Attribute #4**, which focuses on "service descriptions include experience specifics", is another critical attribute and we mention this throughout the Foundational Best Practices and this White Paper as well.

+ **Think of your experience as the first currency you have as a lawyer and firm.** It really is what makes your firm distinctive: you handle a specific issue with particular subject-matter variables for a certain person and client organization in a unique way in a domestic or foreign jurisdiction. No other firm will handle this matter in precisely the same way. New prospects must be able to evaluate you based on your experience – this is the "**short-list test**" about which we've written throughout this White Paper.

+ **If your major competitors are offering rich experience on their websites and you aren't, your firm is at a distinct disadvantage.**

“ ”

Visitors are enormously distracted – even the ones who know you and really like you. You must make it easy to scan your pages on desktops, laptops, tablets and phones (they don't read). Make them more snackable and consumable.

Design your pages more like a magazine with containers, boxes, callouts, snippets of information, infographics and interesting headers and fonts to make your content visually enticing and more memorable.

continued:

“ ”

Even for the firms that feature a lot of video content, the researchers noted that some of it is overly platitudinous and, sadly, sounds too similar from firm to firm.

We noted in FBP1 - **Communicating your Message**, that two themes were over-used in video: 1) the one-firm firm platform and 2) local roots/global reach – or about two dozen derivations of that. Dig deeper/work harder to unearth the essence of who your lawyers are and what firm leaders believe in before you script your video. You don't want to look and sound like your competitor peer firms – or the money you are spending on video is just a waste of money.

top trends+ insights

+ Read more about the importance of including specific and detailed experience on your website in **FBP7 - Site Search** and **FBP4 - Professionals' Bios**.

+ Finally, because experience is such a table-stakes component of practice and industry descriptions (and lawyer bios, of course), we invite you to visit the sites of the ten firms that scored 100.0 on **attribute #4: Dentons, Hogan Lovells, Jones Day, King & Spalding, Paul Hastings, Akin Gump, Winston & Strawn, Orrick, Covington and McDermott Will & Emery**. Several other firms scored between 80 and 90, so firms are getting more conscientious about this. The lowest score was a 60.0 (“fair”).

| We also track video and multimedia content in more than **FBP5** — under **FBP6 - Interactivity, Engagement + Social Outreach** – so read more there. In 2016, the Global 50 firms scored 34.0 (“poor”) and in the 2019 Study, scored 51.4 (barely “fair”).

| In 2019, 15 firms scored “zero” on the video/multimedia attribute and ten firms scored 100.0.

| **Check your analytics:** Do you want visitors to consume more of your news/articles/publications/blogs, etc. content? Then seriously rethink how you organize and present that content.

+ **Visitors want one place they can go to find it all.** Don't separate news from events from alerts from blogs in your global navigation. The analytics prove visitors will not go to multiple locations to find relevant resources, etc. Call it Resources, Thought Leadership, Our Thinking or Insights (for example) and include all of your smart thinking and events under that one umbrella.

+ Once on that landing page, then you can offer special search functionality by topic, author, date and type of resource (e.g., event, article, blog post, podcast). This enables visitors to choose a certain category of content and dig deep into that format type. We said earlier that visitors care more about subject matter and less about format type. This page is the only place visitors may care. Or, they can search by subject matter and consume all you've published about that one topic.

+ The landing page itself should have all the content feeding to it chronologically regardless of whether it is an event or an e-alert. Visitors don't typically care what type of news item it is – they are simply seeking the latest information about, for example in Q1 2020, the coronavirus/COVID-19.

+ Nearly every Global 50 law firm (and most other firms, too) organizes the landing page by the category of content that it is. **This is the old-fashioned way of organizing news.** For inspiration, visit cnn.com, wsj.com or knowledge@wharton.com. There will be lawyers that find these sites messy and nerve wracking, **but if you want more of your content consumed, design your page like a popular news site and organize your offerings the way they do.**

| When it comes to corporate social responsibility (CSR) and **attributes #s 7, 8, 9 and 10**, the AmLaw Global 50 firms perform well. These attributes are about giving back and being good corporate citizens of the world. These sections of their websites often include heartwarming, life-changing stories that global citizens want to hear. **Please share these impactful stories!**

| **Attribute #7**, including core values actually went down from the 2016 Study – it was 92 (“excellent”) then and is 81.2 (“good”) now. We assume that most law firms of any size have core values, which are the fundamental beliefs of the organization. Putting this stake in the ground about who you are and how you operate helps future clients and employees determine if their values align with yours. **This perceived alignment can shortcut the pathway to trust.**

| With an average score of 95.5 (“excellent”) in, 2019, **attribute #8** (“the site highlights firm commitment about diversity and inclusion”) firms are doing a fine job here – but all firms should score 100.0 on this. The lowest score was 70.0 (“fair”) and two firms received this because the content was buried too low on an ABOUT page or it was simply one non-specific statement.

| Here are three examples of superior diversity and inclusion sections of websites that scored 100.0: **Kirkland & Ellis** is a leader in countless areas and diversity and inclusion doesn’t take a backseat to any of it. From its “Diversity Leadership Series” to the hundreds of IL and 2L fellowships they sponsor to their national awards and inclusive programming they offer, firms needing guidance here should view Kirkland & Ellis’s commitment as the gold standard. kirkland.com/social-commitment/diversity-and-inclusion

| The magazine-style layout of **Goodwin** presents numerous things to view, from its initiatives to its affinity groups to news to what “belonging” means - goodwinlaw.com/firm/diversity-and-inclusion.

| And **Clifford Chance** is notable because the firm offers sub-navigation tabs within its Inclusion & Diversity page that more comprehensively defines what they are doing: Disability, Ethnicity, Faith, Gender, LGBT+ and Wellbeing. In case you are wondering what “Wellbeing” includes, the page starts with this: “At **Clifford Chance** we believe everyone is entitled to the same equality of opportunity and experience. Each of us can face a range of personal, work and societal pressures that can impact our mental health and well being.” The firm features its programs, such as Work-Life Balance and Movember cliffordchance.com/about_us/responsible-business/inclusion-and-diversity.html.

| **Attribute #9** (“charitable and civic commitment is described and lawyers’ involvement is noted”) went down from the 2016 Study from 86.0 (“excellent”) to 82.0 (“good”). 14 firms scored 100.0, several scored 80 and above, but several firms scored 50 or below and two firms scored zero.





| We want to highlight **Proskauer's** global navigation because they include a section called "For Good," which includes Pro Bono, Corporate Social Responsibility and a link to the For Good Blog. This blog features terrific posts covering topics such as mental health, the Equal Rights Amendment, grassroots activism for immigrant justice, legal access for rural Americans and numerous other socially relevant topics.

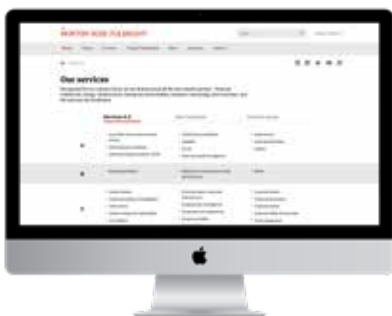
| Pro Bono, **attribute #10** is often one of the more interesting sections of a global firm website if lawyers do a good job of capturing and retelling these important stories.

Of course, high profile pro bono matters also garner a lot of media attention and ultimately result in coveted industry and community awards.



+ For pro bono, the Global 50 score in 2016 was 88.0 and it jumped up to 96.2 in 2019. 35 firms scored 100.0 on this attribute with the lowest scores being 80.0 ("good"). The content on these lower-scoring firms' pro bono pages didn't quite match the depth and breadth of the other firms that scored 100.0.

| The final **attribute, #11**, was new in the 2019 Study even though the law that first addressed it was enacted in 2015. Until this Q4-2019 analysis of the Global 50, we did not notice any law firm policies relating to the UK Modern Slavery Act or Australia's Modern Slavery Act of 2018.



+ 15 Global 50 firms have a statement on their websites, with links to them often found in the footer. Several firms have posted articles discussing it but don't include an actual policy on their websites. A couple others include a link or statement on their United Kingdom location pages. A notably good example is **Arnold & Porter**, which links to a four-page PDF that clearly and completely outlines firm policy arnoldporter.com/-/media/files/firm-statement-policy/antislavery-policy.pdf?la=en.

+ Another excellent example is **Norton Rose Fulbright**, where the firm outlines the many aspects of an inclusive firm policy and includes **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the years 2018, 2019 and 2020**. Impressive that they established KPIs, are tracking how they are doing and are openly posting how they are measuring their progress nortonrosefulbright.com/en-us/global-statements/modern-slavery-act-statement.



One of the finest examples of an EDI policy was written by a nonprofit, Dallas Theater Center, a Tony-award-winning LORT regional theater. We are including it in this White Paper because it identifies and defines the “equity” piece, which few law firms address. If you aren’t adding EQUITY to your D&I statements and policies, we encourage you to take that step.

“All Are Welcome!” At Dallas Theater Center, we want to be the best place to work and see theater, and to be a positive and transformational force in Dallas and beyond.

“We stand-up for equity, diversity, and inclusion across our company and community.

As a leading national theater, we recognize that building an equitable, diverse, and inclusive environment is central to our relevance and sustainability in the community we serve and love.

“Equity means recognizing that not everyone starts at the same place, addressing inequities in access and opportunity, and allowing for full and fair participation.

“Diversity means acknowledging and respecting human qualities that are different from our own and outside the groups we are a part of or with which we are associated. These qualities include but are not limited to: ethnicity, race, color, country of origin, sex, gender, gender identity or expression, age, sexual or relationship orientation, family structure, religion, beliefs, political affiliations, experiences and ability differences.

“Inclusion means honoring and accepting the gifts, backgrounds, experiences, and wisdom that every individual brings with them, so that every stakeholder feels valued by Dallas Theater Center. Our stakeholders are staff, artists, board members, donors, audiences, and community members.” (Source: Dallas Theater Center, February 2020, dallastheatercenter.org)

“ ”

Don't let your content grow stale – add a “freshness” date to each content piece in your web admin tools. Question: How do I know if it's stale? Answer: If no one is reading it. Check your analytics.

standout firms

| Dentons

This firm stands out because of the visitor focus of its practice and industry descriptions. In most or all instances, the first paragraph of the overview sets the stage about the subject matter in terms of issues, challenges and opportunities. Dentons establishes a point of view and then describes why it is the firm to hire to address what's ahead. The experience bullets for each description are very detailed and paint a solid picture of lawyer and team capabilities. **Bravo!** Here is one example: [dentons.com/en/find-your-dentons-team/industry-sectors/life-sciences-and-health-care](https://www.dentons.com/en/find-your-dentons-team/industry-sectors/life-sciences-and-health-care).

| Clifford Chance

If you want a terrific example of how to present firm innovation on a website (or just want to see what BigLaw is doing), view the “Innovation & Best Delivery” global navigation section. You might wonder what “best delivery” is, as we did: Clifford Chance defines it as “smarter ways of working.” Among the things they feature are three visitor/results-focused case studies that quickly summarize the benefits to the clients: **1) Employment law - Machine learning software reduces lawyer effort by more than 50% and speeds up delivery to the client; 2) Loan portfolio - Machine learning software reduces lawyer effort by more than 50% and speeds up delivery to the client; and 3) Due diligence - Machine learning software reduces lawyer effort by more than 50% and speeds up delivery to the client.**

| Allen & Overy

Americans who work in the legal industry are used to what now seems ubiquitous – the *American Lawyer* (AmLaw) 100 and 200 financial reviews of self-reported law firm revenues and profits. **But we have never seen a law firm publish its own audited financial statements as Allen & Overy has, making what it presented to its partners available for all website visitors to see.** <file:///C:/Users/Content%20Pilot/Downloads/Annual-report-and-financial-statement-2019.pdf>. Smartly, they take the opportunity to highlight firm strategy, firm innovation advancements, firm governance structure, how they manage risk and compliance, and much more. It feels transparent and remarkable.

