HOW DO THEY
MEASURE UP?

FBP

FOUNDATIONAL BEST PRACTICE

2016 GLOBAL
50 WEBSITES
Ten Foundational Best Practices
RESEARCH STUDY

content
pilot strategy and technology
with direction™

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2016 GLOBAL 50 WEBSITES
TEN FOUNDATIONAL BEST PRACTICES

HOW DO THEY MEASURE UP?

A LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

We have just completed our 6th comprehensive analysis of the websites of the AmLaw Global 50 law firms, in which we reviewed 70 attributes for each website – yes, 3,500 attributes total. It's an arduous task and you might wonder why we invest in it and broadly share the results.

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 and other professional services firms – specifically, people who sell their brains and experience for a living. With every project(websites, proposal centers, experience database tools), 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. For the 2016 Study, we went "global," as that word defines the aspirational reach of most of the world's largest law firms. These law firms have reputations that are built on decades of notable client representation and advocacy. The firms at the top of the list are among those the legal industry considers "brand names." Virtually all of these firms set the standard in the legal industry against which others are judged and evaluated. In every Study since the beginning, we wanted to determine if the website presence of these firms was reflective of the excellence they achieve in other areas.

INTRODUCTION

SO, HOW DO THESE GLOBAL 50 WEBSITES MEASURE UP?

There are a few great innovators – firms that have taken full advantage of their recent and obvious redesigns to step out of the pack in both design and content strategies. Yet, only one firm scored "Excellent" – **Morgan Lewis**, with a score of 85.4 out of 100. The websites of 23 firms ranked "Good," and the balance of the websites – 26 – ranked "Fair."

There is tremendous room for improvement.

HOW CAN YOU USE THIS DATA IN DISCUSSIONS WITH FIRM LEADERS?
Here's what we hope you'll gain from this Study:

Too many websites are broken from a visitor experience standpoint. In fact, most of them are. Beyond the enhancement of specific features and functionality that are expected today, with this data, global – and national, regional or local – law firm leaders now have:

» Access to data on how to create experiential pathways and journeys for the visitors they identify as "most important."

» A snapshot of how leading law firms are doing and an understanding of how your firm can better compete in your chosen markets and sectors.

» A practical roadmap to view your own website more strategically and to plan your website investments with an eye toward getting a desired return. But – designing a new website and writing new, more relevant and consumable content is challenging. You have to ensure that your firm's time and financial investment are well worth it. Use this Study to help you in future planning discussions with leaders – cover firm strategy, service and sector priorities, opportunities, goals and competitors. Have the right script in hand if firm leaders ask, "Why does it cost so much/take so long – it's just a website?!"

Following the 70 attributes included in the Ten Foundational Best Practices, visitors to your website will:

» Easily see the differences in strategy, scope, reach and strengths that distinguish your firm from others

» Quickly find the information they want and need

» Return to your site to find out more.

Tips on using this White Paper.

There is a lot to digest here. Each Foundational Best Practice has its own section in this White Paper, and each section has the following components in it:

» A listing of the attributes included in that FBP and the average score for each attribute

» Top Trends and Insights; Do's and Don'ts

» A list of Stand-out Firms and what made them stand out

» Results – the average score of all the attributes for the Global 50, the Top Ten Performers, their scores for that FBP, and the highest and lowest scores for the FBP

» Finally, the number of firms that scored Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor and Unacceptable.

Start with the sections that represent your greatest areas of concern. If you are looking to dramatically improve your professionals' bios, for example, start there. Use your website analytics to help you understand how visitors are using and responding to various aspects of your site. If your content isn't being consumed, you must understand why so you can identify tactics to address the issues.

I AM ASKING
A FAVOR OF YOU . . .

In exchange for making this White Paper available at no cost, we ask that you talk about it in social media, and among your friends and colleagues. Please help us get the good word out! My Twitter handle is @ContentPilot – and use the hashtags **#Global50Websites #10FBP.**

Thank you!

Please let us know if you find this Study and White Paper useful.

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2016 GLOBAL 50 WEBSITES
TEN FOUNDATIONAL BEST PRACTICES / INTRODUCTION AND

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

>>

For more than a decade, large law firms have collectively spent millions and millions of dollars designing new websites. But, are their redesigns making visitors – and the plum target market of active buyers of legal services – any happier?

According to the 2016 Global 50 Websites: Ten Foundational Best Practices research Study, the general answer is "no." Many professional services firm websites are broken from a visitor experience standpoint – in fact, most of them are.

My 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 and now 2016, 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 take into account foundational changes that have been 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, I purposely chose the term "Foundational" as a modifier, because I wanted firms to focus on the most basic and *foundational* 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 sophisticated visitors expect from top law firms.

The websites analyzed were those live as of July 1, 2016. Any new launches after this date were not reviewed. If you would like to have your website reviewed, please contact Deborah McMurray – mcmurray@contentpilot.com.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHAT ARE THE GLOBAL 50 FIRMS DOING WELL?

The highest scoring FBP was **FBP10** – SITE "HYGIENE" + USABILITY, with an average score of 85.2 on a 100-point scale. All law firms of any size should aspire to scoring 100 on all attributes included here, yet, only two law firms scored 100: **DLA Piper** and **Jones Day**. The lowest score on this FBP was 67.1

Coming in second, was **FBP 5** - CONTENT (EXCLUDING BIOGRAPHIES) at 81.2. This is a significant improvement over the AmLaw 100 firms' scores in the 2013 Study. Firms scored 94 on "Showing their commitment to diversity and inclusion," 92 on their "Statements of core values related to clients, the profession and markets served by the firms," and an 89 on "Publishing content that has a clear information hierarchy and that is well organized."

Of the 70 attributes we reviewed, only two attributes had all 50 firms scoring 100 on them.

FBP 4 - PROFESSIONAL BIOGRAPHIES came in at a close third – 80.7. The attribute – "First 2-3 sentences of the bio overview are descriptive of lawyer's practice, type, size and industry sector of clients represented, and geography of practice" – scored 87. For those 39 firms that scored "Excellent" on this attribute, it means their professionals have a better chance of quickly connecting with interested visitors and better utilizing their search engine real estate than those who scored lower. Only one firm scored 100 on this attribute: **Hogan Lovells**. The firm also received the highest total score on all ten attributes under FBP4 – 97.5

WHERE CAN THE GLOBAL 50 FIRMS IMPROVE?

Positioning strategy
While 14 firms scored 100 on **FBP1** – COMMUNICATING YOUR MESSAGE – for the attribute, "Clear and Differentiating Positioning Strategy," 20 firms scored zero. The Global 50 average for this attribute was 45.6.

Foreign languages
There is also a surprising lack of foreign language translations for this body of firms. 12 firms have no translated content at all, and 17 firms have only partially translated content. The average score for this attribute under FBP 1 was 40.3.

And 20 of the websites have no translated content on their mobile sites, where the Global 50 average score was 36.0 on the 100-point scale.

Design
The other area of surprise was how low the firms scored on **FBP 2** – DESIGN. The Global 50 average score was 55 for this FBP (the lowest of all Ten FBPs), with the poorest scoring attribute – "Site is responsive with deliberately designed views for phones, tablets and desktop" – averaging 41.0.

Three firms scored 100 on **FBP 2** – DESIGN – **Goodwin**, **Squire Patton Boggs** and **Winston & Strawn**. But more firms scored in the "Unacceptable" range on this FBP than any of the others. And there were four websites that scored a total of 0.0, meaning they flunked all four of the attributes.

2016 ⌄⌄

GLOBAL 50 WEBSITES: TEN FOUNDATIONAL BEST PRACTICES
RESULTS

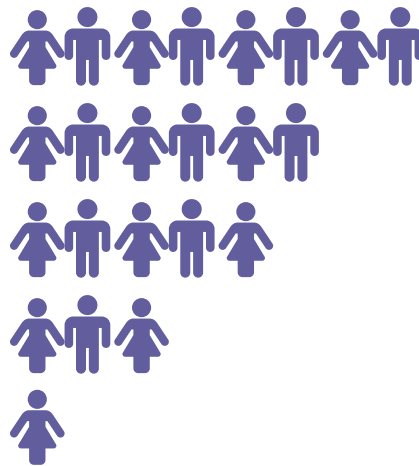## ONLY ONE FIRM RANKED
EXCELLENT

85.4
Morgan Lewis
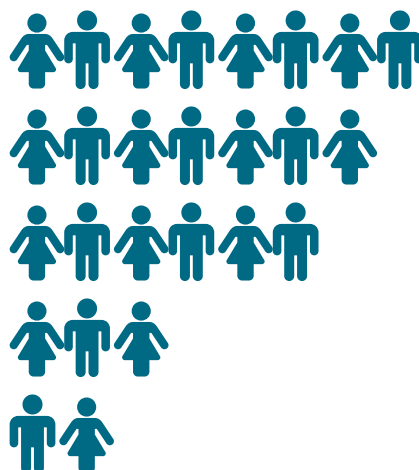
THE LOWEST SCORING FIRM (NOT NAMED) RECEIVED A TOTAL SCORE OF 57.2, OR "FAIR."

23 FIRMS
RANKED "GOOD"

26 FIRMS
RANKED "FAIR"

1ST YEAR
THAT NO WEBSITE RANKED "POOR" OR "UNACCEPTABLE"

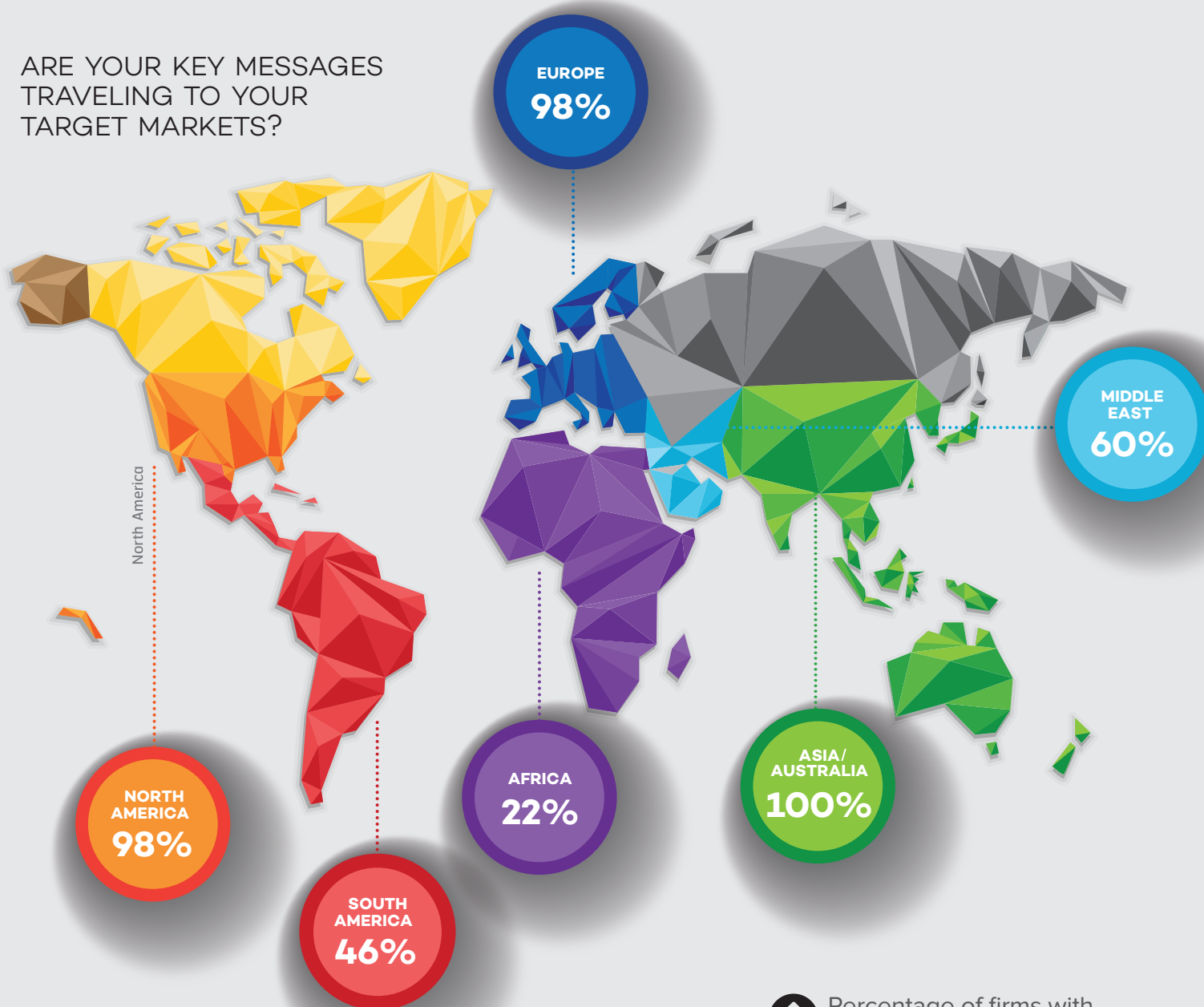THE AVERAGE TOTAL SCORE OF ALL GLOBAL 50 FIRMS WAS

68.7
"FAIR"

THUS, THERE IS ENORMOUS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT – EVEN AMONG THE TOP TEN SCORING FIRMS:

[1]	Morgan Lewis	85.4
[2]	Winston & Strawn	81.4
[3]	Weil, Gotshal	79.9
[4]	Sidley & Austin	79.9
[5]	DLA Piper	79.7
[6]	Perkins Coie	79.0
[7]	Squire Patton Boggs	78.9
[8]	White & Case	77.1
[9]	Reed Smith	76.7
[10]	Goodwin	75.3

HOW WELL DO THE
GLOBAL 50 WEBSITES
COMMUNICATE THE FIRMS' GLOBAL GROWTH STRATEGIES AND MESSAGES?