| Simpson Thacher

The firm was also called out in our 2016 Study. **Watch Simpson Thacher's videos** as examples of beautifully-produced, artfully-scripted and carefully-messaged content. The history video is long, but worth watching the eight-plus minutes that tell the story of the firm's beginnings and how it grew into one of the most formidable law firms in New York – and beyond. Another favorite video is one that features highly diverse associates (plus a few partners) speaking about the summer program and how much they got out of it. [stblaw.com/your-career](https://www.stblaw.com/your-career)



| King & Spalding

This is another firm noted as “standout” in the 2016 Study. **Their core values are the antithesis of platitudinous** (a complaint we noted above). They are practical, walk-the-talk examples of what clients can expect when they hire **King & Spalding** lawyers to represent them. For example, here are a few: *“demonstrate a can-do attitude; speak business not legalese; solve problems, don’t just spot issues; walk in our clients’ shoes; enjoy the relationship and always take an uncompromising approach to quality.”* The short, two-plus minute video highlights the core values and offers testimonial-style quotes from clients that prove the core-value claims they are making. **Smart.** kslaw.com/pages/our-values



| Akin Gump

The landing pages for all the firm’s major regions, practice and industry areas are especially interesting and engaging because the content and design work so well together. They are designed almost as “portals” to that subject matter, displaying, for example, a very short overview, links to all the sub-practice/industry pages, a simple infographic or two, an image of a downloadable PDF brochure, featured news and publications, related practices/industries/regions and the team. This content and design structure enables visitors to quickly scan all the offerings and then choose the one or two items that most interest them. We haven’t seen the analytics for these pages, but we are betting on a higher click-through rate than practice pages typically receive.



content (other than biographies)

do's + don'ts

	Do name client-organization names in your representative experience when you have permission to do so. Use a descriptive alias when you don't have permission.
	Do ensure that your site's content is truly geared to the people who can hire you, and that it describes and illustrates benefits to them.
	Do create a logical information hierarchy to your content in all sections of the site. What is most important? What's next most important? Use H-tags to help guide your human and bot visitors.
	Do take inspiration from today's print magazines (<i>Harvard Business Review</i> is a great example) for page layout. People of all generations don't read (they scan) – they're seeking bits of information they can quickly consume. Organize your pages with subheads, bullet lists, boxes, containers, etc.
	Do step up your use of arresting imagery to add depth to all areas of your site. High-quality images grab your visitors' attention; then, studies show, the next place their eye stops is on the caption (and message) that is linked to the image. Ensure that images boost your story, not detract from it.
	And along those lines, do identify a clear and consistent image style for your website. Multiple formats, combining illustrations and photos without clear design direction, mixing black and white photos with color images can result in a jarring, jumbled, messy experience for your visitor. Go one step further and build an image library that you will use on your site and in collateral pieces.
	Do understand how you pass the "short-list test" – include experience specifics in all service descriptions.
	Answer the questions: what have you done, for whom have you done it and what can you do for me? Don't forget to also answer this: How will you do it?
	Do blow up your landing page for your News/Events/Resources section and pattern it after major news sites. Organize it chronologically so visitors can quickly scan ALL your news at once. Write compelling, evocative headlines that captivate your visitors and choose images that boost your story.
	Do highlight your firm and lawyer leadership when describing charitable, civic and professional commitments and associations. Link to every organization you support (great for SEO and helpful to these charities).
	Do describe pro bono matters in detail, with specific stories, outcomes and links to associated lawyers and practice groups (to the extent your bar rules allow).
	Do regularly clean house in your News/Events/Resources section and eliminate (or archive) news and events that are older than three years. For articles/publications, if they are seminal, five years is OK, but any older deteriorates the relevance of visitors' site searches.



Don't make claims you can't or won't prove. Don't write a laundry list of things you do in your various service areas without backing those up with proof – that is, detail your current and relevant experience.



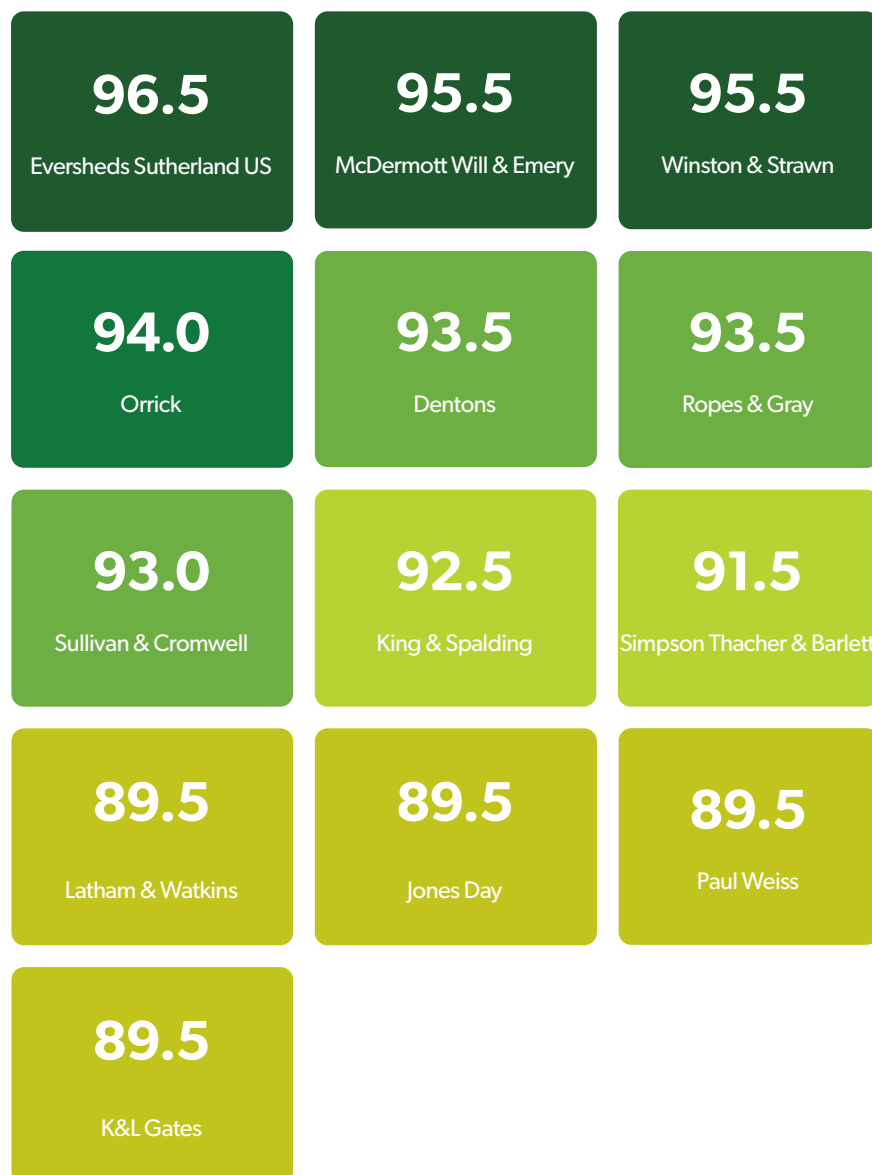
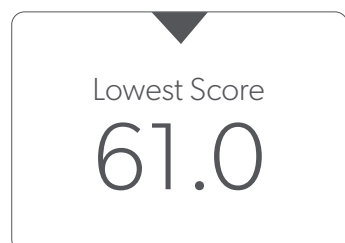
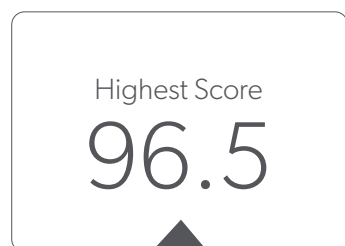
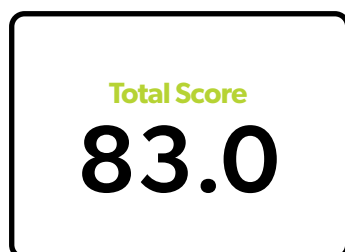
Lawyers: If you don't have adequate detailed experience to qualify you as experts in a service area, don't include that service area as a website page. You can mention your capabilities in your bio, but without enough specific experience, you shouldn't build a page under services/industries. Doing this potentially breaches trust and dilutes the impact of your strongest and most influential practices.



Don't list any news, event, article or publication that is not linked to a details page. Buyers of legal services want access to the articles that can make their lives easier – and that further qualify the lawyers as experts. **A simple article title, publication and date that don't link aren't meaningful at all.**

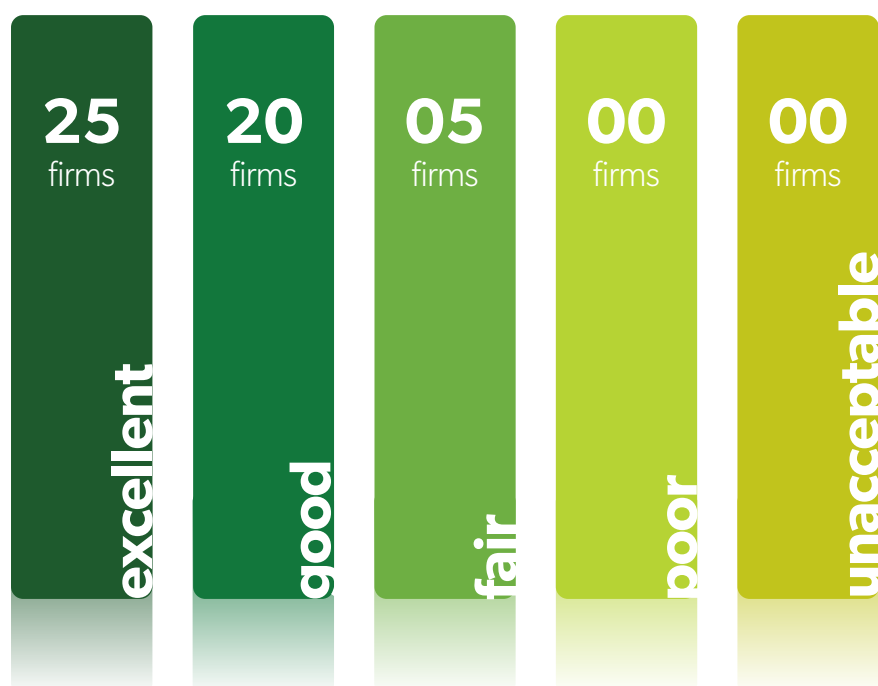
FBP05

content (other than biographies) top ten performers*

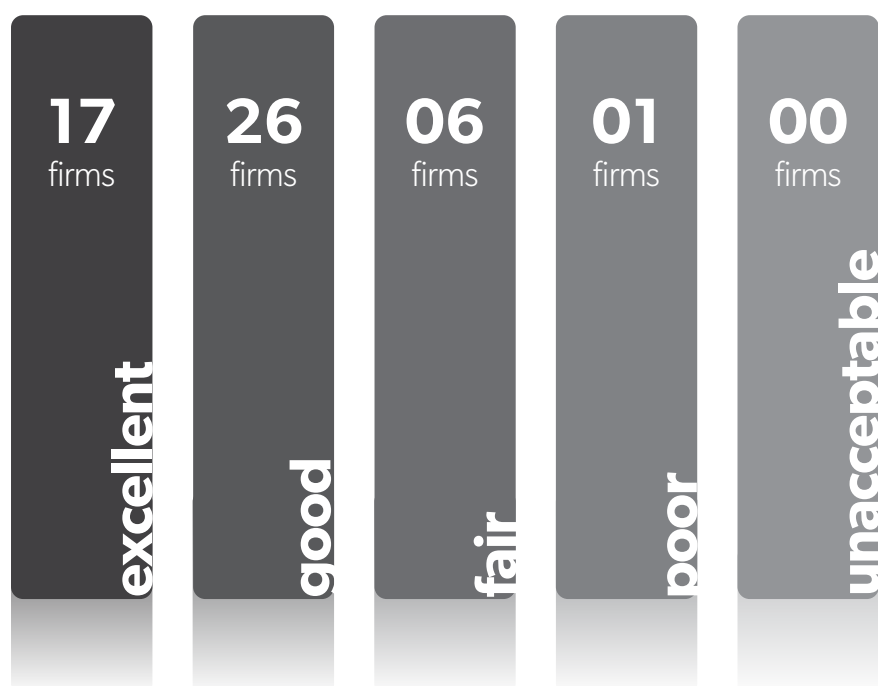


*4 firms tied for 10th place so we are including all of them here.

content (other than biographies) the results



2020 FBP 05
content (excluding biographies)



2016 FBP 05
content (excluding biographies)



FBP06

interactivity, engagement + social outreach

foundational best practice **06**

interactivity, engagement + social outreach

Global 50 Aggregate Scores + Attributes

1	91.6	Site includes a link to an alumni community (LinkedIn or separate website)
2	89.5	Site includes newsletter subscribe feature, event registration, other sign-up opportunities
3	98.4	Links to firm/lawyer blogs on home page, bios, practice/industry and other relevant pages
4	86.2	Site offers educational webinars, videos, podcasts
5	89.5	Site links to social media sites and has an active/current presence on these sites (LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook)
6	80.6	Share functionality is present throughout the site
7	74.9	Site features videos – in bios, careers, news, other areas of the site

top trends + insights

| Four Global 50 firms scored 100.0 on this Foundational Best Practice – **Morgan Lewis, Ropes & Gray, K&L Gates** and **Winston & Strawn**. Bravo!

| In the 2016 Study, the lowest scoring firm averaged 19.4 (“unacceptable”). In this Study, the lowest score jumped up considerably to 58.6 (“fair”).

| We eliminated two attributes in this Study over the 2016 research:

+ *Site offers a PDF “binder” or “build a brochure” functionality.* We deleted this because, while it is interesting functionality, analytics prove that visitors aren’t using it. Since the very reason this research exists is to evaluate and improve visitors’ experience over time on law firm websites, if they aren’t using it, let’s get rid of it.

+ *Client extranet is offered and accessible.* The average number of firms who included an extranet link in the 2016 Study was 55 out of 100. Today we assume that all major B2B firms offer clients secure portals to share documents, etc., but we no longer advocate that firms include visible links on their main website. The primary reason is security. In spite of having several layers of protection, **we don’t recommend advertising that this link provides access to the law firm clients’ most sensitive information.**

| As in 2016, too many Global 50 websites don’t offer “share” functionality for bios and other important pages (**and, after the latest round of redesigns, many firms also don’t offer “email this page,” thus they are making it next to impossible to easily transfer information from one interested reader to another**). The 2019 score was 81.0 (“good”) compared to 71 (barely “good”) in 2016.

| 43 of the Global 50 firms scored 100.0 on “linking to an online alumni community – either through their websites or via LinkedIn.”

+ Most large law firms follow the lead of the Big 4 and other major accounting and advisory firms – they recognize the enormous value of nurturing alumni as sources of new business. Small to mid-sized firms aren’t as adept or conscientious about this. Missed opportunity, we think.

+ **Building your alumni community on LinkedIn is an affordable, smart alternative to designing and maintaining a private alumni website.**

| 24 of the websites scored 100.0 on **attribute #2** “making it easy to subscribe to newsletters, eAlerts and other publications and register for events.” The rest of the law firms made it harder to do one or the other. Often, they included subscribe or register but not both, or the functionality they did offer was hard to find or wasn’t user friendly. This is such basic functionality today, we found this surprising.

“ ”

Take advantage of all channels to build reputation, community and engagement. It can all work much harder for you if view it collectively. Don’t forget that you are also providing a platform for clients to interact with you. They may not be ready to hire or refer you – but they may want to keep learning about you.

continued: top trends+ insights



As noted in FBPI -
Communicating your Message,
**don't bury your positioning
strategy messages in a video that
is further buried in your ABOUT
section.**

Fine to have a video but ensure that
the text is featured and readable
on your home page. And don't
forget to caption it so it passes
the accessibility test for hearing-
impaired visitors.

+ Firms typically link to a third-party event registration software, such as Cvent or EventBrite. No need to build this functionality into your website.

+ The average score in 2019 was 90.0 ("excellent") – a marked improvement over the 2016 score of 73 ("good").

| Only two law firms didn't score 100.0 on **attribute #3**, "linking to blogs on all relevant pages." With a score of 98.4 in this Study, it's improving on an already good score (90.0) from the 2016 Study.

+ **Many lawyers still don't include social media links on their bio pages.** These links promote relationship stickiness and help people feel closer to you.

| The greatest positive change in the 2019 Study over 2016 is the proliferation of multimedia, primarily video. Analytics prove that video drives further engagement and longer website dwell times, so it has highly practical and undisputable advantages. (To learn more about "dwell time," read **FBP2 - Design.**)

+ 15 firms scored 100.0 on this attribute and we congratulate all of them on what we know is a lot of hard work. Because the investment of time and money can be substantial to produce well-scripted, high-production-value video, we are naming all 14 firms here: **Hogan Lovells, Morgan Lewis, Jones Day, Norton Rose Fulbright, White & Case, Ropes & Gray, Greenberg Traurig, CMS, Sullivan & Cromwell, Paul Weiss, Morrison & Foerster, K&L Gates, Winston & Strawn, McDermott Will & Emery.**

+ The lowest score was 25.0 or "unacceptable" – six firms offered little video content or what was on the site was very difficult to find.

+ Videos should be short; generally, two minutes or less. If you really want consumption, target 30 to 60 seconds. The exceptions are: a deep-dive into a particular topic, which can be up to 10 or 15 minutes; a video of a panel discussion, presentation or longer live speech, or a webinar recording (which isn't technically a video). If you have an hour of video material, consider creating a video "executive summary" of the high points in five minutes or less.

+ **We really like Cooley's "Dealology" videos narrated by one of its partners.** They are simply produced – perhaps shot in the lawyer's office or a conference room and cover important aspects of different deal types. The content meets the accessibility standard, with the text of the material captioned on top of the image, and the accompanying page content summarizes what visitors will learn when they listen to it (for several of them). The shortest is 3:37 minutes and the longest is 13:52. [Cooley.com/landing/dealology](https://www.cooley.com/landing/dealology) These prove that you don't have to spend a fortune on creating a video with the highest production value. **The purpose is to inform, so they should be clear, relevant, crisp, pleasant to watch and have no jargon.**

| The 2016 Study score for **attribute #4**, "the website offers educational programming," such as webinars and podcasts was 67.0 ("fair"), but it has improved significantly in our 2019 Study – now an 86.2, which is "excellent." 21 firms scored 100.0 and are offering terrific programs to clients and other visitors.

| The Global 50 firms do mostly link to their social media pages, but many too often have a skeletal presence on these pages.

+ Still the most common social media pages represented are LinkedIn and Twitter, with varying degrees of commitment to Facebook.

+ Full exploitation of YouTube is still uncommon for the Global 50 firms, but five firms do stand out because of their comprehensive YouTube channels and thousands of subscribers: **Jones Day, Mayer Brown, Latham & Watkins, White & Case** and **Baker McKenzie**.

+ **The Global 50 firms use their social media sites more strategically than smaller firms (with some exceptions, of course).** Too many smaller firms focus only on self-promotion – news about the firm (such as firm and lawyer awards, updates on new partners, specific achievements). They are not using social media to discuss relevant news and topics that would appeal to a broader audience. This is a huge missed opportunity to invest in boosting your reputation via thought leadership, whether you originate content or curate and comment on others' posts.

+ Some websites had social media accounts but did not provide links to them on their sites. We were flummoxed about this. **Another missed opportunity!**



standout firms

| Morgan Lewis

With a score of 100.0 on all attributes (compared to an 84.4 in 2016), the firm offers an excellent library of videos covering numerous substantive topics – as well as pro bono, celebrating kindness and one where they share their favorite things (for the December holidays).

| Ropes & Gray

Also scoring a perfect 100.0 on all attributes, all points of interactivity and engagement are visible and easily accessible by visitors.

| K&L Gates

This site was also featured in the 2016 Study (it's the same site), but then scored an 86.3. It scored 100.0 in this Study. They have paid increased attention to ensuring that these foundational attributes are readily available to visitors. The firm offers a lot of podcasts and webinars, as well as video.

| Winston & Strawn

This site offers two levels of global navigation. In the secondary navigation, which appears on all pages above the Who we are / What we do / Where we are, Winston & Strawn includes **Videos and Blogs & Podcasts**. Easy to find and access, most videos are very short and well produced, but they do need to be captioned. The podcasts are excellent and do include the script. Also featured in the 2016 Study, the firm's score improved from a 90.6 ("good") to a perfect score of 100.0 in this Study.

| Cooley

As noted above, Cooley stands out because of its terrific video series, "Dealology."

interactivity, engagement + social outreach

do's + don'ts

	Do study your website analytics to understand how multimedia builds engagement and increases dwell time.
	Do make it easy to find your multimedia resources. Tag them so searching for “video,” “webinars” or “podcasts” harvests a list of all them in your search results. Make them easy to find and ultimately consume. Make sure they are also searchable by subject matter.
	Do provide prominent and visible links to blogs (on the homepage, bios, practice/industry pages and all other relevant pages) – syndicate your valuable content!
	Do include share functionality and social media links on all pages, especially professionals’ bios, news/events/articles/etc. and your practice/industry pages. Make it easy for others to spread the word about you!
	Do ensure that all seven of these attributes seamlessly function on tablets and phones. Interactivity and engagement are especially important on mobile devices.
	Don’t forget to caption your videos for hearing-impaired visitors and include scripts for all podcasts, as well.
	Don’t miss the opportunity to further connect with prospects and referral sources via social media. Focus first on LinkedIn and Twitter – but remember that Facebook and Instagram are popular for business users, too.
	Don’t think of your website as primarily an online brochure. Build interactivity and engagement points throughout your site -- they will keep your visitors on your site longer, and visitors will consume more of your pages.
	Don’t assume that “clients of a certain age” don’t care about interactivity and engagement. Clients of all ages care.