ARE YOUR KEY MESSAGES
TRAVELING TO YOUR
TARGET MARKETS?

North America

EUROPE
98%

MIDDLE EAST
60%

NORTH AMERICA
98%

SOUTH AMERICA
46%

AFRICA
22%

ASIA/ AUSTRALIA
100%

Percentage of firms with offices on each continent.

MOST COMMON
OFFICE LOCATIONS

TOTAL NUMBER OF ***G50 OFFICES**= **1,474**
AVERAGE NUMBER OF OFFICES PER FIRM = **29**
*G50=GLOBAL50

WASHINGTON D.C.

BEIJING

LONDON

NEW YORK

HONG KONG

50 FIRMS
HAVE OFFICES IN
ASIA/ AUSTRALIA

11 FIRMS
HAVE OFFICES IN
AFRICA

49 FIRMS
HAVE OFFICES IN
N. AMERICA

49 FIRMS
HAVE OFFICES IN
EUROPE

30 FIRMS
HAVE OFFICES IN
MIDDLE EAST

23 FIRMS
HAVE OFFICES IN
S. AMERICA

MOST COMMON
LANGUAGE TRANSLATIONS
 # OF FIRMS

18 Japanese

26 German

29 Chinese

24 French

14 Spanish

09 Russian

09 Italian

NUMBER OF FIRMS
WITH LANGUAGE
TRANSLATIONS

Average number of foreign language translations per firm — **4**

Don't offer complete website translations — **17**

Don't offer translated content — **12**

2016 GLOBAL 50 WEBSITES

METHODOLOGY + SCORING

The 2016 Ten Foundational Best Practices and a brief summary of the attributes are:

FBP 1
Communicating your Message — clear and differentiating firm strategy, strengths and focus are apparent, as is geographic reach

FBP 2
Design — bold, distinctive branding, responsive design, intuitive information hierarchy and strong imagery

FBP 3
Navigation — global/local navigation are consistent and intuitive across multiple devices

FBP 4
Professional Biographies — detailed experience, an overview that tells a compelling story of the person, current and larger-format photos, social media and other links

FBP 5
Content (excluding biographies) -- quality, clarity, effective portrayal of domain expertise and organization of all non-bio narrative content

FBP 6
Interactivity, Engagement + Social Outreach — how interactive and engaging is your site? Access to additional content, including multimedia, blogs, social media, alumni portals, extranets and "share" functionality

FBP 7
Site Search — remember, it's not about searching, it's about "finding" — easy access to and quality of the multiple site search options and an intuitive display of search results

FBP 8
Site Optimization + Online Awareness (SEO) — is your site optimized for search engines? We analyze nine basic attributes that make your Internet presence more powerful

FBP 9
Mobility + Responsiveness — brand integrity is high on mobile devices, your mobile site is intuitive and promotes a good user experience

FBP 10
Site "Hygiene" + Usability — site functions perfectly on the latest browsers, no error pages or broken links, site meets the W3C Level 1

SCORING
Each attribute is reviewed and scored on a 100-point scale. For example, FBP 4 - Professional Biographies has ten attributes — each was scored separately. We average the scores for all attributes to determine the law firm's score for each FBP. Once each FBP has its average score, those will be added, divided by ten and that is the law firm's total score for the entire Study.

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

HOW DO THEY
MEASURE UP?

FBP 1

COMMUNICATING
MESSAGE

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TOP TRENDS & INSIGHTS
COMMUNICATING YOUR MESSAGE

"

There is a surprising lack of foreign language translations for these global firms.

» 17 firms have only partially translated content, 12 firms have no translated content.

» Translations are rarely as detailed as the original English site - oftentimes only headings are translated.

» Firms promote themselves as "**truly global**," yet do not cater to non-English speaking users - this is a significant negative point.

FBP1 Attributes +
Global 50 Aggregate Scores

Clear and differentiating positioning strategy / **46**

Practice and industry focus are apparent / **94**

Geographic reach is apparent / **93**

Contact information is clear and easy to find / **59**

Site features or links to foreign language translations / **40**

» Positioning strategy is non-existent or fleeting with the high number of rotating carousels on the home pages — the headlines and images disappear too quickly. Nearly half - 21 firms — had no positioning strategy whatsoever.

31 firms use rotating carousels — and too many of them are featuring firm awards and rankings, and news briefs that all other firms are reporting on, too.

» Many firms have long and tedious "Contact us" forms - no general email (such as info@lawfirm.com), which would be much easier for your visitors.

» Many firms make awards and recognition the only focus of the home page — it's not client-focused or visitor-related. Too much "all about me."

» The same news topics/features appear (Brexit was big news in June-July 2016) - the stand-out firms are those that offer fresh points of view on these topics.

» Cliché of "global reach, local expertise" - too many firms use this and it's not distinguishing. We challenge firms to take this message and prove it with real client stories and solutions — then communicate it in a unique way.

» Cliché of two-word phrases paired together, with word pairs that are not distinguishing - too many firms fall into the habit of using exactly the same words.

Too many firms use the same, uninventive language: "client-focused, responsive, innovative, star lawyers" - it becomes noise that doesn't differentiate the firms.

STAND-OUT
FIRMS
## FOR FBP1 POSITIONING STRATEGY

✚ **Hogan Lovells /** **hoganlovells.com** / "Legal challenges come from all directions. What's ahead for your business?" - client-focused, good use of the rhetorical question. ✚ **White & Case /** **whitecase.com** / "International law firm that services companies, governments and financial institutions." This describes exactly who they serve. Even though other global firms serve the same audiences, White & Case putting the stake in the ground here completely works. ✚ **Quinn Emanuel /** **quinnemanuel.com** Uses a *Wall Street Journal* quote for its positioning strategy: "A global force in business litigation." There is no ambiguity about what they do; it's simple and straightforward, and it lends third party credibility. ✚ **King & Wood Mallesons /** **kwm.com** / "The Power of Together" is KWM's tag-line - it's strong, clear and doesn't really need any additional explanation. What stands out on this site is the terrific infographic, which is one click away under the rotating carousel (yes, Brexit is featured, of course, as is other world news, lawyer promotions and other firm news). The infographic is the best display of awards, rankings, demographics, firm statistics, etc. that the researchers have seen. It paints a global picture of a complex, high powered and far-reaching firm without coming across as bragging. Bravo!
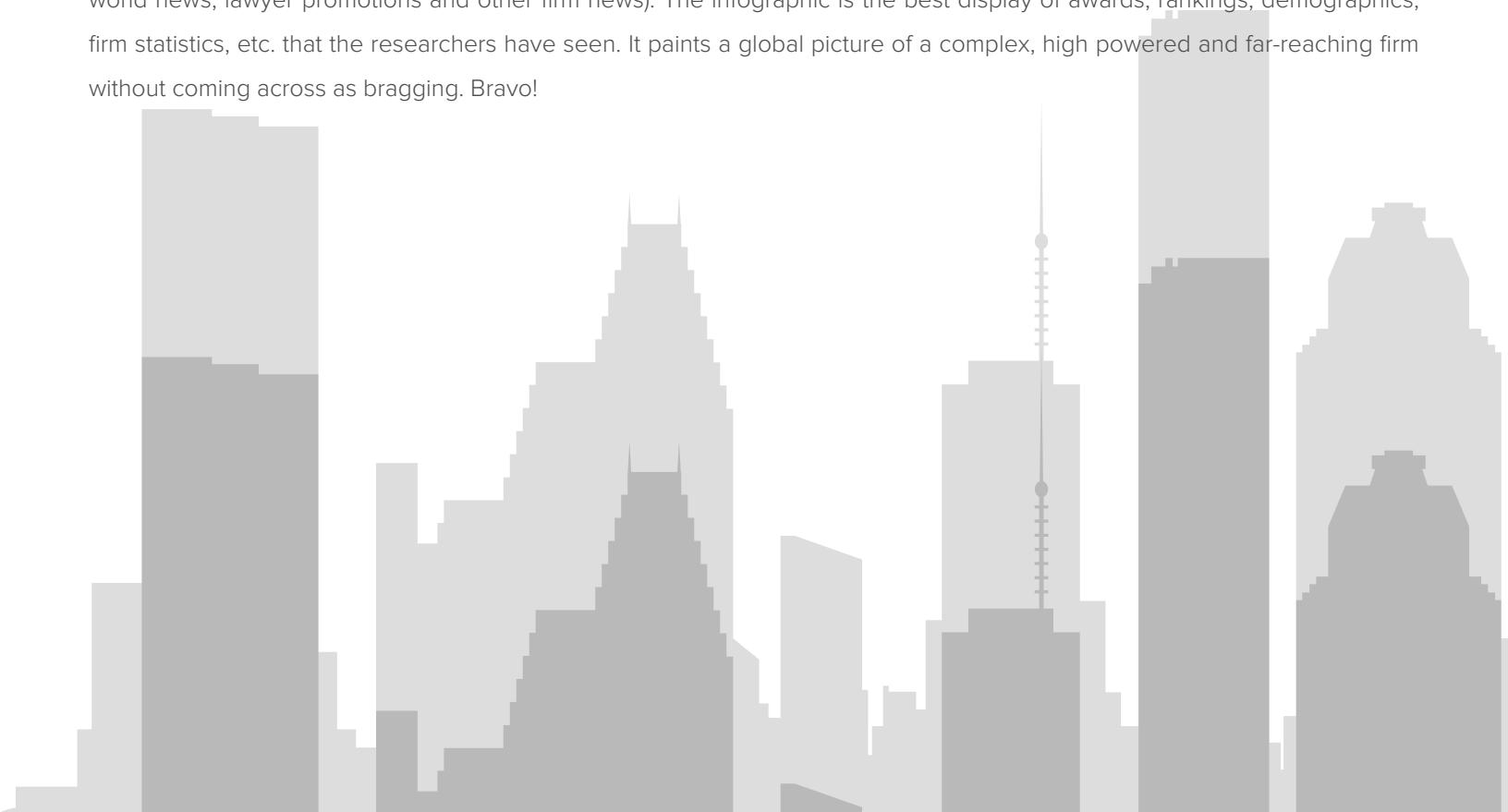
STAND-OUT
FIRMS
FBP1 REST OF THE ATTRIBUTES

⊕ **Jones Day / jonesday.com** / Shows how many offices are on each continent - shows global reach at a glance. ⊕ **Norton Rose / nortonrosefulbright.com** / Gives the option to search locally for services – a strong feature. ⊕ **Paul Hastings / paulhastings. com** / Strong website translations example. All five translations are extremely detailed and thorough, even covering News & Insights (which show on the home page in the translated languages). ⊕ **Hogan Lovells / hoganlovells.com** / Good use of containers and expand/contract features, and these content organizers are not over-used. ⊕ **DLA Piper / dlapiper.com** / Effective use of geo-location services. ⊕ **Perkins Coie / perkinscoie.com /** Simple, intuitive, ideal listing of practices and industries. ⊕ **Kirkland & Ellis / kirkland.com** / Shows the local time at each office location, which makes them seem more connected and embedded in the various cities. It also allows visitors to know when they can call. ⊕ **Gibson Dunn / gibsondunn. com** / Strong, simple access to contact information. Link found in footer and under "About us," and includes general inquiries, website feedback, media contacts, recruitment contacts, etc.
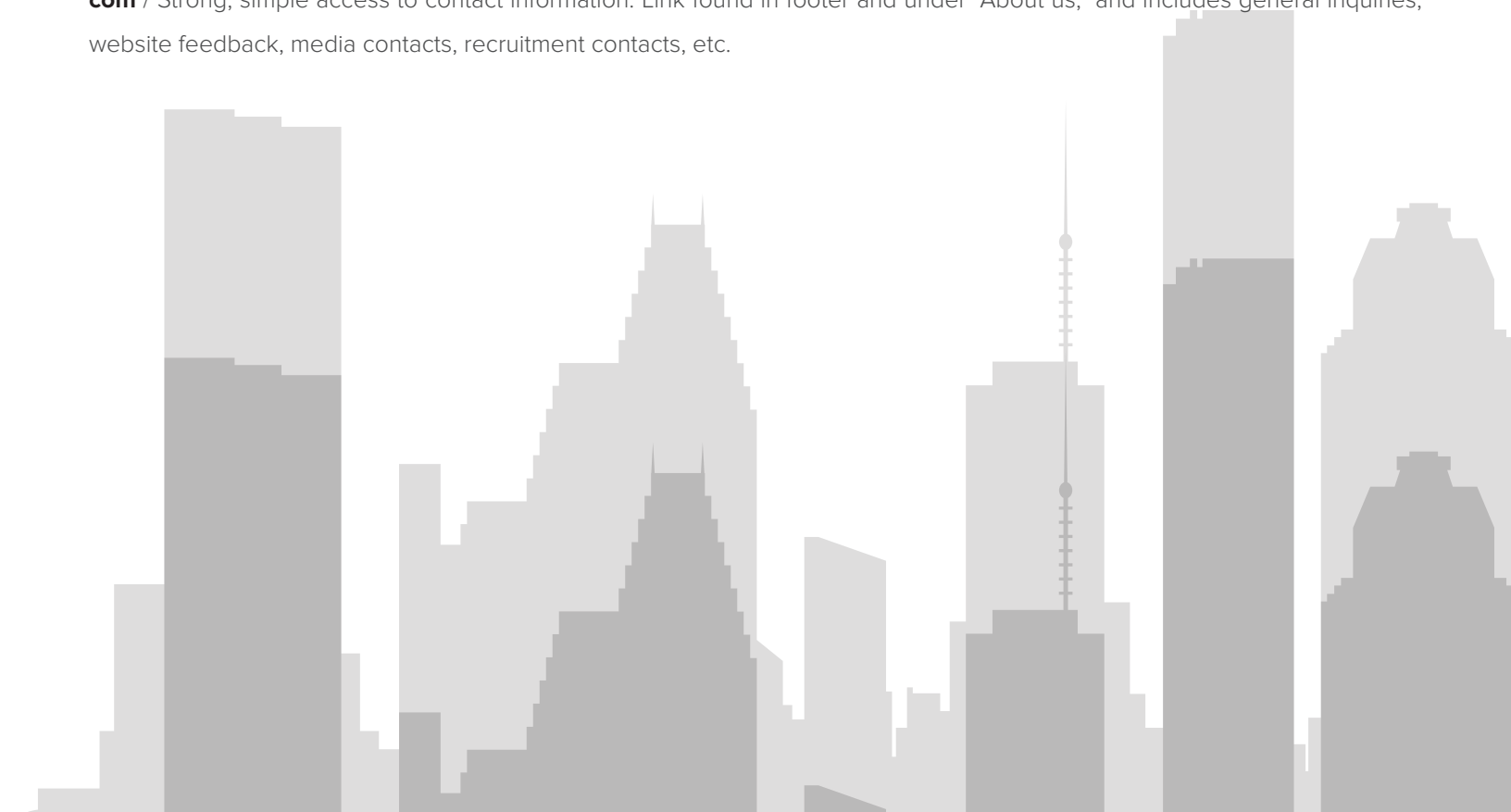
THE DO'S