FBP06

interactivity, engagement + social outreach top ten performers*

Total Score
87.3

Highest Score
100.0

Lowest Score
58.6

100.0
Morgan Lewis

100.0
Ropes & Gray

100.0
K&L Gates

100.0
Winston & Strawn

97.9
DLA Piper

97.9
Dentons

97.9
Norton Rose Fulbright

97.9
Mayer Brown

95.7
Latham & Watkins

95.7
Sidley

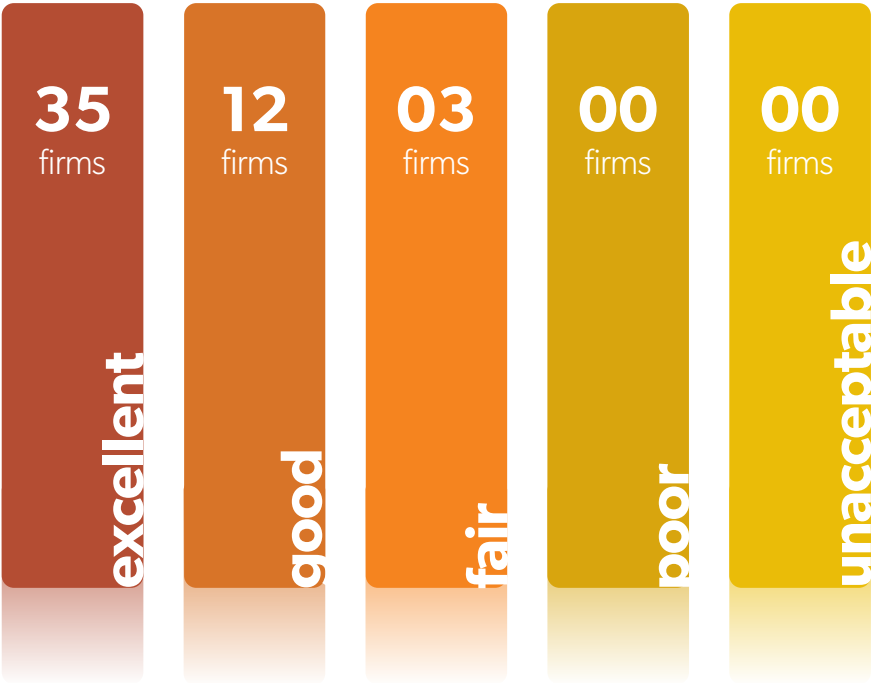
95.7
White & Case

95.7
McDermott Will & Emery

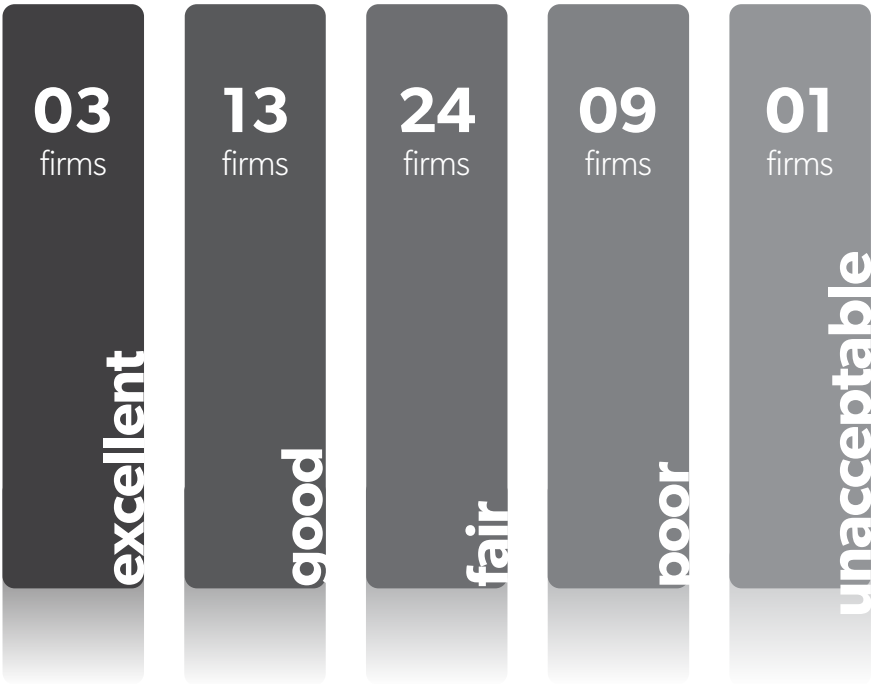
*4 firms tied for 3rd place so we are including all of them here.

interactivity, engagement + social outreach

the results



2020 FBP 06
interactivity, engagement
+ social outreach



2016 FBP 06
interactivity, engagement
+ social outreach

A person wearing a dark jacket and sunglasses is looking through binoculars. They are standing on a rocky shore with waves in the background. The image has a teal overlay.

SEEK

FBP07
site search

foundational best practice **07**

site search

Global 50 Aggregate Scores + Attributes

1	88.7	Site offers easy-to-find, full-site keyword search
2	72.7	An advanced search link or option appears on all pages and enables visitors to narrow or refine the search in multiple ways
3	64.9	Search results are clear and well organized, and the most relevant categories (bios, experience) appear first
4	56.1	The site offers predictive, "did you mean," highlighting search terms in annotated results, exact phrase searches
5	08.4	Site offers separate experience search

top trends + insights

| The attributes in the 2019 Study largely mirrored those in the 2016 research for FBP7 - Site Search.

- + **Stunningly, the Global 50 firm websites turned in a disappointing performance – largely worse than three years ago.**
- + In the 2016 Study only two firms scored “excellent,” but in this Study, no firm ranked that high. The highest score was 82.0 (“good”) and the top two scorers were **Cooley** and **Eversheds Sutherland US**.
- + For **attribute #1** (“Site offers easy-to-find, full-site keyword search”), the Global 50 firms’ average score was 95 in 2016 and it went down to 88.7 in 2019. Still “excellent.” Those that didn’t score 100.0 on this attribute could rethink design so that the keyword search is more visible. 17 firms scored 100.0 in the latest Study, but in 2016, 40 firms scored 100.0. **What happened here?**
- + “Advanced search link or option appears on all pages/visitors can refine the search in multiple ways” is **attribute #2** – the average score also went down for this attribute from 75 in 2016 to 72.7 in 2019. Only nine firms scored 100.0 in this latest Study.
- + For **attribute #3** (“Search results are well organized and the most relevant categories appear first”), the score improved from 64.0 to 64.9 – both “fair.” Only eight firms scored 100.0.
- + “And for offering predictive”, ‘did you mean,’ etc., **attribute #4**, the average score moved slightly from 53.0 to 56.1 – very surprising given the many website redesigns among the Global 50 in the last three years. **Only seven firms scored 100.0 on this attribute and nine firms scored zero.**

| The score for having a “separate experience search” (**attribute #5**) went down from 14.0 three years ago to 8.4 in 2019 – both “unacceptable.”

- + Given that passing the “**short-list test**” is the first most important achievement by lawyers when it comes to people hiring them, it’s remarkable that firms are ignoring this critical evaluation tool. Visitors to a law firm website want to know these four things (exactly what the short-list test consists of): **1) What have you done? 2) For whom have you done it? 3) What can you do for me? And this is the newest question they have, 4) How do you do it or deliver it?** If lawyers aren’t answering these fundamental questions, the prospect will simply continue to the next name on their short list. **#HugeMissedOpportunity**
- + Only two firms scored 100.0 on having a separate experience search – **Jones Day** and **Eversheds Sutherland US**. A few others had partial experience-search functionality. In 2016, seven firms offered one.
- + **43 firms scored zero.**



Search remains the most important basic functionality that should satisfy your Type-A, business-day visitors. Yet, with a total average score of 58.0 (“fair”) these powerful law firms are not focusing enough on ensuring their visitors can easily find what they want and need.

continued: top trends+ insights

“ ”

Having superior and multiple search features on your website adds complexity and cost to your project – but it’s one set of functionality that completely pays off.

| Most visitors have something in mind when they type in your URL. They are busy, often Type A buyers of legal services and they expect your search to deliver precisely what they’re looking for. ***Your job is to be a mind-reader.*** The most sophisticated search tools help you satisfy this. When a visitor searches for something and receives relevant answers in return, they feel smart – and they begin to feel that you are smart, too. If they can’t find what they think they should be able to find on an AmLaw Global 50 (or any other professional services firm) website, they unconsciously lose confidence in themselves and in your firm.

| **A surprising number of AmLaw Global 50 sites still do not offer faceted search results** – i.e., they were not organized by the global navigation category, such as People, Industries and News. In searching “patent litigation,” for example, a visitor must sort through a seemingly infinite list of results and guess which results are the most relevant ones. **This is a time waster for visitors.**



standout firms

| Jones Day

This site employs an effective "experience search" as its own engine, and it is included as a category-filter tab for the global site search. The global search bar returns an extensive series of results with the keywords bolded. The best part about the main search engine is the number of categories available to use in refining search results, although a visitor can only choose one category at a time. There is a separate lawyer search at jonesdaycareers.com with fewer filtering options.

| Eversheds Sutherland US

This site stands out for its search customization abilities. Each page goes above and beyond in allowing the searcher to narrow down results and types of content. The global search bar directs a visitor to a unique page (which normally can be annoying), yet, **the extensive "advanced" search makes this feature a welcome and inviting option.**

| McDermott Will & Emery

The one search feature that stands out on mwe.com is that each page has a search bar inside the large hero image that is exclusive to that page's content. The fact that four global sections of the site offer this functionality is unique.

| Milbank

Possibly the most attractively designed, magazine-style search results page for the Global 50 firms, it quickly displays both news and articles, as well as lawyers with their headshots. Each page comes with at least some general refining tabs.

| Cleary Gottlieb

Also called out in the 2016 Study, the global search provides a window with a predictive preview of a summary of the full results that quickly appears after typing in the search terms. One can click on the search arrow, taking a visitor to the full search results or refine the results from the preview. **The main search-results page is one of the best organized and uniform of all Global 50 firms – a high degree of usability and a strong hierarchy.**

| Sidley

This site's global search engine is impressive, lots of predictive suggestions and an accurate auto-correct feature for misspelled words. It italicizes only the correction for a misspelling in the non-italicized predictive results, so a visitor can easily discover the error they made. Although it does not automatically group the like kinds of content, the results page uses a tab system that is unique to each search, only displaying refining tabs that would bring up pages with your keywords. It also bolds the keywords when displaying each result.



site search

do's + don'ts

	Do remember: It's never about searching – it's always about finding.
	Do understand that the vast majority of your business-day visitors are searchers – and they are distracted and busy. A lightning fast, accurate website search is critical to visitors trusting that your firm can best serve them.
	Do organize search results so that the most relevant categories (bios and experience) appear first on the list, versus having to hunt through an unsorted list of results to find the one important result. Buyers of legal services go to a law firm website to find lawyers first (the analytics we track prove that 50-75% of all visitors to a law firm website view lawyer bios), then they want to view relevant experience (they want you to prove that you are the right person and firm to hire).
	Do know that the easiest way to shortcut the pathway to trust between your visitor and you/ your firm is to give them what they want. Invest much, much more time and rigor in building and delivering more comprehensive search features.
	Do ensure that a visitor's search terms are highlighted in the annotated results. Make it easy on them to find what they want.
	Do always include an advanced search option on the news, events and publications pages and, of course, in the People section.
	Do fully test your mobile search features and view search results with a discriminating and critical eye. If your phone search results are in tiny text, the links will be impossible to click on with a fingertip – and that is completely maddening to your busy, on-the-go visitors.
	Do make it easy to search again – include a “search again” link intuitively near all search results.
	Do include an experience search where a visitor can sort and parse in the categories most important to their problem, opportunity or organization.
	Do include a language search on the People landing page. All global firms should offer this.
	Do offer translations of your search results.



Don't waste your visitors' precious time by delivering irrelevant search results to them.



Don't forget that receiving "**no results found**" on a large professional services' firm website is frustrating to all visitors. Is it because your search features aren't robust enough to help you satisfy their request?



Don't compromise your visitors' experiences (and risk a poor impression of your firm) by not dedicating the right budget to your search. **Don't cut corners here. Your visitors and you will regret it.**



Don't forget to use filters that will be helpful to your non-American or non-UK visitors. For example, include location and language searches in your People advanced search.



Don't forget to fully test the functionality, responsiveness and relevance of every search feature and search result on all your sites – desktop, tablet and phone. Too many designers put the search box in the upper right hand corner and check it off their list without knowing if it really works from a visitor's point of view. **It's up to the law firm to test and retest to ensure the search results are high-performing – that is, accurate and relevant.**



Don't forget that your visitors search like you do! Design functionality that would be easy for you to use.

FBP07

site search top ten performers

Total Score
58.0

Highest Score
82.0

Lowest Score
20.0

82.0
Cooley

82.0
Eversheds Sutherland US

78.0
Cleary Gottlieb

77.0
Kirkland & Ellis

77.0
Weil

76.0
Sullivan & Cromwell

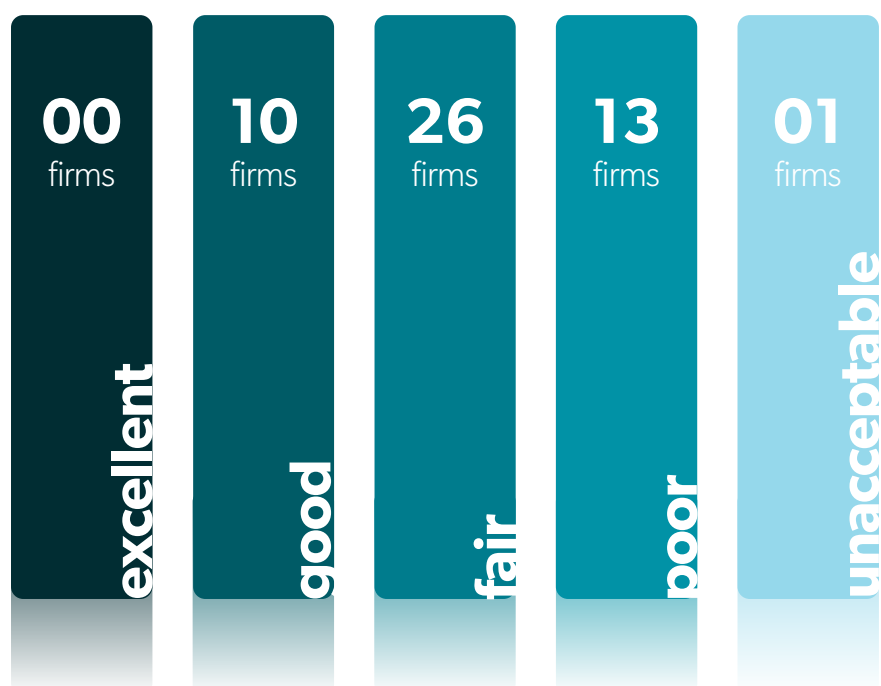
76.0
Winston & Strawn

74.0
Shearman & Sterling

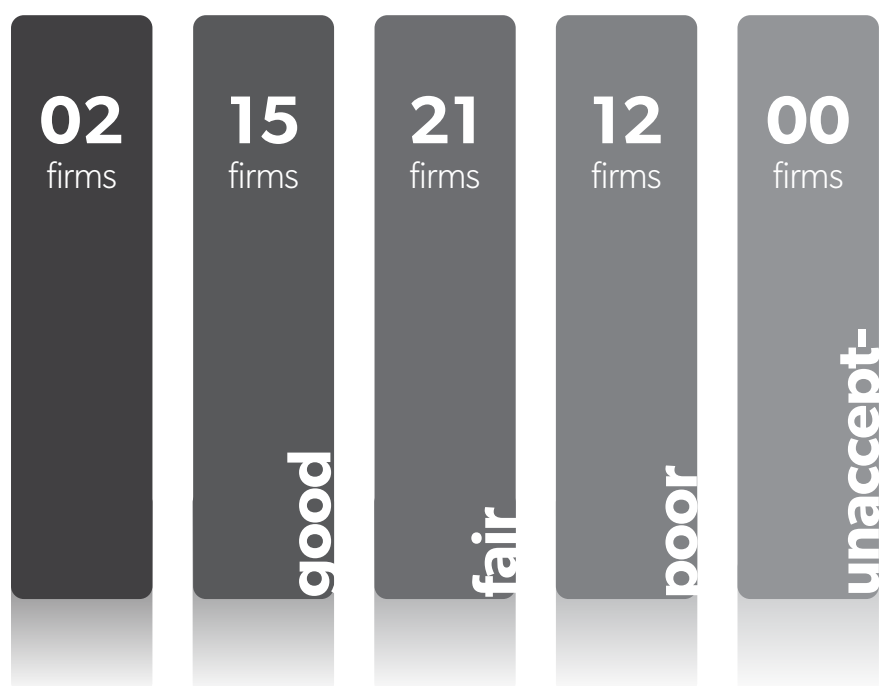
71.0
Dentons

71.0
Hogan Lovells

site search the results



2020 FBP 07
site search



2016 FBP 07
site search



FBP08

site optimization + online awareness



foundational best practice **08****site optimization +
online awareness****Global 50 Aggregate Scores + Attributes**

1	70.7	Domain Authority: Relative score compared to other Global 50 firms, based on the measurements of multiple tools
2	68.3	Backlinks: Relative score compared to other Global 50 firms, based on the measurements of multiple tools
3	93.9	XML Sitemap(s): Present, well organized and includes all pages for the website
4	66.0	HTML: Strong, properly structured HTML content. Includes correct use of Heading tags (H1, H2, H3...), ARIA labels, doctype, avoiding inline styles, etc.
5	20.9	Structured Data Markup: Schema and Open Graph tags are present and used effectively
6	54.9	Images have alt tags that provide alternative text when images can't be displayed
7	69.0	GZip + CDN: The site utilizes GZip Compression and serves static assets (images, stylesheets, scripts...) through a Content Distribution Network
8	49.6	Accessibility: Site content can be readily consumed by search engine crawlers and assistive technologies
9	76.5	SEO Hygiene: The site meets basic standards including having an SSL certificate, mobile viewport, Robots.txt file, meta titles and descriptions, no links to unsafe domains or mixed content, and other essentials that should be present on all sites
10	84.7	Site Speed Desktop: Google PageSpeed Insights score of 90+ on desktop
11	49.5	Site Speed Mobile: Google PageSpeed Insights score of 90+ on Mobile

top trends + insights

| We completely overhauled the attributes for FBP8 - Site Optimization + Online Awareness, significantly raising the standards of our best practices and what is “foundational.” No Global 50 firm received a total score of 100.0 – in fact, the highest score was 77.5 (“good”) attained by **Winston & Strawn**.

+ The highest score on **attribute #1** “Domain authority” was **DLA Piper** with a 79.0 (“good”). The lowest score was 63.0 (“fair”).

+ For **attribute #2** “Backlinks,” the highest score was **Eversheds Sutherland US** with its 100.0 (“excellent”). The lowest score was 25.0 (“unacceptable”).

+ **NOTE:** Don’t make backlink-chasing a pure numbers game. Backlinks should be relevant to the content and from a diverse group of root domains. **The best links have always come as by-products of simply doing good marketing and PR to promote your firm, website and content.**

+ On **attribute #3** “XML Sitemap(s)” firms either scored 100.0 or zero. 47 achieved 100.0 and three scored zero.

+ “HTML,” **attribute #4**, saw 14 firms score 100.0 and one firm score zero.

+ **Attribute #5** “Structured Data Markup” was the lowest ranking of all the attributes with 37 of the Global 50 firms scoring zero. Four firms scored 100.0 – **White & Case, Gibson Dunn, CMS and Milbank**. “Schema markup” was also the lowest scoring attribute in the 2016 Study with the average of the 50 firms being 12. But this year we expanded it beyond just schema markup.

+ Schema markup is code that you put on your website to help search engines return more instructive results for users. **It tells search engines what your content means, not just what it says.**

+ Schema.org, the website for schema markup, was created by a wonderful inter-industry collaborative team, which now includes Google, Bing, Yahoo and Yandex. Learn much more about this at schema.org.

| Especially surprising in 2019 is that only nine firms scored 100.0 on using alt-tags on their images – and three firms scored zero. When you have thousands of lawyers and likely hundreds (or thousands) of illustrated news items, we understand that adding alt-tags to each image is quite a task – but from an SEO and accessibility standpoint, it’s table stakes. Most content management systems have a field for “Alt-Description” or “Alt-Tag.” **Our best practice is to complete this field for each image at the time that the web administrator is uploading the images.**

“ ”

A word of caution to professional services firms of all sizes and reach: If your firm ranks low on these 11 foundational attributes for Site Optimization + Online Awareness, it means it will also rank low on accessibility and ADA compliance – and vice versa. The experience that human visitors and search-engine spiders, crawlers and bots have with your site will be unsatisfactory.

continued:

top trends+ insights



| Curious about what **GZip Compression** is and why it's foundational? [GiftOfSpeed.com](https://www.giftofspeed.com) defines it this way: "Gzip compression makes it possible to compress your web files (mainly HTML, CSS, and JS files), sometimes up to 70%-80%. This much smaller compressed version of the file is then sent to the browser of the visitor instead of the larger original file. The browser of your visitor will then automatically decompress the compressed file and serve the uncompressed original file to your visitor." In other words, it's all about delivering your content as fast as possible to your visitors. 18 firms scored 100.0 on this attribute and two firms scored zero.

| As mentioned in our discussion of accessibility in **FBP10 - Site Hygiene + Usability**, we used Siteimprove's Accessibility Checker to test the Global 50 firms on a pass-fail standard – they were either compliant or they weren't. All 50 firms failed. In **FBP8 - Site Optimization + Online Awareness** we analyzed whether "site content can be readily consumed by search engine crawlers and assistive technologies" (**attribute #8**). Three firms scored 70.0 ("fair"), which was the highest score – **Skadden, Winston & Strawn** and **Milbank** – but most firms scored in the 40-50 range, which is "poor." The average of the Global 50 firms was 49.6 ("poor").

| The average score of the Global 50 was 76.5 for the most basic SEO elements "SEO Hygiene," **attribute #9** in this FBP. Only two firms scored above 90.0 on this attribute – **Linklaters** with a 92.0 and **WilmerHale** with a 94.0. Seven additional firms scored "excellent" with an 85.0, 87.0 or 88.0 on **attribute #9**: **Kirkland & Ellis, White & Case, Greenberg Traurig, Mayer Brown, Morrison & Foerster, Winston & Strawn** and **McDermott Will & Emery**.

| For **attributes #10** and **#11**, we tested site speed on both desktop and mobile, testing for a **Google PageSpeed Insights (PSI) score of 90.0 or higher**. 22 firms scored "excellent" on desktop speed, **but only two firms scored "excellent" on mobile speed**. The average score for the Global 50 on desktop speed was 76.5 and mobile speed was 49.5. According to Google, "PSI reports on the performance of a page on both mobile and desktop devices and provides suggestions on how that page may be improved." **There is a lot of room for improvement here among the world's largest law firms.**

stand-out firms

| Winston & Strawn

This firm ranked first on **FBP8 - Site Optimization + Online Awareness** with a 77.5 ("good"). It had among the highest scores for desktop site speed and SEO Hygiene, as well as scoring 100s on GZip Compression, properly structured HTML content and XML sitemap.

| Linklaters

Came in second and received a 76.0 ("good") on this FBP. The firm's site scored 100.0 on three of the eleven attributes.

| King & Spalding

The firm received four 100s, plus a 99.0 on desktop site speed.

| K&L Gates

Is a standout because it received the highest score on mobile site speed – a 94.0 out of 100.0. The lowest score for mobile site speed in the Global 50 pack was 4.0 with two firms pulling up the rear. This firm was also one of the highest scorers for the number of quality back-links.



site optimization + online awareness

do's + don'ts

	Do keep your content current and keyword rich throughout your website – especially professionals' bios. Focus on the first 140 characters of the bio – ensure that it features the most relevant keywords of that person's practice today. Better yet, if your site's CMS enables you to include a custom meta description, take advantage of this feature. This will allow you to better tailor your message for the search results page as well as search engines.
	Do include current, relevant, properly structured HTML content on your home page and other pages: use H1, H2, H3, etc. for headings/subheadings and no image -based navigation.
	Do implement structured data markup (schema and open graph tags).
	Do ensure you have a correct and up-to-date XML sitemap and that it has been submitted to the proper search engines.
	Do utilize HTTPS over HTTP. It has been the standard for some time and all new sites must use HTTPS.
	Do ensure that your site scores 100.0 on the use of alt-tags on every image on your website. Yes, it's a big task on large sites, but you are hurting your SEO and accessibility rankings if you don't.
	Do keep SEO in mind from the beginning of your site design and build. Ensure that you are adhering to the basics (such as the attributes listed above) and then grow your reach and campaigns from there.
	Do inventory your backlinks and ensure that they are growing in number and strength, and that you are maintaining a diverse link profile. This is especially important for smaller B2B and B2C firms as they don't get the amount or variety of exposure and the links that come with it.
	Do focus on PageSpeed on both desktop and mobile – it should have a Google PSI score of 90.0 or higher. As the percentage of mobile users continues to rise, ignoring this discerning and easily distracted audience is deadly to your online reputation. They'll simply not wait for your site if it's slow.
	Do utilize schema markup to give your firm more control over what is displayed in SERPs and help you stand out.



Don't forget to add alt-tags for every image on the website – start with the photos of your lawyers and other professionals. **With an average score of 54.9 out of 100.0, the Global 50 firms have a lot of work to do.**



Don't use outdated URL structures. For example, the URL for the Our Firm section of a site could be lawfirm.com/sitecontent.cfm?contentID=3000. A more intuitive and SEO-friendly structure would be lawfirm.com/Our-Firm. Subsequent pages, to use Diversity as our example, would be lawfirm.com/Our-Firm/Diversity. Another tip that's good for humans and robots.



Don't use HTTP. Use HTTPS. The difference is security and the presence of an SSL certificate. This is one of the first clues to a visitor that your site is begging for a redesign.