FBP1 COMMUNICATING YOUR MESSAGE DO'S

(DO)

Comply with your state or country's advertising regulations.

(DO)

Tell compelling stories - use infographics to help build your brand and tell firm stories, successes, global reach, awards, etc.

(DO)

A better job presenting practices + industries. Simplicity is best - users want clarity and an intuitive list that's well organized by the top services you provide. Create a taxonomy that is based on what clients buy from you, not how your firm is structured. Separate practices + industries + even regions - to make it easier for visitors to quickly find what they are seeking.

(DO)

Include interactive maps on the "locations" or "offices" page - these are a helpful and engaging way of visually displaying global reach.

**FBP1
Communicating
Your Message**

(DO)

Make it easy to switch among languages on any given page.

(DO)

Tell your strategy right up front - it should be clear and succinct not hidden in the footer or on an "About Us" page.

(DO)

Make your home page welcoming. Home page content should appear and stay long enough for visitors to scan and grasp it - when they are getting their bearings on your site - help them feel at home.

(DO)

Include a general email (info@lawfirm.com) instead of insisting on long, tedious contact forms.

THE DON'TS

FBP1 COMMUNICATING YOUR MESSAGE DON'TS

(DON'T)

Make claims that you can't prove anywhere
on your site, especially as slogans and themes on the home page.

(DON'T)

Use the word "international" or "foreign"
when describing office locations outside
the U.S. or Europe - it depicts the firm as U.S.
or Euro-centric and not truly global.

(DON'T)

Use overly small fonts – content should be
easy to scan and read.

TOP TEN
PERFORMERS

G50 SCORE/66.2
COMMUNICATING YOUR MESSAGE

G50
97

Hogan Lovells

G50
97

Paul Hastings

G50
94

Jones Day

G50
91

Perkins Coie

G50
89

Ropes & Gray

G50
87

DLA Piper

G50
86

Orrick

G50
85

CMS Legal Services

G50
84

Morgan Lewis

G50
80

Simpson Thacher

HIGHEST SCORE
97

LOWEST SCORE
14

FBP1
COMMUNICATING
YOUR MESSAGE

2016 RESULTS

07 FIRMS
EXCELLENT

11 FIRMS
GOOD

25 FIRMS
FAIR

06 FIRMS
POOR

01 FIRM
UNACCEPTABLE

content
pilot®

HOW DO THEY
MEASURE UP?

FBP2
DESIGN

content
pilot
strategy and technology
with direction™

TOP TRENDS & INSIGHTS
DESIGN

" More firms scored in the "Unacceptable" range on this Foundational Best Practice than any of the other FBPs. There were four sites that scored a total of "0.0." **"**

But three firms scored 100:
» **Goodwin**
» **Squire Patton Boggs**
» **Winston & Strawn**

FB2 Attributes +
Global 50 Aggregate Scores

Bold, distinctively branded layout and style / **61**

Strong, unique imagery reinforces and advances firm brand and story / **53**

Site is responsive with deliberately designed views for phones, tablets, desktop / **41**

Design is uncluttered and presents an intuitive information hierarchy / **64**

» There was inconsistent and poor design on mobile versions — a missed branding opportunity when the mobile version is an inferior skeletal version of the desktop site.

» 20 of the Global 50 were unresponsive sites, and several firms didn't even have dedicated mobile sites.

» 31 firms use rotating carousels — and focus too much on "it's all about me" content, such as firm awards and rankings.

» Many sites are cluttered and unfocused — too much information squeezed into one page with no clear hierarchy of what's most important to a visitor. Especially the home pages: You have 2-3 seconds to get your message across — don't throw spaghetti messages against the wall and hope something sticks; the visitor won't "see" any of it. Respect your visitors and respect the integrity of your own messages and material.

» Few firms offer true "print to PDF" options. Visitors are forced to use the browser-print for the page rather than dynamic, well-designed, presentation-ready PDF pages (e.g., especially

on lawyer bios and practice pages). Buyers of legal services do actually print the bios of lawyers they are evaluating, and line them up on conference tables side-by-side.

» Generally, there are many outdated websites. It's likely many of these firms are considering a redesign — but it is surprising how old some of these sites actually are.

» It's easy to get lost in poorly designed sites — this affects your visitors' grasp of what you offer and what you can do for them. Time is critical - the time it takes visitors to hunt down the information they're seeking can affect whether your firm will be hired or not.

» There is too much color inconsistency for hover and link states, and other general confusion about how to effectively use color to advance communication and user experience. Many firms have too many colors in their color palette (colors change on every page) — this does not contribute to effective branding, unless their palette is literally the rainbow.

Others have too few colors, where one color serves too many purposes (headers, link hovers, accents, etc.).

TOP TRENDS & INSIGHTS

» Many sites are old-fashioned in their page layout. They are divided into thirds – top third is the firm logo and banner/global navigation, then there is a rotating carousel of undifferentiating photos, then there are three vertical columns of news, events, awards, etc.

» Some sites have busy wallpaper backgrounds or big stock images in the background – it obscures the important content that is layered on top of it.

» Several firms took steps back in their latest redesigns rather than advancing the firm forward – the new sites launched with more issues than their previous versions. When this happens it's clear that the designers and firms are not focused on the decision-makers who are determining whether to hire you. You are missing the opportunity to effectively sell your firm.

» Many mega-menus don't work smoothly – they are jumpy, overly sensitive, disappear at inopportune times and often hide important page content.

STAND-OUT
FIRMS

⊕ **Hogan Lovells /** **hoganlovells.com** / Simple and clean, yet visitors can easily access a breadth of information. Good use of imagery on industries and practices pages, and an effective use of animation on the Contact Us page. This is also the best Contact Us form we've seen – it's actually quite personal – i.e., "What would you like to discuss? How should we contact you? Is there anything specific we should know?" ⊕ **Goodwin /** **goodwinlaw.com** / Smart use of the hamburger menu and how the navigation cascades to the right (think of pulling out a "drawer" of information – and then another "drawer" for more detail). ⊕ **Winston & Strawn /** **winston.com** / Good interactivity and bubbles that engage the user. Also a very good transition to tablets and phones from the desktop and laptop. ⊕ **DLA Piper /** **dlapiper.com** / Not afraid of bold, strong colors. Good organization of information – clear hierarchy

THE DO'S

FBP2 DESIGN DO'S

(DO)

Choose fresh, unique imagery that 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.

(DO)

Respect the use of "white" (or unfilled) space, but don't leave large randomly-empty spaces or gaps that make your site look unfinished.

(DO)

Consider usability if you place your logo on the right of the page versus the left. Most firms use the left – there are studies that prove left is better from a usability standpoint, even if it seems more differentiating to put it on the right.

FBP2
Design

(DO)

Focus on "information design." What is most important for you to convey? What is next most important? This design rigor will help your decision-makers feel at home on your site, regardless of the sections they visit. And they will better comprehend your messages.

(DO)

Use containers and boxes to effectively organize information. Call-outs, sidebars and containers will get more attention than the long narrative text – the smaller bits of information will be easily consumed. Use them.

THE DON'TS

FBP2 DESIGN DON'TS

(DON'T)

Settle on a rotating carousel just because it's hard to make a decision about what to feature. Make every feature compelling – and the carousel should not be complicated with too many buttons/options. Studies show that visitors view 1-2 items, seldom 3 and almost never 4.

(DON'T)

Squeeze as much information as possible on one page – it translates as undifferentiated noise to your visitors, and they will not consume it.

(DON'T)

Make things big just for the sake of design – make sure your bold statements relate to your information hierarchy and what is most important on the page

TOP TEN PERFORMERS
G50 SCORE/54.8
DESIGN

G50
100

Squire Patton Boggs

G50
100

Goodwin

G50
100

Winston & Strawn

G50
90

DLA Piper

G50
87.5

Morgan Lewis

G50
87.5

Dechert

G50
86.3

Perkins Coie

G50
85

Sidley & Austin

G50
85

Weil, Gotshal

G50
83.8

Gibson Dunn

HIGHEST SCORE
100

LOWEST SCORE
0

FBP2
DESIGN

2016
RESULTS

07 FIRMS
EXCELLENT

10 FIRMS
GOOD

11 FIRMS
FAIR

12 FIRMS
POOR

10 FIRMS
UNACCEPTABLE

content
pilot®

HOW DO THEY
MEASURE UP?

FBP3
NAVIGATION

content pilot strategy and technology with direction™

TOP TRENDS & INSIGHTS

NAVIGATION

"" Scoring was particularly black-and-white with this FBP - there is no ambiguity about what's good and what isn't.

FBP3 Attributes +
Global 50 Aggregate Scores

Global and local navigation styles are consistent / **84**

It's easy and intuitive to navigate across multiple devices / **64**

Site does not use multiple expand/contract features that hide valuable content / **79**

Site has a global footer with relevant clickable links / **35**

» Non-responsive sites (sites that do not automatically scale to the size of the device it's viewed on) were more consistent with their navigation.
Responsive websites had more navigation variables on the interior pages (e.g., "About Us" was structured differently from "Practices"). They were, however, more closely conforming to how the navigation was structured on the desktop site.

When you are designing a new responsive site, beware of inconsistent navigation styles from section to section that could confuse visitors.

» The highest scoring responsive sites did maintain navigation consistency across multiple devices.

» It is surprising how few firms included global footers on their sites (other than the usual full firm name and copyright, plus the disclaimer and privacy notice). This is real estate that appears on every page — so it's a perfect spot for certain firm messages and news. It's also an intuitive spot for the complete site map to live.

» The mobile navigation tail is wagging the desktop dog - hamburger menus are becoming more and more popular on desktop sites.
If you aren't ready to make this leap, try a hybrid navigation structure that combines the hamburger with traditional global navigation — like: **Goodwin** (goodwinlaw.com) and **O'Melveny** (omm.com).

» Sites continue to utilize a heavy amount of tabbed structures when designing local navigation — like: **Reed Smith** (reedsmith.com/susan_edwards), but less now than we've seen in previous years. This navigation style, while intuitive, is giving way to other local navigation styles, Java Script movements (which should be smartly used) and full pages requiring users to scroll for their content. The increasing shift to viewing law firm website content on mobile phones is driving firms to employ fewer tabs and more scrolling pages.

STAND-OUT
FIRMS

✚ **Winston & Strawn / winston.com** / The firm went retro with the "who we are" and "what we do" global navigation titles (these were popular in the early 2000's and typically signaled an internal focus). But the firm added cascading mega-menus, which are well-designed, intuitive and provide visitors exactly the information they want – quickly and completely. "What we do" is divided into two lists, "Services'" and "Sectors," and Winston also features two late-breaking news items in the menu. ✚ The site also performs seamlessly on a hand-held device. Our only recommendations are to make the full-text search in the "Who we are" section more visible (we didn't see that the first go-around), and not repeat the same content that appears in the mega-menu on the "Who we are" landing page. ✚ **Goodwin / goodwinlaw.com** / This firm didn't have a particularly high composite score in this FBP category because of the site's almost non-existent footer, but goodwinlaw.com is a stand-out nonetheless for offering a hybrid global navigation approach and the hamburger menu. Goodwin repeats the global navigation in the pop-out cascading menu or "drawer" (i.e., it's like a drawer opening to the right – we encourage you to open it up and see what you discover inside). The firm features five industries, under "Services" and a second "drawer" shoots out when you hover over "Additional industries." Services also includes Practices and Regions, each which has its own second "drawer." ✚ **Mayer Brown / mayerbrown.com** / What makes this firm stand-out is its solid performance among the four attributes. The global navigation along the top of the site is easy to use and intuitively points the way to any page on the site. The local
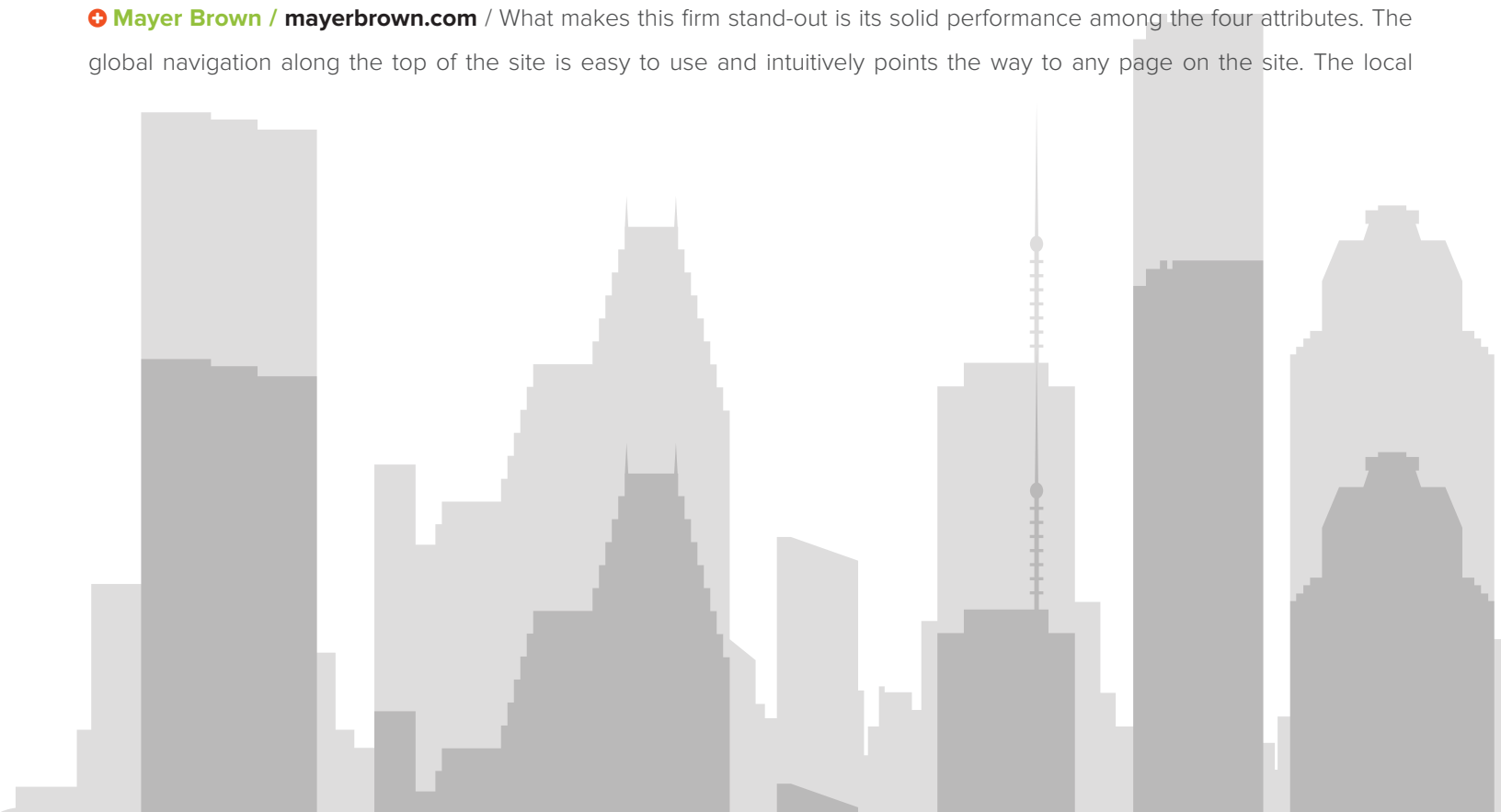
navigation tab structure on the desktop site is 100% predictable and consistent throughout — starting with a brief Overview and then Experience. What the mobile-specific site misses in design, it makes up for in navigation — which is a divided navigation with the most important things for on-the-go visitors residing "above-the-fold;" and the Site Map is full of helpful links. Other great features of the mobile navigation include Locations (with easy to get contact info), Experience (all the services listings) and People. ⊕ **Reed Smith / reedsmith.com** / The primary and secondary mega-menu navigation features are the real wins on this site. Not only are they full of excellent, navigable content — they are well organized for the amount of information offered, which provides an extraordinary example of how design and navigation should work together to produce something wonderful. There is also something here for everyone, (with the "everyone" being the three types of website visitors described in Foundational Best Practice 7: Site Search ("FBP7") — searchers, navigators and browsers. As noted in the Trends and Insights for FBP7, "During the business day, visitors primarily search — they're busy and they want rapid results. Type A visitors search and they want to find the right answer FAST. On mobile phones, focus groups have proved that visitors both search and navigate, regardless of the time of day they are accessing your site. Tablets reintroduced browsing to us, but don't rely on visitors to casually browse your site. They still want to find what they are seeking as easily and fast as possible. Remember: It's never about searching — it's always about finding."

THE DO'S

FBP3 NAVIGATION DO'S

(DO)

Remember that navigation should be intuitive.
You are creating important journeys for your different visitor personas – make it easy for them to find their way.

(DO)

Maintain navigation consistency across multiple devices with your responsive design.

(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.

(DO)

Stick to the basics:
mega-menus and cascading navigation should not be disregarded simply because they're an established idea. There is place for them – especially to display practice and industry lists, as well as offices.

FBP3
Navigation

(DO)

Include short intros of navigable content when the links 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)

Include global footers that include substantive info – these are easy ways to maximize content and should be used more.

THE DON'TS

FBP3 NAVIGATION DON'TS

(DON'T)

Forget the importance of Foundational Best Practice 2: Design when thinking through your navigation. This is especially important to remember for local navigation on desktop sites and global navigation for mobile sites. Keep in mind, however, that form does follow function – so don't sacrifice your functionality for something that just looks "pretty."

(DON'T)

Try to get cute with your global navigation titles; buyers of legal services want to view lawyers, services, offices and maybe some trending news. Make it easy for them to quickly navigate to these pages.

(DON'T)

Shift your interior page navigation structures from section to section. Even the most sophisticated visitors feel more confidence (i.e., confident about their experience with you) when they know what to expect when they click a link.

(DON'T)

Ignore the global footer when you are designing your content strategy.

(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. It's just good rear view-mirror etiquette.

NOTE: This navigation "Don't" conflicts with an SEO best practice attribute noted in FBP8: Site Optimization and Online Awareness, where tabbed content should have the same URL – so you maximize and optimize your search engine benefits of that content on your site. There is a give and take when it comes to SEO – for example, the best SEO page wouldn't have tabs at all (all content would be visible on the page). But, from a navigation standpoint, the argument can be made that it results in a better user experience to keep your content inside a clearly labeled tab structure for better organization (visitors can choose the content tabs they want to see and ignore the others that they don't). You should assess strategically what's most important to you – optimizing the pages for SEO or ensuring the very best visitor experience.

TOP TEN PERFORMERS **G50 SCORE/50** NAVIGATION

G50 **91.3**	G50 **87.5**	G50 **85**	G50 **82.5**	G50 **80**
Mayer Brown	Reed Smith	Winston & Strawn	Perkins Coie	Weil, Gotshal

G50 **80**	G50 **77.5**	G50 **77.5**	G50 **75**	G50 **75**
King & Wood Mallesons	Sullivan & Cromwell	Dentons	DLA Piper	Skadden

G50 **75**	G50 **75**	G50 **75**	HIGHEST SCORE **93.1**	LOWEST SCORE **37.5**
White & Case	Gibson Dunn	Ropes & Gray		

FBP3
NAVIGATION

2016 RESULTS

O2 FIRMS
EXCELLENT

14 FIRMS
GOOD

27 FIRMS
FAIR

O7 FIRMS
POOR

OO FIRMS
UNACCEPTABLE

content
pilot®

HOW DO THEY
MEASURE UP?

FBP4

PROFESSIONAL
Biographies

content
pilot · strategy and technology
with direction™

TOP TRENDS & INSIGHTS

PROFESSIONAL BIOGRAPHIES

" **"**

40-70% of visitors come to a law firm website to view bios – that's why they are there.

》 Professionals are mostly wasting the rich opportunity offered by the bio Overview. Too many begin by merely re-stating the lawyer's 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, or flagging anything with SEO value. The first two sentences of your bio (another way of saying this is the first 140 or so 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. Think of it as real estate no longer than a tweet and, possibly, the only part of your bio that a visitor might read.

FBP4 Attributes +
Global 50 Aggregate Scores

First 140 characters of bio are current, compelling and relevant for SEO and reader benefit / **74**

First 2-3 sentences of the overview describe the person's practice, client types and industries / **87**

Bio uses the professional's first name or nickname / **60**

Photos are current and consistent, convey personality of professional and firm / **77**

Full contact information is easy to find / **99**

The professional proves accessibility / **91**

Bios crosslink to practices, industries, news, events, etc. / **89**

Bios include detailed experience/matter lists that are well-organized and specific / **79**

Page design displays elegant content organization that enables users to scan and consume what they want / **81**

Associates and professional staff have full bios / **71**

» Very few sites turned a representative engagement section into an engaging, reader-friendly, story-telling illustration of the lawyer's practice focus and strengths – most were "all about me" and not client-focused or related to value from the client's point of view.

» Bios were often several clicks away from the home page. And, the firms didn't make it easy to quickly view multiple bios – i.e., visitors had to click their browser "back" arrow many times to get back to the People Search page or, they have to jump to the global navigation and navigate there.

» Photos are often dated (8 years or older), much too small and poorly cropped, black and white (and not because they were going for an Ansel Adams style!), not approachable or friendly.

» Lawyers in different offices have different colors, backgrounds and image styles. Consistency in photo style is key in promoting "one firm" and a memorable firm brand. Not identical sameness, but branded cohesiveness.

» Very few sites, which otherwise had good, sticky design, effectively used sidebar-type containers, subheads, bullet lists or differentiation in the presentation of bio information. The pages aren't engaging and are difficult for visitors to scan or consume the most relevant details and key messages. The few engaging sites more effectively used headers, different font sizes and styles to capture and hold the visitor's attention.

TOP TRENDS & INSIGHTS

» On some of the surveyed websites, professionals were only searchable by name (not by service or industry, location or language). This is time-consuming and often frustrating for a new visitor who doesn't personally know the lawyers to find someone who can guide them in the IP ramifications of Brexit, for example.

» 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. Remember that you have an internal audience for your website, too.

Strangely, professional staff and associate bios are not the beneficiaries of the website's full search features. (This is a throwback to the days when associates in large New York firms never had bios – and often weren't even listed on the old-time websites.) Today, too many are merely listed on a page without full bios. When associates are billed to clients at US $500 or more per hour, they deserve full bios for buyers of legal services to evaluate.

» Experience lists are almost always too long (and, therefore, overwhelming to the digital reader), poorly organized (i.e., NOT according to subject matter themes) and don't adequately answer a prospect's short-list questions. If they contain 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 and for whom have you done it" – then, "what can you do for me." You must answer these questions first to have any chance of being hired.