Don't rely on black-hat SEO practices and don't write content for the purpose of attracting search engines. Keyword stuffing (e.g., "Our international real estate lawyers are knowledgeable about international real estate law. Contact our international real estate attorneys today to discuss your international real estate issue.") is not only annoying for human visitors to read and digest, but **Google WILL penalize you for it.**

FBP08

site optimization+ online awareness top ten performers

Total Score
64.0

Highest Score
77.5

Lowest Score
43.9

77.5
Winston & Strawn

76.5
Linklaters

75.9
King & Spalding

75.5
White & Case

73.9
Mayer Brown

73.6
Milbank

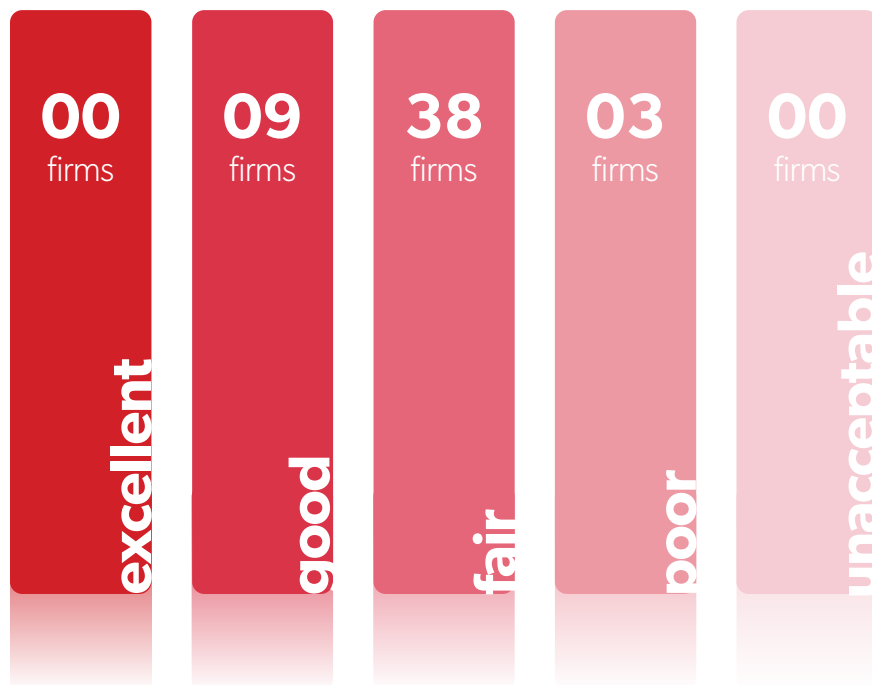
73.4
McDermott, Will & Emery

71.1
CMS

70.7
Hogan Lovells

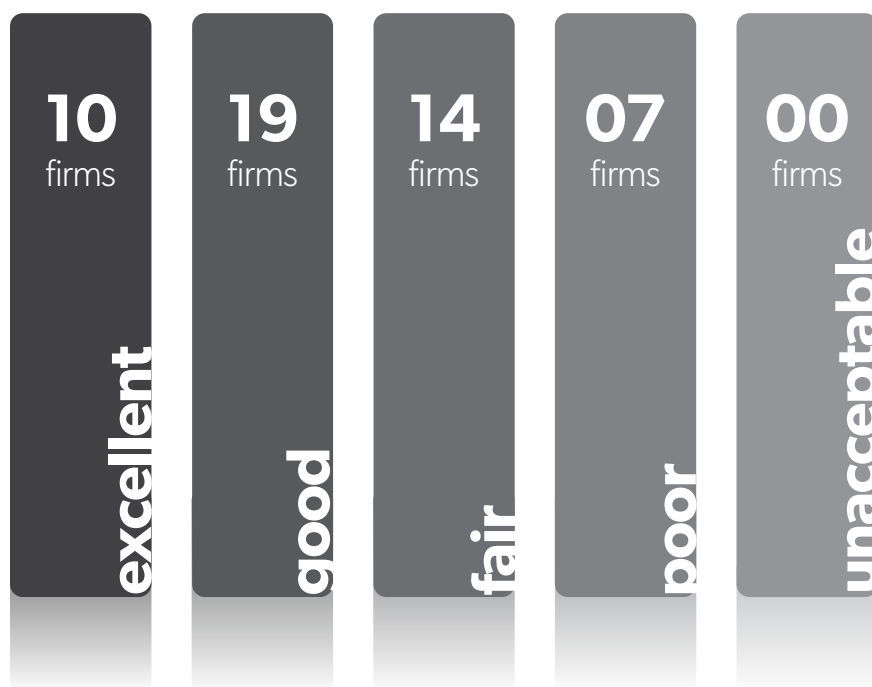
69.5
Morrison & Foerster

site optimization+ online awareness the results



2020 FBP 08

site optimization + online awareness



2016 FBP 08

site optimization + online awareness



FBP09 |
mobility

foundational best practice **09**

mobility

Global 50 Aggregate Scores + Attributes

1	93.7	Brand integrity/personality is not lost on smaller devices
2	93.9	User experience is superior regardless of device
3	66.8	Navigation for tablet and mobile should meet minimum threshold for touch targets. Apple recommends 44 x 44px, Android says 48 x 48px minimum
4	81.4	Content and images resize correctly and information hierarchy is maintained
5	31.0	Mobile site is available in non-English languages with ability to return to English

top trends + insights

| Three Global 50 firms scored 100.0 on FBP 9 - Mobility. **Sidley, King Wood & Mallesons** and **Squire Patton Boggs**. In the 2016 Study, two firms scored 100.0 (two different firms).

+ In 2019, the lowest score achieved on this FBP was 50.0 ("poor") – six firms received it. **In the latest round of redesigns, mobile usability – especially phones – is getting short shrift.**

+ **What does this mean to law firms?** For global firms operating in emerging digital markets, it means that certain countries are mobile first, such as India and many countries in Asia. In most African nations, mobile accounts for more than half of the website traffic – but in the U.S., mobile accounts for about 40 percent of website traffic.

| The mobile share of total digital minutes in the U.S. in 2019 was 77%. **Most U.S. legal services buyers are using both desktop and mobile equally during their business day.** They may have different pages of your website pulled up on both their phone and desktop and will absolutely expect a seamless experience between them.

+ This heavy adoption requires website planners and designers to view their mobile site designs, content, features and functionality more strategically. The mobile experience your law firm offers must be effective, productive and harmonious for your visitors.

| Scores on **attributes # 1, 2 and 4** improved significantly over the 2016 Study.

+ "Brand integrity/personality" went from 70.0 ("fair") in 2016 to 93.7 ("excellent"). Only nine Global 50 firms did not score 100.0 and only one firm scored zero.

+ "User experience is superior regardless of device" went up from 59.0 ("fair") to 93.9 ("excellent"). 39 firms scored 100.0 and those that did not had phone usability issues.

+ **Attribute #4**, "Content and images resize correctly and information hierarchy is maintained," also improved from a 59.0 in 2016 to 81.4 in this Study. 29 firms scored 100.0, **but three firms scored zero because they didn't pay attention to maintaining their information hierarchy.** For example, the H-tags were jumping from H1 to H5, to H2 and H6, so the user experience was jarring. For those of you who don't know what H-tags are, they are used to define HTML headings on websites. The H1 is the most important header and the H6, the least important. **H-tags and the hierarchy they establish are equally important for both search robots and human visitors.**



Global mobile website traffic

is 52.6%, which is not the highest it's been (Q3 2017 was 53%), but it has seen a steady rise since Q1 2015 when it was 31.2%.

continued: top trends+ insights

“ ”

A surprising number of Global 50 firms

are still not strategic or deliberate in their design of the mobile version of their website.

“ ”

"Touch target" is the area of a screen that responds to user input (or touching). "Small targets are difficult to tap accurately. This requires more cognitive effort for the user and can leave them feeling frustrated and dissatisfied after making mistakes. Pressing a button is a simple task and if a user is unable to successfully tap on a button they may start to feel as if it's their fault, which leads to a negative experience... In some cases, users will begin trying to use their fingertip for small targets, which will most often yield poor results."

(Source: [Zac Dickerson medium.com/@zacdicko/size-matters-accessibility-and-touch-targets-56e942adc0cc](https://medium.com/@zacdicko/size-matters-accessibility-and-touch-targets-56e942adc0cc))

| For **attribute #5**, "Mobile site is available in non-English languages with the ability to return to English," firms have not improved over the 2016 Study in offering translated content with the ability to return to English. In the 2016 Study, only seven of the Global 50 firms offered this and 20 websites didn't offer any translated content.

+ In 2019, 28 firms scored zero on this attribute – bizarrely, the number is significantly higher than it was three years ago. Scoring "zero" meant they either had no translated content or the functionality was impossibly broken in one way or another.

+ Seven firms scored 100.0 where most or all content was offered in multiple languages.

+ Several firms scored 50.0 or 75.0, where they, for example: 1) Offered only translated bio and/or office content or 2) titles, headers and menu were featured, but not page content.

| Another notable problem for several of the sites on phones was **attribute #3**, "Navigation for tablet and mobile should meet minimum threshold for touch targets. Apple recommends 44 x 44px, Android says 48 x 48px minimum."

+ Eight firms scored zero – even firms with very recent redesigns. Researchers noted the following, as examples of their commentary: "The Menu on mobile is only 36px and the text is 12px. Very tiny on mobile." And, "Menu navigation is very small — 24px on mobile and tablet." Also, "Target hit is very low, 22 and 19px." And finally, "Global Navigation is slightly under the hit target, but the People search is only at 19.2px."



stand-out firms

| Dentons

This website has – on all platforms – the ability to change to eight languages that reformat the entire page on all pages of the site. It also “remembers” the last language setting and adjusts to the last saved option. The touch target is 43px, however the text is small at 15px.

| Sidley

Target sizes are up to standard – but the text could still be boosted in size. User can choose between Europe and American English as well as two Asia-Pacific languages. It translates menu/navigation and most pages (Offices, simplified Bios, About Us, etc.) but it does not translate the majority of news/publications content.

| Quinn Emanuel

Also noted as a stand-out site in the 2016 Study, it remains a standout in 2019 not because of the design, but that it is well functioning. The translations apply to approximately 90% of the content on the mobile site. It’s easy to update/change the language on desktop/phone/tablet. The touch target is 42px not 44 on all the drop-downs, so that could be bumped up. The information hierarchy and use of the H-tags could be improved in the bios.

| WilmerHale

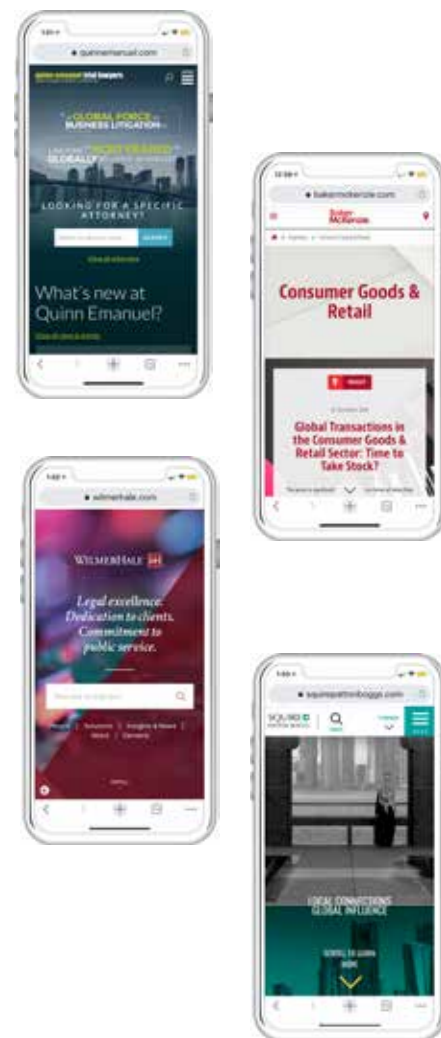
Language selection is easy to use and can revert back to English. It changes various titles – but doesn’t change search titles. Unlike many of the other firms’ websites, this mobile site does change the language of the news pages. **Note to the firm:** The H-tags need some housekeeping – on the practice/industry details pages, “Key Contacts” is listed as H1 although the page title is already labeled as H1. Below that, “Related Solutions” is identical to “Key Contacts” and it is in H2. Finally, in 2020 it is unnerving not to have a hamburger menu to anchor the phone experience. We recommend adding it.

| King & Wood Mallesons

Also a standout site in the 2016 Study, this is great mobile design with fantastic language support and visuals. The placement and size of the logo is curious – it’s almost lost on the home page on phones. But all in all, it’s a great design and easy to use.

| Squire Patton Boggs

Great functionality on the language options, although the only bios translated are for those lawyers that are speakers of or native to that particular language. The touch target in the global navigation is great; but the sub-categories under the Professionals’ search are slightly under. Well-organized and clean design.



mobility

do's + don'ts



Do understand that global buyers of legal services come from most countries and continents. Ensure that non-American and non-UK prospects/clients and future personnel feel as welcome on your website as your American guests do.