STAND-OUT
FIRMS

⊕ **Skadden / skadden.com** / Packed lots of content value into the first 140 characters. Opening sentences are engaging and informative. "Meet our staff" section is diverse and inviting. ⊕ **Clifford Chance / cliffordchance.com** / Bios have outstanding Overviews. Opening sentences hit all of the key markers: industry niche, area of concentration, brief descriptor word/phrase. (Pro tip: Be sure to state the geography of the lawyer's practice.) ⊕ **Kirkand & Ellis / kirkland.com** / Search feature offers ways to find professionals by who have been seconded to Kirkland and to whom Kirkland lawyers are seconded – great strategic, differentiating idea. ⊕ **Jones Day / jonesday.com** / Strong "lawyer spotlight" feature on bio landing page. ⊕ **Hogan Lovells / hoganlovells.com** / Outstanding page design: the Overview is in a larger font, there is call-out text (quote from Chambers, for example), most bios have "areas of focus" tabs that take visitors to personalized content about services that relate to the lawyer, tabbed sections are dynamic when the cursor passes over them. ⊕ **White & Case / whitecase.com** / Great photos that remain stationary (they stay put when you scroll). ⊕ **Greenberg Traurig / gtlaw.com** / Introductory section uses hypothetical business challenges to frame the lawyer bio – effective and differentiating.
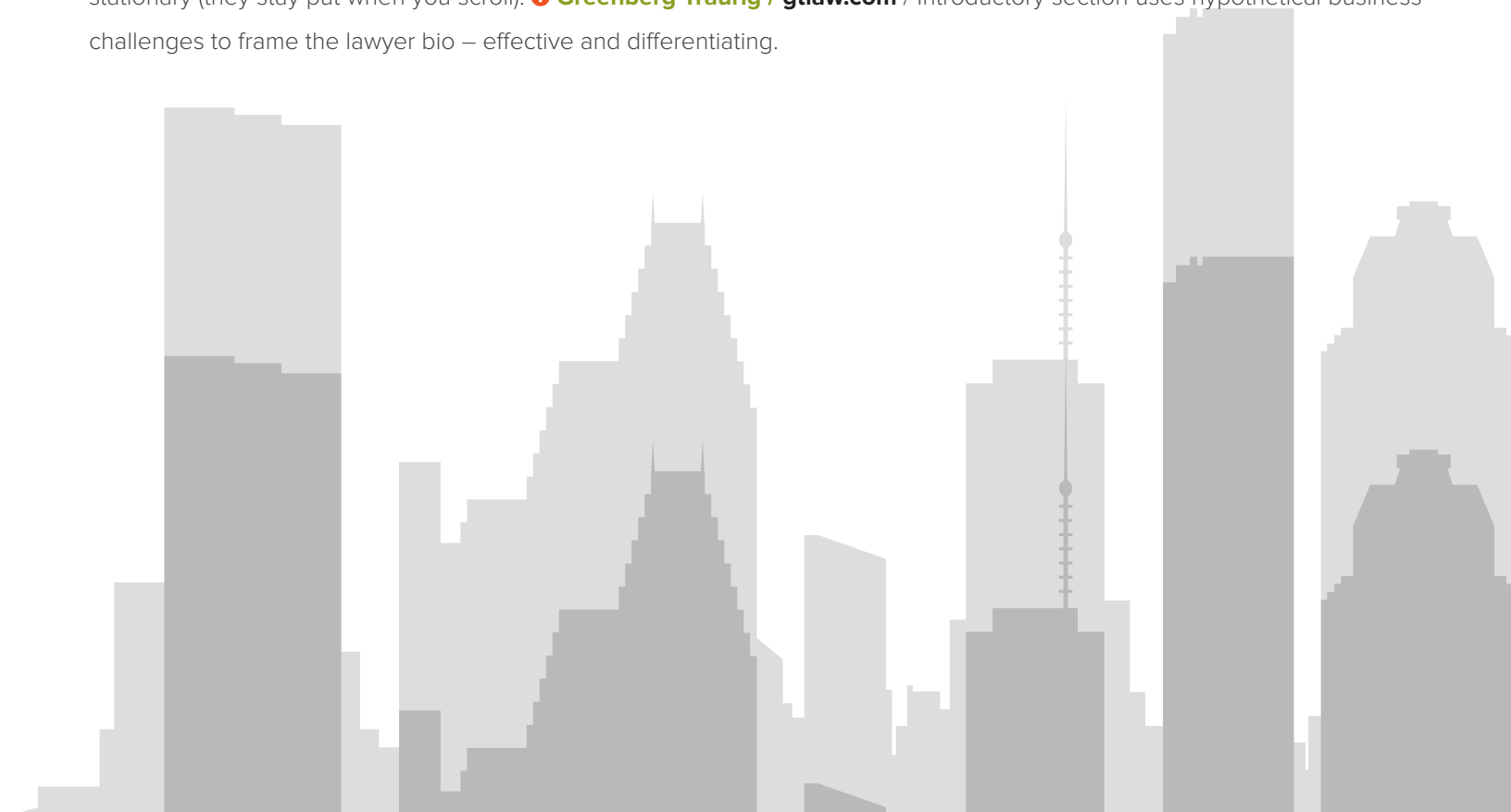
THE DO'S

FBP4 PROFESSIONAL BIOS DO'S

(DO)

Immediately engage the reader in the most substantial content. The first two to three sentences should describe practice, type and size, and industry sector of clients represented, along with the geographical reach of the 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 really easy to find your lawyers in multiple ways). According to the analytics we track, the alphabet search for Professionals is by far the most used search feature.

(DO)

Personalize your bio in some way – provide content that shows you are client-centric and focused on value. Answer the question: "What sells you?" – This will help you determine what visitors in your unique markets/industries are looking for from you – and forms the basis for your content.

(DO)

Include social media links and visitor-friendly page tools (such as 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, practices and industries).

(DO)

Organize bios with containers, sidebar-style boxes, headers, subheads, bullet lists, etc. **Avoid dense, unbroken blocks of undifferentiated text.**

(DO)

Ensure that associates and professional staff (such as CFO, CMO, COO, etc.) have full bios and are retrievable via your search tools.

(DO)

Provide full contact information (including your snail mail address), accessible without scrolling and accessible without having to download a v-card.

(DO)

Humanize your professionals through magazine-style, current photos and client-facing content – avoid bland, stock-like-images that provide no differentiation.

THE DON'TS

FBP4 PROFESSIONAL BIOS DON'TS

(DON'T)

A colossal don't: Don't stay in love with – **your 15-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.

(DON'T)

Address your professionals by Mr. or Mrs. – it's old-fashioned and very unfriendly. Use the professional's first name or nickname, and maintain consistency throughout the bio.

(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 – and present what you've done in a more interesting light.

TOP TEN PERFORMERS

G50 SCORE/80.8
PROFESSIONAL BIOGRAPHIES

G50
97.5

Hogan Lovells

G50
94.5

Norton Rose Fullbright

G50
94.5

Morgan Lewis

G50
94

Ropes & Gray

G50
93

Jones Day

G50
93

White & Case

G50
93

Perkins Coie

G50
92.5

Simpson Thacher

G50
91.5

McDermott Will & Emery

G50
90.5

Herbert Smith Freehills

HIGHEST SCORE
97.5

LOWEST SCORE
61

FBP4
PROFESSIONAL
BIOGRAPHIES

2016 RESULTS

17 FIRMS
EXCELLENT

23 FIRMS
GOOD

10 FIRMS
FAIR

00 FIRMS
POOR

00 FIRMS
UNACCEPTABLE

content
pilot®

HOW DO THEY
MEASURE UP?

FBP5
CONTENT
Excluding Biographies

content
pilot
strategy and technology
with direction™

TOP
TRENDS
& INSIGHTS
CONTENT (EXCLUDING BIOS)

" "
Very little website content demonstrated that the client comes first.

FBP5 Attributes +
Global 50 Aggregate Scores

Content is visitor focused (not "all about me") and is available in multiple languages / **80**

Page content has a clear information hierarchy and is well-organized for the scanning reader / **89**

Practices + industries are broken out separately by services that clients buy; bonus for geographic regions / **85**

Service descriptions include experience details and specifics / **78**

Video and multimedia content is featured, well-produced and short / **34**

Landing page for news, articles, events, etc. is well-organized and searchable by topic, author, etc. / **89**

Site has a statement of core values related to the clients, the profession and the markets served by the firm / **92**

Site highlights the firm's commitment to diversity and inclusion / **94**

Charitable and civic commitment is described and evident / **86**

Pro bono commitment is described in detail, highlighting stories/specific matters / **88**

Every global section landing page is used as an opportunity for value-to-client messaging / **77**

» Few firms told interesting stories about the clients they serve or the extraordinary work they do. However, when the content is more engaging, visitors are more likely to stay longer on the site...and the longer they stay, the more likely they are to trust the firm. The more trust, the greater the likelihood that the firm will be hired or stay hired.

» Video content was often difficult to find and hidden under "About Us" or other firm-focused pages instead of juxtaposed with bios or wherever else it made thematic sense. This means that the practice/industry teams are not producing content designed to truly engage visitors — or which has the potential of enhancing the relationship. There were several instances where we found a firm's YouTube channel, which featured valuable video content, but the videos were not linked to their site. This is content leveraging 101.

One site even required visitors to register to view videos — an unfriendly user-experience obstacle.

» Almost all sites excelled at highlighting diversity and inclusion, charitable, civic and pro bono commitment. These were usually found under "About Us," described in detail and zippered back into the lawyers' bios.

» Firms that understood the concept of designing content journeys for their visitors had the most intuitive global and local navigation. Many sites were difficult to navigate, thus resulting in poor scores for content (since it was not easy to find).

TOP TRENDS & INSIGHTS

» Many sites were too "all about me." Lots of undifferentiating, unproven, universal statements, such as: "We have the best people who do the best work and care the most about our clients."

» Firms are often one step behind: they include valuable content on emerging issues (Brexit was the hottest home page issue in this Study), but fail to show client work that relates to the issue and that illustrates the lawyers' strengths and first-hand experience with the matters at hand. After all, this is really the most important differentiating content that one firm has over another. The only way for a prospect to evaluate your firm is by understanding how deeply and completely you know the issue, proven by your specific experience as told in an engaging way.

» Almost no sites used every landing page as an opportunity for value-to-client messaging. Some sites completely squandered this opportunity – many offered some messaging, but it was often too firm-focused. Ask yourself the question: What do clients care about in each section of the site?

» Far too many firms are more focused on firm recognition and awards than their description of client benefits, relevant experience or the demonstrated value to clients. Most firms make claims they can't prove – or don't prove. Too many noisy, empty, show-off statements that are meaningless to sophisticated buyers of legal services.

» Often there is no clear information hierarchy -- lots of content randomly placed on the page without much structure that helps the visitor see what's most important, next most important and so on. With too little regard for this kind of organization or structure, visitors will often miss the most significant messages you have to convey.

» Perhaps the most noteworthy trend we noted: the firm's size does not correspond to the quality of its content. In fact, oftentimes the smaller firms had better organized and quality content than the largest firms.

» There was very little use of eye-catching, story-telling imagery or captioned photos on the practice and industry pages, and too much undifferentiated narrative.

STAND-OUT
FIRMS

⊕ **Freshfields / freshfields.com** / Strong core statement on "who we are." Divided in 3 expandable sections: our people make our firm, we think and work globally, we aim to add value in everything we do. Each of these sections has 3 or 4 subheadings with specific, client-facing strengths. ⊕ **Jones Day / jonesday.com** / Outstanding, engaging client-facing content -- multiple client stories in every practice and industry description, videos with excellent production values and engaging content. ⊕ **White & Case / whitecase.com** / In addition to detailing pro bono services, diversity initiatives and community involvement, the site describes the firm's emphasis on sustainability – it goes the extra mile. ⊕ **Simpson Thacher / stblaw.com** / Good video of the Chairman's introduction -- helps the client connect with the firm, understand what to expect and captures the firm's spirit. ⊕ **K&L Gates / klgates.com** / Extensive use of well-produced videos. ⊕ **Ropes & Gray / ropesgray.com** / Strong value-to-client messaging on every major landing page. Solid, appealing messaging. ⊕ **Quinn Emanuel / quinnemanuel.com** / Inventive and snappy writing, well-suited to scanning visitors. ⊕ **King & Wood Mallesons / kwm.com** / Good job of using keywords that show their concern for the client. E.g., client support, client advising, protecting YOUR interests. ⊕ **King & Spalding / kslaw.com** / Good balance of firm recognition and strengths, and client material (how they serve and help clients) ⊕ **McDermott Will & Emery / mwe.com** / Each practice page begins with a brief snapshot of what's going on in that area – current global trends, significant points, importance of issues, etc. (a great way to promote understanding of what clients are facing before facts about the specific firm capabilities). ⊕ **Winston & Strawn / winston.com** / Effective page organization with bullets, subheads, pop-ups, containers etc., proving their grasp of how today's visitors consume information. ⊕ **Milbank / milbank.com** / Good landing pages: e.g., the professionals landing page – "the difference isn't in the law, the difference is in the people."

THE DO'S

FBP5 CONTENT DO'S

(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, not just boasting about your firm's features or merely asserting that "we do great work and get great results." Show it.

(DO)

Include experience specifics in service descriptions (client locations, names or alias descriptions of clients) Answer the questions: what have you done, for whom have you done it and what can you do for me? This is where you clinch getting on the most coveted short lists – it's your differentiating proof of your value. Always adhere to your governing bar association rules.

(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)

Organize your pages with subheads, bullet lists, containers, etc. – website visitors don't read, they scan...or, jump around.

(DO)

Clearly organize your news/events landing pages and make them easily sortable by topic, author, date, location and more. Link to any articles. Write compelling, evocative headlines that draw in your visitors.

(DO)

Incorporate value-to-client messaging on every landing page. For example, on the Bio landing page: What's different about your lawyers and other professionals, what are their strengths and how do these relate to client benefits? Or, tell how accessible you are to your global clients on your Contact and Office landing pages.

(DO)

Use captioned photos or other images to add depth to and illustrate industries and practices (and other areas of your site). Remember that relevant, high-quality images arrest the visitor's attention. Studies show that the next place their eye stops is on the caption (and message) that is linked to the image. Avoid space-consuming stock photos that add nothing to your story.

(DO)

Highlight your firm and lawyer leadership when describing charitable, civic and professional commitments and associations. Link to every organization you list (great for SEO).

(DO)

Take a chance and incorporate a first-person, personal value proposition or other personal statement on at least partner bios – about how the lawyer does business and what clients can expect – this is the essence of client-facing content.

THE DON'TS

FBP5 CONTENT DON'TS

(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 lawyer as an expert.
A simple article title, publication and date that don't link are not meaningful at all.

(DON'T)

Lawyers:
Do not oversell yourself --
content should be relevant,
informative and engaging, not overly
promotional or infomercial-like
(this occurred with a few firms).

(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.

TOP TEN PERFORMERS

G50 SCORE/81.2
CONTENT (EXCLUDING BIOS)

G50
98.2
Winston & Strawn

G50
96.4
Jones Day

G50
95.9
Shearman & Sterling

G50
95.9
Perkins Coie

G50
93.6
Gibson Dunn

G50
93.6
McDermott Will & Emery

G50
93.2
K&L Gates

G50
92.3
Sidley & Austin

G50
91.4
CMS Legal Services

G50
91.4
King & Spalding

HIGHEST SCORE
98

LOWEST SCORE
42

FBP5
CONTENT
(excluding biographies)

2016
RESULTS

17 FIRMS
EXCELLENT

26 FIRMS
GOOD

06 FIRMS
FAIR

01 FIRM
POOR

00 FIRMS
UNACCEPTABLE

content pilot®

HOW DO THEY
MEASURE UP?

FBP6

INTERACTIVITY
Engagement + Social Outreach

content pilot
strategy and technology
with direction™

TOP TRENDS & INSIGHTS
INTERACTIVITY, ENGAGEMENT + SOCIAL OUTREACH

"" Videos drive interest in and engagement with more pages on your site. The analytics prove it.
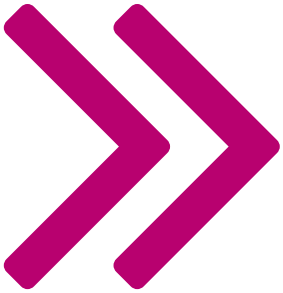
FBP6 Attributes +
Global 50 Aggregate Scores

Client extranet is offered and accessible / **55**

Site includes a link to an alumni community (LinkedIn or separate website) / **82**

Site includes newsletter subscribe feature, event registration, other sign-up opportunities / **73**

Site links to firm/lawyer blogs / **90**

Site offers educational webinars, videos, podcasts / **67**

Site links to social media sites and has an active presence here / **66**

Share functionality is present throughout the site / **71**

Site offers a PDF "binder" or "build a brochure" functionality / **7**

» Many websites do not offer "share" functionality on bios, nor do they include social media links on their bio pages. Today, both are an important addition to promote relationship stickiness, leverage/syndicate your thought leadership via social media, and provide a platform for clients to interact with you and keep up with the outstanding professionals in your firm.

» Many firms only have videos and multimedia content for their "Careers" section, but not on other pages (especially news and publications), which would greatly benefit from more interactive content. **Videos drive further interest in and engagement with additional pages on your website — the analytics prove it.**

» The Global 50 firms do mostly link to their social media pages, but often have a limited presence on these pages.

» The most common social media pages represented are LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook. YouTube is still uncommon for the Global 50 firms.

» Many sites use their social media informally to promote news about the firm (such as updates on new partners, specific achievements and photos of office outings) versus using social media to discuss global news and topics that would appeal to a broader audience. This is a huge missed opportunity for further syndicating your thought leadership and currency.

TOP TRENDS & INSIGHTS

» **Finding links to social media and blogs was often difficult as they were not featured on the home page or global navigation (they are often only featured as small links in the footer). Remember: if we can't find them (and we were really looking for them), your busy visitor won't find them either.** Some sites had social media accounts, but did not provide links to them on their sites. Another missed opportunity!

» Many sites have no client extranet link at all, and for some sites, the extranet was only accessible through the search functionality (rather than being prominently featured on the homepage as a client benefit).

» **Some sites have no share functionality at all.** This is a big negative, since most visitors use law firm sites to validate a referral to a particular lawyer, practice/ industry or news item. It should be easy for them to share the page upstream (or downstream) and with colleagues inside and outside their organization.

» Only three sites offered PDF Binder or "build a brochure" functionality -- the vast majority did not offer such an option.

» Only four websites offered no newsletter subscribe feature, event registration or other sign-up opportunities. Most websites offered these services partially, and 16 offered them completely.

» **In spite of the "Fair" total score of 69.9, this FBP is remarkably improved over the AmLaw 100 firms in the 2013 study.**

STAND-OUT
FIRMS

⊕ **K&L Gates / klgates.com** / Extranet and Alumni page links are in prominent places on the home page. The home page has a "Connect with Us" that has multiple newsletter signups – there is also a details page with more areas to subscribe, including RSS. Blogs, the digital content HUB and priority pages are all above the fold. The HUB is a dedicated page for Educational webinars, seminars and events. It includes many videos. Social Media channels are updated frequently, but the bios do not link to lawyers' social pages. Share functionality is in the global header and prevalent on all pages. ⊕ **Winston & Strawn / winston.com** / Clean and easily accessible links, and great binder functionality. ⊕ **Paul Weiss / paulweiss.com** / Great link accessibility and binder application (however, some areas are not available to add to binder).

THE DO'S

FBP6 INTERACTIVITY, ENGAGEMENT + SOCIAL OUTREACH DO'S

(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 LinkedIn and Twitter, but focus on getting more attention for your video content – include YouTube).

(DO)

Provide a specific page for multimedia resources -- make it easy to find and access your videos and podcasts.

(DO)

Provide easy access to your client extranet through a prominent link on the homepage. This is a popular client collaboration feature – if people see it's available, other firm clients will want to use it, too. One of the best ways to add stickiness to your firm.

FBP6 **Interactivity, Engagement + Social Outreach**

(DO)

Ensure that your mobile site has all of these features – interactivity and engagement are especially important on mobile.

THE DON'TS

FBP6 INTERACTIVITY, ENGAGEMENT + SOCIAL OUTREACH DON'TS

(DON'T)

Reduce your website to merely an online brochure. Build interactivity and engagement features into it — they will keep your visitors on your site longer, and they'll view 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.**

TOP TEN PERFORMERS

G50 SCORE/63.9
INTERACTIVITY, ENGAGEMENT + SOCIAL OUTREACH

G50
93.1
Reed Smith

G50
90.6
Winston & Strawn

G50
86.3
K&L Gates

G50
84.4
Latham & Watkins

G50
84.4
Morgan Lewis

G50
83.1
Herbert Smith Freehills

G50
81.9
Morrison & Foerster

G50
81.3
Sidley & Austin

G50
81.3
Dechert

G50
79.4
Norton Rose Fullbright

HIGHEST SCORE
93.1

LOWEST SCORE
19.4

FBP6
INTERACTIVITY,
ENGAGEMENT +
SOCIAL OUTREACH

2016 RESULTS

03 FIRMS
EXCELLENT

13 FIRMS
GOOD

24 FIRMS
FAIR

09 FIRMS
POOR

01 FIRM
UNACCEPTABLE

content
pilot®

HOW DO THEY
MEASURE UP?

FBP7

SITE SEARCH

content pilot strategy and technology with direction™

TOP TRENDS & INSIGHTS
SITE SEARCH

"For most of the 2016 Global 50 websites, visitors are not easily finding what they want and need. Remember: It's never about searching it's about *finding*.

FBP7 Attributes + Global 50 Aggregate Scores

Site offers easy-to-find, full-site keyword search / **95**

Advanced search link or search options appear on all pages / **75**

Search results are clear and well-organized / **64**

Site offers predictive search ("did you mean") / **53**

Site offers separate experience search / **14**

» Only two firms scored "Excellent," on Site Search – **Proskauer** and **Debevoise & Plimpton.** 15 ranked "Good," 21 were "Fair," and 12 ranked "Poor." **This means that for most of the Global 50 website visitors, they are not easily finding what they want and need.**

» 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. There are three types of visitors to your website: searchers, navigators and browsers. During the business day, visitors primarily search – they're busy and they want rapid results. Type A visitors search and they want to find the right answer FAST. On mobile phones, focus groups have proved that visitors both search and navigate, regardless of the time of day they are accessing your site. Tablets reintroduced browsing to us, but don't rely on visitors to casually browse your site. They still want to find what they are seeking as easily and fast as possible. **Remember: It's never about *searching* – it's always about *finding*.**

» 40 websites scored 100 on the presence of a full-site keyword search. **Sites that scored less than 100 had difficult-to-find search boxes, camouflaged by the color scheme or placed in an unintuitive spot on the page.**

» Many sites did not have faceted search results – i.e., they were not separated by the global navigation category, such as Bios, Industries and News. In searching "securities," for example, a visitor must parse through a seemingly infinite list of results and guess which results are the desired ones. This is frustrating for visitors – difficult, often unproductive and time-wasting.

Only seven Global 50 sites offered a separate experience search. Remember, this is why buyers of legal services are going to your site – to find out what you've done, for whom you've done it – and ultimately, what you can do for them.

Design your site so your experience is easily found and readily consumable. Make it easy for your visitor to keep your firm on its short list.

TOP TRENDS & INSIGHTS

» Many sites had several separate search options (for News, Professionals, etc.). Great! But, because most sites didn't offer predictive (also called "type ahead") search for its primary keyword search, it was hard to get the most relevant search results served up first.

» **Only seven of the Global 50 websites used the very popular predictive search well. There were two other firms that offered predictive search, but the results were poorly organized, so it was ineffective.**

» Very few firms offered the addition of highlighting the search term in the annotated results, which adds so much "*here is why this search result is relevant*" clarity to your visitor.

» **The lowest score on FBP7 was 27. All firms should take a hard look at how their search features are (or aren't) performing. 12 firms rank "Poor".**

STAND-OUT
FIRMS

⊕ **Cleary Gottlieb / clearygottlieb.com** / Simple navigation, strong predictive search, well organized and easy to refine search results. The search results are wonderfully easy to read because they are large – it does necessitate a lot of scrolling, though. ⊕ **Morgan Lewis / morganlewis.com** / The predictive search is well organized. The search results are also easy to parse down and you are able to do a partial term search. It could be even better if they offered "did you mean" and search tips. ⊕ **Mayer Brown / mayerbrown.com** / The site results are very well organized and easy to navigate / parse down. There are also multiple search options for the other global navigation sections. ⊕ **Weil, Gotshal / weil.com** / This site has well organized results and search capabilities. It has the best search and search results layout of any other firm – but, it does not have an experience search, so it did not score at the top of the *Top Ten Performers for Site Search.* ⊕ **Kirkland & Ellis / kirkland.com** / The search results are clear and well organized. The search features enable you to further parse down your results. We recommend adding "highlighting the search term" to make Kirkland stand out even more. ⊕ **White & Case / whitecase.com** / Terrific that it also offers predictive search on the People landing page (e.g., the search word, e.g., "Thomas," highlighted.) ⊕ **Sullivan & Cromwell / sullcrom.com / sullcrom.com/publications** / One of the most complete search features in a publications section. It offers predictive search, and in the list of results, the keyword is highlighted. It also enables you to sort publications further by 14 different category types.
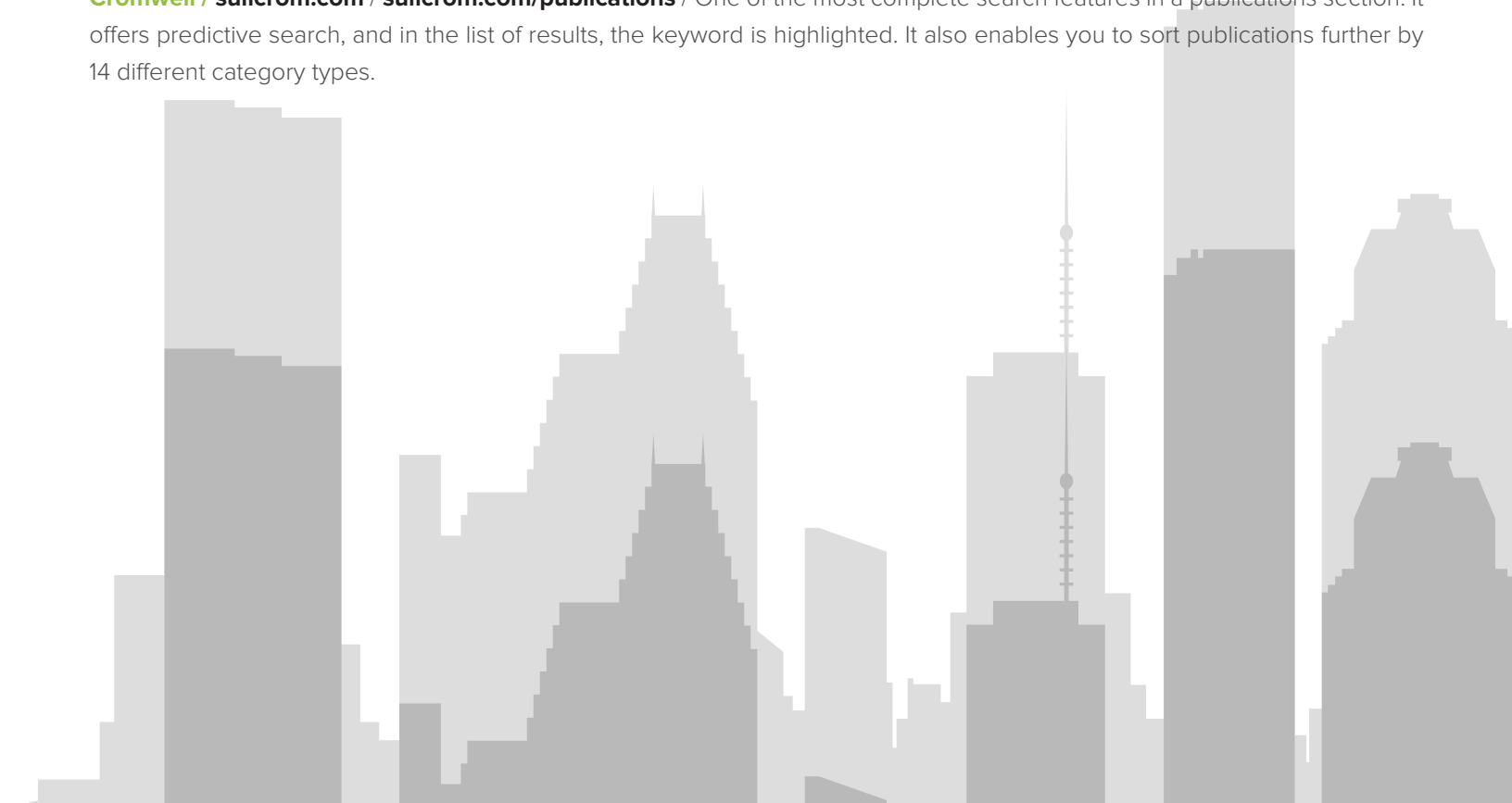
THE DO'S

FBP7 SITE SEARCH DO'S

(DO)

Include an advanced search link that enables visitors to narrow or refine their search in multiple ways. This was much improved over the 2013 AmLaw 100 Study, when only a few firms offered an advanced global search. Nearly 75% of the Global 50 websites include an advanced search.