Do spend more time planning the mobile experience when you commit to a redesign. **Too many of the AmLaw Global 50 firms made mistakes that are avoidable with better planning and design.**



Do include a well-designed hamburger menu on your mobile site.



Do have more rigor when it comes to your information hierarchy and the proper and consistent use of H-tags throughout your site. They are critical for search engine and human accessibility and ease.



Don't try to be "different" or "clever" on mobile. Meaning, ensure that mobile visitors' table-stakes expectations are being met. That includes a hamburger menu with effective, well-spaced navigation titles.



Don't forget that you control how accessible your content is to your visitors. If someone with larger fingers can't easily select and travel to the content they want, they'll not tolerate this frustrating experience. **This paints you in a bad light and they feel – on some level – that they are wasting their time with you.**



Don't forget the value of video and podcasts on your mobile versions. We have clients whose analytics prove that visitors view videos at least twice more often on a mobile device than a desktop device, and after viewing a video, they stay on the website three times longer, viewing 3-5 more pages.



Don't rely on Google translate for the translations on your mobile (or any) device. It can be highly unreliable.

FBP09

mobility top ten performers

Total Score
72.8

Highest Score
100.0

Lowest Score
50.0

100.0
Sidley

100.0
King & Wood Mallesons

100.0
Squire Patton Boggs

95.0
Dentons

95.0
Reed Smith

95.0
McDermott Will & Emery

90.0
Quinn Emanuel

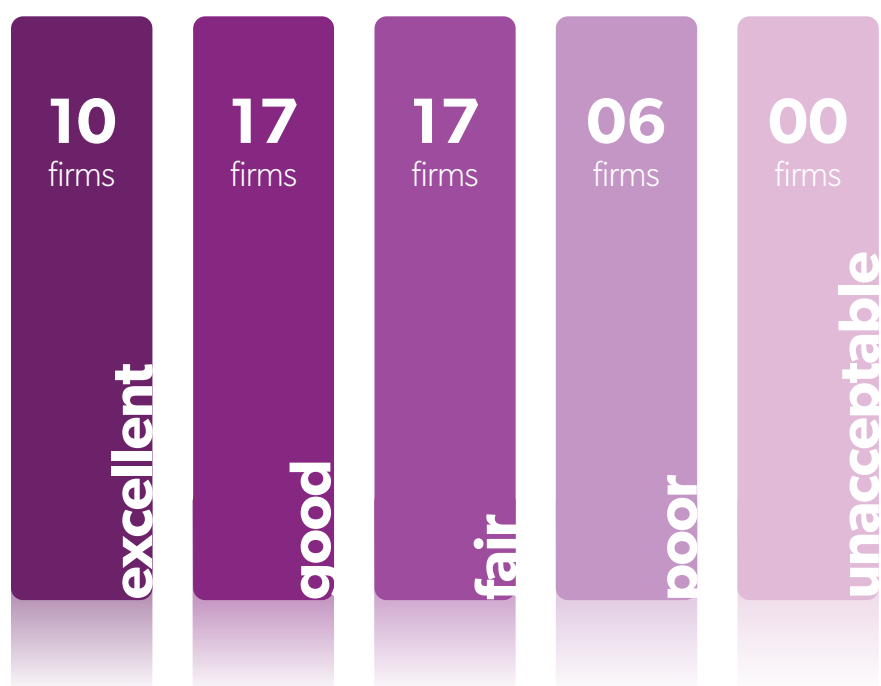
90.0
WilmerHale

85.0
Goodwin

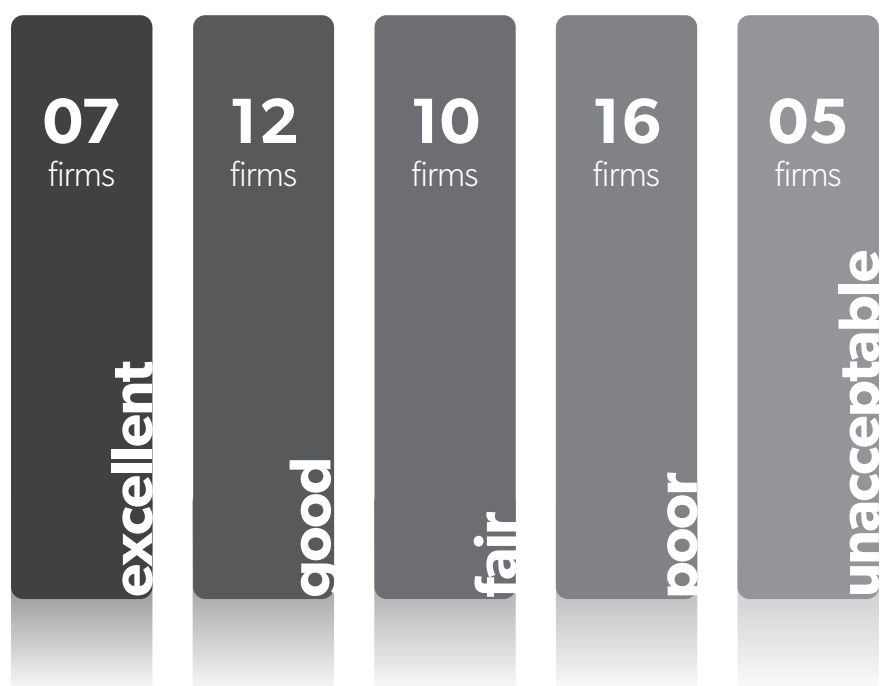
85.0
Arnold & Porter

mobility

the results



2020 FBP 09
mobility



2016 FBP 09
mobility



FBP10

site hygiene + usability

foundational best practice **10**

site hygiene + usability

Global 50 Aggregate Scores + Attributes

1	84.0	Site functions perfectly on all the latest browsers
2	100.0	No error pages are found on spot check
3	98.0	No broken links or images are evident with spot check
4	48.0	Pages print and email easily
5	48.0	Site offers dynamic print to PDF option on most pages
6	100.0	Content has been checked for spelling
7	98.0	All appropriate domains are active, including https
8	0.00	Site meets W3C WCAG 2.0 & 2.1 accessibility standards – Level A

top trends + insights

| The 2020 Global 50 website scores for **FBP10 - Site Hygiene + Usability** went down in this Study because of two primary attributes:

+ **Attribute #1**, "Poor performance on certain browsers" and **attribute #8**, "Meeting the accessibility requirements."

+ These two attributes brought down the 2020 aggregate score of the Global 50 firms to 72.0 (barely "good"), down from 85.2 ("excellent") in 2016.

| This is the second FBP Study where we tested website compliance for those with disabilities. No law firm scored 100.0 on FBP10 – because all firms failed the W3C WCAG 2.0 & 2.1 accessibility requirements. We used **Siteimprove's Accessibility Checker** (a helpful tool you can download for free: [siteimprove.com/en-us/accessibility/what-is-accessibility](https://www.siteimprove.com/en-us/accessibility/what-is-accessibility)). If you don't comply with all the criteria, your site has "failed."

| This FBP is called "**Site Hygiene + Usability**" because these are the irritating little things that get in the way of a visitor having a perfect experience with your website. They are akin to having the dreaded kale or quinoa in your teeth or Fluffy's dog hair on your dark suit.

| 16 firms ranked "excellent" with the top score of 87.5. They received 100.0 on all attributes except accessibility.

| 26 firms scored zero on **attribute #4**, "Pages print and email easily," up from the seven firms who received a zero score in 2016. **It appears this foundational functionality has completely gotten lost in the redesigns of many of the Global 50 websites.** Given the ubiquitous desire to increase revenues and improve relationships, it is stunning that firms are making it impossible to easily email pages to colleagues and friends. They are also forcing visitors to use the browser to print, which nearly always results in imperfect output and erosion of brand integrity.

| Email functionality is often hidden under share options, if it's offered at all. Frequently, the only option is to share via social media, but not to email to another person.

| All firms scored 100.0 on two **attributes: #2**, "No error pages found on spot check" and **#6**, "Content has been checked for spelling." Good! In addition to firms not making it easy to print and email pages, they are also scoring very low on **attribute #5**: "Offering the presentation-ready print to PDF option on most pages."

+ 26 firms scored zero on offering the print-to-PDF functionality, which is worse than the 19 who received a score of zero in 2016. We first scored this functionality in the 2005 analysis of the then AmLaw 100 firms. We have not come very far, it seems.

+ The remaining 24 firms scored 100.0 on offering print to PDFs.

“ ”

This should be the easiest Foundational Best Practice for a firm to score 100.0.

continued:

top trends+ insights

| The essential page tools (print, email, share) are often hard to find — icons are too small, haphazardly appear on the page or don't appear at all.

| The Bureau of Internet Accessibility website (boia.com) has improved in the last couple of years and is now a rich resource for law firm leaders and website planners who want to expand their knowledge and understanding.

+ According to BOIA, over a billion people worldwide have a disability, and according to the U.S. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 1 in 4 U.S. adults has a disability.

+ The overwhelming number of all websites are inaccessible — this presents an opportunity for these powerful law firms to step out and set the right example.

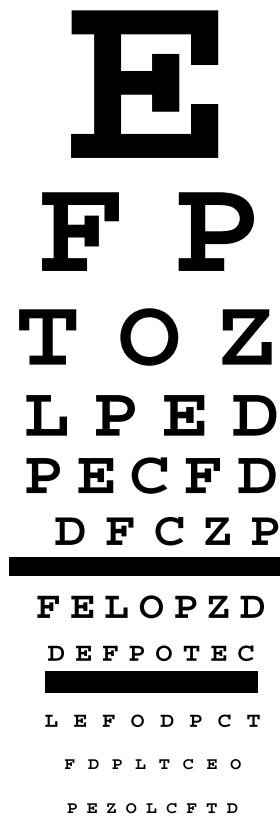
+ In January 2019, **Beyoncé's company, Parkwood Entertainment**, became the defendant in a class-action lawsuit alleging that it violated the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Lawsuits in the first half of 2019 were up 12% over the same period the prior year — all because of inaccessibility to digital assets, a/k/a websites. The **Domino's** June 2019 lawsuit was equally high profile (although some may argue that Queen Bey will always have a loftier presence than anything, pizza included).

+ **Bottom line: Err on the side of inclusiveness and comply with at least the standards that we used in our analysis — W3C WCAG 2.0 & 2.1 — Level A.** The WCAG 2.1 is a series of measurable success guidelines for developers and designers, including: **Perceivable:** Available through sight, hearing or touch. **Operable:** User interface and navigation must be operable and compatible with keyboard or mouse. **Understandable:** User-friendly, easy to comprehend. **Robust:** As technologies and user agents evolve, the content needs to remain accessible.

If you want a full content audit of your site, contact sales@boia.com.

| We couldn't have been more surprised that **so many of the Global 50 websites weren't rendering well in all browsers**. From Chrome to IE to Edge to Firefox — all of them had problems. Eight firms scored zero on this attribute because the sites had issues on one or more browsers. 42 firms scored 100.0. The total score for this attribute went from 99 in 2016 to 84.0 in 2020.

| All but one firm used the recommended https instead of http. That really stands out today — not in a good way.



site hygiene + usability

do's + don'ts

	Do feature page tools on most pages of your website: email this page, print to PDF, share. Make it easy for your visitors to spread the good word about you to social media sites and to their friends/colleagues.
	Do create beautiful presentation-ready print to PDF pages. Don't underestimate the impact of an artistically designed print page.
	Do ensure that content has been checked for correct spelling and grammar in all languages. We recommend at least quarterly spelling/grammar check-ups, if not monthly.
	Do make a commitment to your visitors with disabilities. Ensure that they feel comfortable and at home with you because of the easy experience they have with your website.
	Do recognize that your visitors' computer skills might not be as finely tuned as yours. View your site with fresh eyes each time you explore it. What are your visitors seeing that you are now blind to? Familiarity breeds both contempt and mistakes.
	Don't use a tedious form with multiple required fields for email share functionality – instead, it should open directly in a visitor's email immediately after the pop-up compliance box (which the visitor must accept to continue).
	Generally, don't make it hard or frustrating to use your site. Design an intuitive and engaging experience and don't let irritating little hygiene things get in the way of a visitor having a perfect experience with you. Remember, it's like having kale in your teeth – now, that's a visual that your visitors can't unsee.
	Don't let your website fall victim to visitors' negativity biases. According to Nielsen Norman Group, the global gurus of website usability, this is what negativity bias means on the web and to your firm: <i>"How does negativity bias manifest on the web? A single usability flaw on your site will weigh more than the many positive features that you've struggled to implement."</i> To leave a lasting positive impression, user interfaces must not only be good, they must be great, and you must root out every single design flaw with a vengeance." The emphasis add is ours.
	And NNG continues: <i>"You might assume that as websites get better, people will regard them more favorably. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Our research shows that websites have improved over the years, yet users' satisfaction ratings have remained the same — for two reasons: (1) UX failures count more than UX successes; (2) people judge a site by comparing it with other sites that they've encountered."</i> Don't forget this.

FBP10

site hygiene + usability top ten performers*

Total Score
72.0

Highest Score
87.5

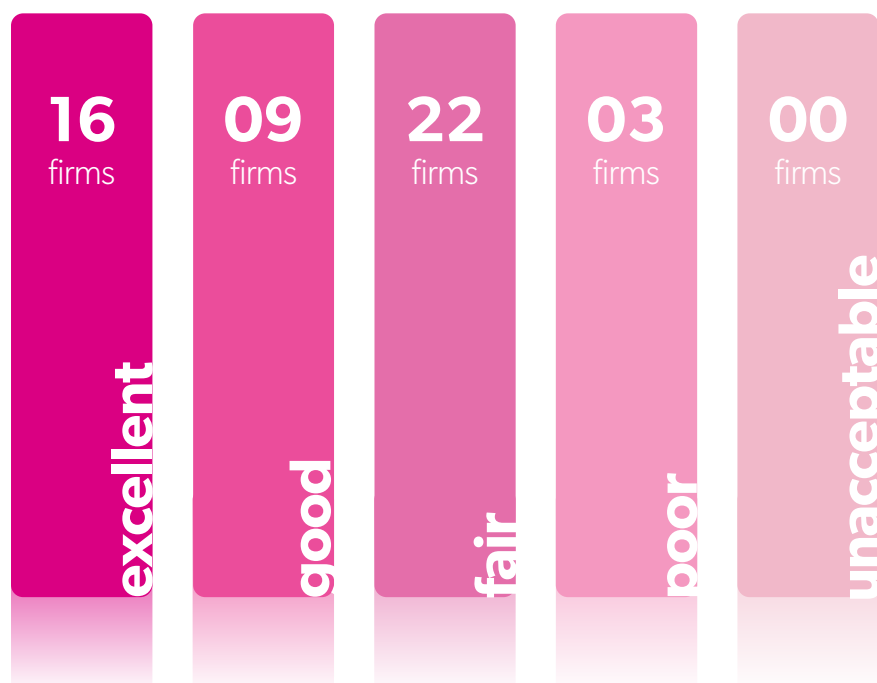
Lowest Score
50.0

87.5 DLA Piper	87.5 Skadden	87.5 Dentons
87.5 Morgan Lewis	87.5 Jones Day	87.5 Sullivan & Cromwell
87.5 Weil	87.5 Simpson Thacher & Barlett	87.5 Davis Polk
87.5 Cleary Gottlieb	87.5 Goodwin	87.5 Eversheds Sutherland US
87.5 Squire Patton Boggs	87.5 Orrick	87.5 Arnold & Porter
87.5 Covington		

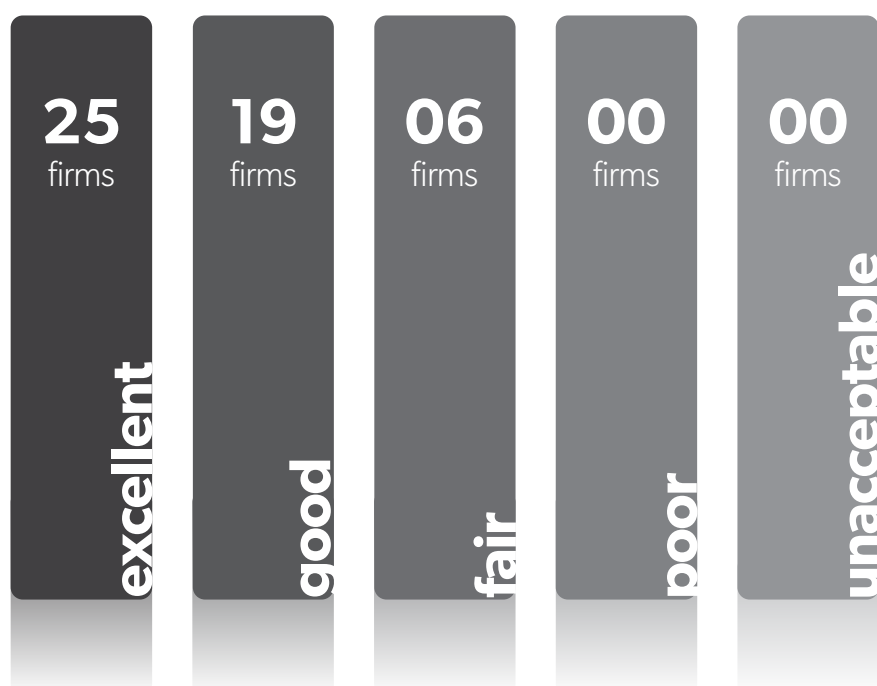
*16 firms tied as top performers for FBP10, so we are including all of them here.

site hygiene + usability

the results



2020 FBP 10
site hygiene + usability



2016 FBP 10
site hygiene + usability

about content pilot

Content Pilot is a leading strategy, design, content and technology agency headquartered in the U.S. We are woman-owned, highly diverse and constantly in search of innovations and best practices inside and outside the legal industry. Our clients are global, national, regional and local law firms, CPA and other professional services firms, and progressive companies in other industries.

Founded in 2006 as a nimble and entrepreneurial agency, we take a strategic and holistic approach to everything we do. Our agency leaders were executives in professional services firms and understand the exacting requirements of brilliant people who sell their brains and experience for a living. This and the “four-legged stool” of services and web-based products we offer make us uniquely qualified to design and complete the Ten Foundational Best Practices research, analyze and distill the results, and publish this comprehensive White Paper.

products + services

- + Positioning strategy for companies, firms, practice and industry teams, and business development strategies, planning and training
- + Brand design, including visual identity, print and digital collateral and guidelines
- + Award-winning website design, development and hosting – CP Web Pilot for WordPress
- + Beautifully branded WordPress microsites and blogs
- + Intranet planning and design
- + The latest in enterprise and business development experience management databases
- + Proposal automation centers used around the world, including multilingual content management for proposals and experience
- + Strategic integrations of business development and other technologies – website, CRM, proposal center, experience database, data warehouse, document management systems, time/billing, HR databases, and more
- + Content overhauling and creation: Website and proposal content strategy and rewrites – both comprehensive restructuring and rewriting, and writing new biographies and service/sector descriptions for professional services firms of all sizes
- + Content marketing, social media and PR, including new brand/product/service launches, designing successful campaigns and communications to reach and grow new audiences
- + Comprehensive website audits based on the latest Ten Foundational Best Practices
- + Marketing and MarTech audits and planning, and strategic consulting on the successful implementation and adoption of marketing technologies

contacts

If you have questions or comments about this research, our products and services, please contact:



Deborah McMurray
CEO + Strategy Architect
mcmurray@contentpilot.com



Keith N. Wewe
Vice President
Strategy and Solutions
kwewe@contentpilot.com

the index

2020 Global 50 Index of Firms

a-b

Akin Gump

38, 41, 57, 62

Allen & Overy

19, 22, 29, 32, 61

Arnold & Porter

28, 37, 41, 59, 100, 107

Baker McKenzie

19, 28, 41, 71

c-d

Cleary Gottlieb

28, 38, 41, 48, 52, 80, 83, 107

Clifford Chance

32, 61

CMS

18, 19, 22, 37, 45, 70, 87, 92

Cooley

20, 32, 45, 70, 72, 78, 83

Covington

20, 28, 57, 107

Davis Polk

41, 107

Dechert

28

Dentons

4, 22, 29, 45, 46, 57, 61, 65, 74, 83, 98, 100, 107

DLA Piper

29, 41, 45, 74, 87, 107

e-h

Eversheds Sutherland US

6, 8, 20, 56, 65, 78, 79, 80, 83, 87, 107

Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer

45

Gibson Dunn

7

Goodwin

20, 29, 32, 37, 38, 45, 58, 100, 107

Greenberg Traurig

8, 22, 37, 41, 48, 52, 70, 88

Herbert Smith Freehills

14, 30, 32, 41, 45,

Hogan Lovells

14, 52, 57, 70, 83, 92

j-l

Jones Day

4, 19, 45, 46, 52, 57, 65, 70, 71, 78, 79, 80, 107

King & Spalding

28, 32, 41, 48, 52, 57, 62, 65, 89, 92

King & Wood Mallesons

41, 96, 98, 100

Kirkland & Ellis

41, 46, 58, 83, 88

KL Gates

28, 65, 69, 70, 72, 74, 89

Latham & Watkins

45, 65, 71, 74

Linklaters

32, 88, 89, 92

m-p

Mayer Brown

22, 37, 38, 41, 71, 74, 88, 92

McDermott Will Emery

6, 13, 14, 22, 37, 45, 48, 52, 57, 65, 70, 74, 80, 88, 92, 100,

Milbank

18, 19, 30, 32, 41, 80, 87, 88, 92

Morgan Lewis

14, 19, 22, 69, 70, 72, 74, 107

Morrison Foerster

14, 37, 45, 48, 52, 70, 88, 92

Norton Rose Fulbright

0, 32, 41, 59, 70, 74

Orrick

57, 65, 107

Paul Hastings

57

Paul Weiss

70

Proskauer

45, 59

q-w

Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan

18, 19, 22, 98, 100

Reed Smith

22, 37, 41, 52, 100

Ropes & Gray

22, 65, 69, 70, 72, 74

Shearman Sterling

41, 83

Sidley

14, 29, 32, 74, 80, 90, 96, 98, 100

Simpson Thacher & Barlett

52, 61, 65, 107

Skadden

2, 37, 45, 46, 52, 88, 107

Squire Patton Boggs

28, 32, 96, 98, 100, 107

Sullivan Cromwell

37, 46, 65, 70, 83, 107

Weil

83, 107

White & Case

30, 45, 48, 52, 70, 71, 74, 87, 88, 92

WilmerHale

14, 37, 88, 98, 100

Winston Strawn

6, 13, 14, 22, 30, 32, 41, 45, 52, 57, 65, 69, 70, 72, 74, 83, 87, 88, 89, 92

6600 LBJ Freeway #165
Dallas Texas 75240
972.479.9142

contentpilot.com



©Content Pilot 2020 - All Rights Reserved