(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 prove this), then they want to view relevant experience (they want you to prove that you are the right person and firm to hire).

(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)

Include an advanced search option on the news, events and publications pages, as well as the People section.

(DO)

Make your full site search easily accessible on every page on the website.

FBP7
Site Search

(DO)

Make it easy to search again – include a "search again" link intuitively near all search results.

(DO)

Include an experience search, which includes at least practice, industry, region, name and keyword.

(DO)

Include a language search on the People landing page. All global firms should offer this.

THE DON'TS

FBP7 SITE SEARCH DON'TS

(DON'T)

Forget to fully test the functionality, responsiveness and relevance of every search feature on your site. Too many developers 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 accurate and relevant.

(DON'T)

Short-shrift your visitors' experiences (and compromise their impression of your firm) by not dedicating the right budget to your search.

(DON'T)

Forget that your visitors search just like you do! Design functionality that would be easy for you to use.

TOP TEN PERFORMERS

G50 SCORE/60.2
SITE SEARCH

G50 **96.0**	G50 **89.0**	G50 **82.0**	G50 **81.0**
Proskauer Rose	Debevoise & Plimpton	Mayer Brown	Cleary Gottlieb

G50 **79.0**	G50 **76.0**	G50 **76.0**	G50 **74.0**
Weil, Gotshal	Shearman & Sterling	Perkins Coie	McDermott Will & Emery

G50 **74.0**	G50 **74.0**	HIGHEST SCORE **96.0**	LOWEST SCORE **27**
Orrick	Goodwin		

FBP7
SITE SEARCH

2016 RESULTS

02 FIRMS
EXCELLENT

15 FIRMS
GOOD

21 FIRMS
FAIR

12 FIRMS
POOR

00 FIRMS
UNACCEPTABLE

content
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HOW DO THEY
MEASURE UP?

FBP8

SITE OPTIMIZATION
+ Online Awareness

content
pilot strategy and technology
with direction™

TOP TRENDS & INSIGHTS

SITE OPTIMIZATION + ONLINE AWARENESS (SEO)

" "

100% of the Global 50 scored 100 on link volume and diversity, which was expected because of their global reach.

FBP8 Attributes + Global 50 Aggregate Scores

High quality back-links and link relevancy are present throughout the site / **100**

Site features strong, properly structured HTML content on the home page and interior pages / **65**

HTML site-maps are present and include all pages organized in a clear hierarchy / **65**

Smart URLs with appropriate syntax are used in all sections / **76**

Page titles, meta-descriptions and natural keyword usage are used throughout the site / **68**

Images have alt tags that provide alternative text when images cannot be displayed / **56**

Tabbed bio and practice/industry pages all have the same page URL / **72**

Correct schema mark-up is present throughout the site / **12**

Site provides fast page load (less than 4 seconds) / **81**

» 100% of the Global 50 scored 100 on link volume and diversity, which was expected considering their global reach. There were only two attributes out of 70 in this entire Study where all firms scored 100. The other appears under *FBP 10: Site Hygiene and Usability.*

» As to be expected with such a diverse group of firms, the number of backlinks spanned from 1,956 **(Milbank)** to 109K **(Baker & McKenzie). 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 this FBP, ten firms scored "Excellent," 19 ranked "Good," 14 scored "Fair" and seven were "Poor."

» Firms successfully avoided keyword stuffing and unnatural copy – one of the most prominent SEO (and human visitor) offenders. Firms that do this fall into the dreaded "black hat" SEO practices.

» **It was surprising to see so many firms without schema markup throughout the site -- this is an easy and useful addition, which should be implemented by all firms to boost their SEO.**

»"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 from Google, Bing and Yahoo. Learn much more about this at **schema. org** and a blog that has successfully boiled it down for lay users called **kissmetrics.com.** Only six Global 50 firms used schema markup.

TOP TRENDS & INSIGHTS

» Too many firms had below-excellent load times — firms scored 100 if their websites loaded in four seconds or less. We expected that most firms would score 100 on this attribute, but 23 firms ended up scoring below 90, and several scored "Poor."

» On this Foundational Best Practice, the majority of firms scored good to excellent (33 firms), particularly those firms that recently launched new sites. This shows that they took new SEO norms into account, as this is a field that is constantly changing. Schema markup is a good example of a recent enhancement in the field, but as noted above, it's not widely adopted yet.

» Whether you're a Global 50 firm, the SEO best practices and solid principles don't change — the same rules of good judgment apply. SEO is even more significant for local B2C firms than for global firms, since smaller firms rely on a high volume of business leads generated by Google, Bing and other search engines.

STAND-OUT
FIRMS

⊕ **Morgan Lewis /** **morganlewis.com** / The top scoring firm of the entire Study, this site does a great job all-around of following SEO best practices, even if it is a bit short on landing page copy. The URLS, H-tags and meta descriptions are all correctly formatted and keyword usage is natural. This site is incredibly fast and is utilizing HTTPS over HTTP. The absence of schema markup is unfortunate, but that is an easy (and highly recommended) fix. ⊕ **Baker & Mckenzie /** **bakermckenzie.com** / With 109K backlinks (the most of the Global 50) from more than 1,100 different root domains, Baker's online footprint is large enough to overcome the lack of a proper XML site map. ⊕ **King & Spalding /** **kslaw.com** / A blazingly fast site, King & Spalding has been an early adopter of schema markup among this group and should be applauded for staying current. ⊕ **Orrick /** **orrick. com** / Correct treatment of tabbed content doesn't dilute SEO by assigning a new URL to each tab. Great use of image Alt tags throughout. NOTE: This SEO best practice about tabs conflicts with a navigation best practice noted in *Foundational Best Practice 3: Navigation,* where tabbed content should not have the same URL so visitors can easily use the "back" button in the browser and cycle through all the tabbed pages they have visited. From a navigation standpoint, the argument can be made that it results in a better, more organized user experience to keep your content inside a clearly labeled tab structure (visitors can choose the content tabs they want to see and ignore the others that they don't). You should assess strategically what's most important to you – optimizing the pages for SEO or ensuring the very best visitor navigation experience. ⊕ **Weil, Gotshal /** **weil.com** / Intuitive information hierarchy with correct page titles, meta descriptions and natural keyword usage. ⊕ **Herbert Smith Freehills /** **herbertsmithfreehills.com** / Great attention was paid to the URL structure and information hierarchy. The site map is incredibly intuitive and organized. ⊕ **Hogan Lovells /** **hoganlovells.com** / Great overall attention to SEO. A decrease in long load times and the use of schema markup would be helpful.
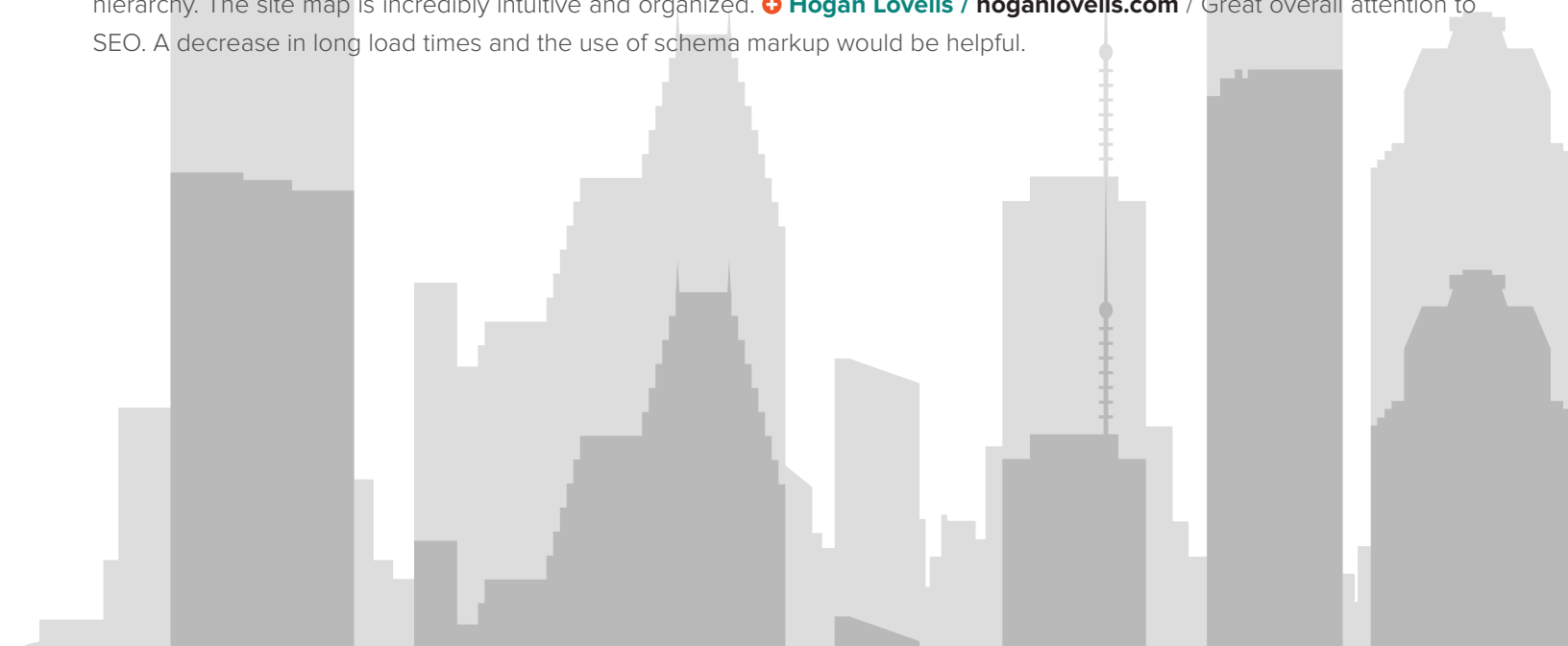
THE DO'S

FBP8 SITE OPTIMIZATION + ONLINE AWARENESS (SEO) DO'S

(DO)

Include strong, properly structured HTML content on the home page and other pages: H1, H2, H3, etc., for headings/subheadings, doc type, no image-based navigation or other text.

FBP8
Site Optimization + Online Awareness (SEO)

(DO)

Implement schema markup and other modern SEO techniques. Schema or JSON are easy to implement and specifically recommended by Google.

(DO)

Ensure you have a correct and up-to-date XML site map and that it has been submitted to the proper search engines.

(DO)

Utilize HTTPS over HTTP. Google prefers HTTPS and sees this as a positive in its algorithm.

(DO)

Deploy blogs more on your website to leverage your content for SEO. There is always a battle about this among veteran bloggers. It's better for your law firm's website to have the blog content on your website (as opposed to RSS'ing it into your various pages). However, bloggers believe they are viewed as more credible subject – matter resources if they host stand-alone blog domains. Work together to determine the most effective strategy for your professionals and firm.

(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)

Monitor your backlinks and ensure that your firm is 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, as do the larger, multi-location firms.

THE DON'TS

FBP8 SITE OPTIMIZATION + ONLINE AWARENESS (SEO) DON'TS

(DON'T)

Rely exclusively on the first 140 or so characters of the page – especially bios, services and industries – to function as the search engine real estate you "own" for that page. While this should be extremely rich content (that tells the "what" about the practice or person), too many of these pages start out with bland, undistinguishing copy. Write relevant, keyword-rich meta-descriptions for at least these pages of your website.

(DON'T)

Rely only on compelling images to tell your story. Search engines need relevant, current content that they can serve up in search results – make sure your firm is included in them.

(DON'T)

Use unconventional or outdated URL structures. For example, the URL for the Our Firm section of a site could be **lawfirm.com/sitecontent.** A more intuitive and SEO friendly structure would be **lawfirm.com/Our-Firm.** Subsequent pages, to use Diversity **lawfirm.com/Our-Firm/ Diversity** as an example, would follow this structure.

(DON'T)

Forget to add alt tags for every image on the website – especially the photos of your lawyers and other professionals. 22 firms did not use alt tags on their site – an SEO missed opportunity.

(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 difficult for human visitors to read and digest, but Google WILL penalize you for it.

TOP TEN PERFORMERS

G50 SCORE/71.3
SITE OPTIMIZATION
+ ONLINE AWARENESS (SEO)

G50 **95.8**	G50 **95.8**	G50 **95.8**	G50 **91.7**
Clifford Chance	Morgan Lewis	Ropes & Gray	Latham & Watkins
G50 **91.7**	G50 **91.7**	G50 **87.5**	G50 **87.5**
King & Spalding	Orrick	Norton Rose Fulbright	Hogan Lovells
G50 **87.5**	G50 **87.5**	HIGHEST SCORE **95.8**	LOWEST SCORE **45.8**
Herbert Smith Freehills	Weil, Gotshal		

FBP8
SITE OPTIMIZATION
+ ONLINE AWARENESS (SEO)

2016 RESULTS

10 FIRMS
EXCELLENT

19 FIRMS
GOOD

14 FIRMS
FAIR

07 FIRMS
POOR

00 FIRMS
UNACCEPTABLE

content pilot®

HOW DO THEY
MEASURE UP?

FBP9
MOBILITY
+ Responsiveness

content
pilot — strategy and technology
with direction™

TOP TRENDS & INSIGHTS

MOBILITY + RESPONSIVENESS

"A surprising number of Global 50 firms have not been strategic or deliberate in the design of their mobile sites.

FBP9 Attributes +
Global 50 Aggregate Scores

Brand integrity is not lost on smaller devices / **70**

User experience is superior regardless of device / **59**

Mobile site features intuitive, well-spaced navigation tools / **60**

Content and images resize correctly and an information hierarchy is maintained / **59**

Mobile site is available in non-English languages / **36**

» Firms with recently updated or redeveloped sites kept mobility in mind far more than older, more outdated sites. Research shows that 2015 was the first year in which more Internet users searched on mobile versus desktop, proving the increasing significance of mobile design and usability.

Users do not want to stretch their screens just to click links or read text, so all law firms redeveloping their sites must put a premium on superior mobile design.

» Many Global 50 firms are in need of an update to their general desktop site, so not surprisingly, their mobile sites are virtually unusable -- poor mobile sites are very often reflections of poor desktop sites.

» Responsive sites (sites that automatically scale to the size of the device on which they are viewed on) often resulted in better mobile sites, even including multiple language options.

Too many firms have not kept up with the technology, nor have they kept up with the expectations of buyers of legal services today — despite the fact that a good mobile experience is expected from visitors.

» Generally, "global" is not successfully translating to mobile.

Only seven firms provided full translations on their mobile site, with the ability to return to English.

20 sites did not provide any language translations on their mobile site, despite constantly promoting their "global" reach.

23 sites provided poor or incomplete language translations on their mobile sites.

TOP TRENDS & INSIGHTS

» Many sites do not resize on mobile, thus creating awkward and unfriendly spacing and making them difficult to navigate. Visitors must "pinch and zoom" to navigate and read the site's content, which is frustrating and time-consuming.

» 16 firms ranked "Poor" and five ranked "Unacceptable" on this FBP. This was the most surprising aspects of this 2016 study.

» A surprising number of Global 50 firms have not been strategic or deliberate in their design of the mobile version. Much of their branding on a mobile device is lost; logos and images don't show up in the right sizes or places, colors do not appear as they do on the desktop site and text is often in long, scrolling blocks with no information hierarchy, making it difficult or impossible to find what you are looking for.

Only 14 Global 50 firms scored 100 on maintaining brand integrity. And, only 16 firms scored 100 on content and images resizing correctly and maintaining a clear information hierarchy.

» The Professionals search (one of the most important features on law firm sites) was particularly poor on mobile, often loading poorly with search results appearing cluttered

» Only two of the Global 50 firms scored 100 on this Foundational Best Practice 9: **DLA Piper** and **Quinn Emanuel.**

STAND-OUT
FIRMS

⊕ **DLA Piper / dlapiper.com** / Site is beautifully and intuitively designed across devices. They have clearly put time and effort into ensuring users receive a high-quality experience on all mobile devices – they understand how visitors use their mobile tools. ⊕ **Quinn Emanuel / quinnemanuel.com** / Well-designed responsive site. Very intuitive navigation. Language translation is best in class in implementation. Beautiful site that offers a full experience on mobile. ⊕ **Baker & McKenzie / bakermckenzie. com** / This is a new site and you can tell. It is thoughtfully designed and provides a full experience on mobile. What the firm does and who they are could be clearer on mobile, and a more robust lawyer search would be better. The firm does have several different language options, but the user has to navigate to the specific location page in order to choose. They could stand to add a few more translations considering the size and reach of the firm. ⊕ **King & Wood Mallesons / kwm.com** / Great mobile design with fantastic language support and visuals. The placement of the logo is curious – it's getting almost lost. But all in all, it's a great design and easy to use. We'd recommend adding the logo to the hamburger menu "drawer" as it pops out – so a visitor is entirely clear where they should "Begin their journey." ⊕ **Morgan Lewis / morganlewis.com** / Full, responsive experience on mobile devices. Compelling, yet simple content-focused design is well maintained on mobile site.
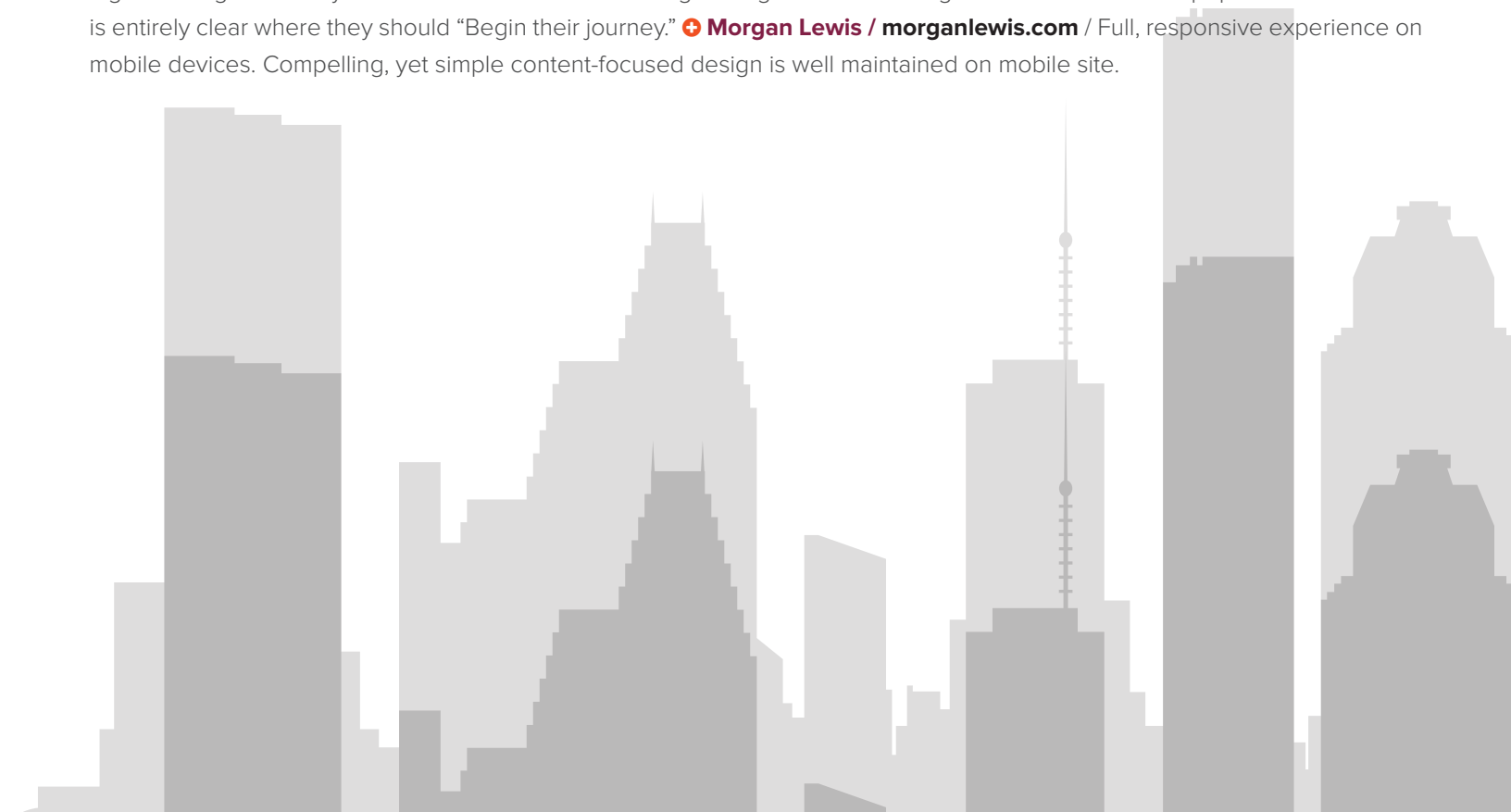
THE DO'S

FBP9 MOBILITY + RESPONSIVENESS DO'S

(DO)

Offer language translations on your mobile site, with the option to easily return to English.
This is specifically important for the Global 50 sites, considering their dominant global presence.
Language translations are key to mobile accessibility, especially for visitors who are often traveling and may not always have access to fast Internet connections on a desktop or laptop.

FBP9
Mobility + Responsiveness

(DO)

In today's world, do adopt a true responsive design rather designing a stand-alone mobile site. There are strategic arguments for dedicated mobile sites, but with phone and tablet device sizes changing every year, responsive design provides a more consistent experience to users across devices. The next size that designers and firms must consider is the wearable device, such as the Apple Watch.
The website content that is pushed to someone's wrist will have to be strategically selected.

(DO)

Make full use of hamburger menus on a mobile site – they are ubiquitous enough today that they are intuitive and create good experience for visitors.

THE DON'TS

FBP9 MOBILITY+ RESPONSIVENESS DON'TS

(DON'T)

Forget the value of video and podcasts on your mobile websites.
We have clients whose analytics prove that visitors view videos at least twice
more often on a mobile device than a desktop, and after viewing a video,
they stay on the website three times longer, viewing 3-5 more pages.

(DON'T)

Make mobile menu options too small
– all menus should be easily touchable
for visitors with large fingers to
select the option they want.

(DON'T)

Sacrifice your brand identity and
integrity on phones. Several firms are
missing the mark by just pasting the
firm logo at the top of the page.
Take inventory of your most important
brand elements and ensure they are
beautifully transferring to iPhones
and Androids.

(DON'T)

Rely on Google translate for the
translations on your mobile (or any)
device. It can be highly unreliable.

TOP TEN PERFORMERS

G50 SCORE/57.3
MOBILITY + RESPONSIVENESS

G50 **100**	G50 **100**	G50 **96.0**	G50 **95.0**
DLA Piper	Quinn Emanuel	King & Wood Mallesons	Morgan Lewis
G50 **90.0**	G50 **90.0**	G50 **88.0**	G50 **84.0**
Baker & McKenzie	Squire Patton Boggs	Clifford Chance	Sidley & Austin
G50 **84.0**	G50 **80.0**	HIGHEST SCORE **100**	LOWEST SCORE **11**
Shearman & Sterling	Sullivan & Cromwell		

FBP9
MOBILITY +
RESPONSIVENESS

2016 RESULTS

07 FIRMS
EXCELLENT

12 FIRMS
GOOD

10 FIRMS
FAIR

16 FIRMS
POOR

05 FIRMS
UNACCEPTABLE

content
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HOW DO THEY
MEASURE UP?

FBP10

SITE "HYGIENE"
+ USABILITY

content pilot strategy and technology with direction™

TOP TRENDS & INSIGHTS

SITE "HYGIENE" + USABILITY

" "

More than any other, this is the Foundational Best Practice on which every firm should score 100.

FBP10 Attributes +
Global 50 Aggregate Scores

Site functions perfectly on all the latest browsers / **99**

No error pages are found on spot check / **100**

No broken links or images are evident with spot check / **97**

Pages print and email easily / **60**

Site offers dynamic print to PDF option on most pages / **47**

Content has been checked for spelling / **97**

All appropriate domains are active, including https / **100**

Site meets W3C Level 1 accessibility standards / **87**

» More than any other, this is the Foundational Best Practice on which every firm should score 100. This is called Site "Hygiene," because these are the irritating little things that get in the way of a visitor having a perfect experience with your website. They are similar to having the dreaded spinach in your teeth or white lint on your dark suit.

25 firms ranked "Excellent," but only two firms scored a perfect 100. Those firms are: **DLA Piper** and **Jones Day.**

Seven firms scored zero on the attribute "Pages print and email easily." This page functionality is so foundational — it's really surprising that firms are still making it impossible to email pages to colleagues and friends. They are also forcing the user 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.

» Most firms are doing well when it comes to the hygiene nuts and bolts. FBP 10 had the highest total score of all the Ten FBPs — 85.2 on the 100-point scale.

» In addition to firms not making it easy to print and email pages, they are also scoring very low on offering the presentation-ready print-to-PDF option on most pages.

19 firms scored zero on offering the print-to-PDF functionality — also surprising for 2016 law firm websites. We first scored this functionality in the 2005 analysis of the then AmLaw 100 firms. We have not come very far, it seems.

17 firms scored 100 on offering print-to-PDFs.

TOP TRENDS & INSIGHTS

» Firms that did not score 100 on print-to-PDF functionality received lower scores because the PDFs are often stripped of clear information hierarchy and good page design. The page looks like a skeleton of the desktop page. Most firms only offer this feature on bios. It should also be available on most sections of the site – at least all practice, industry, news and office pages.

» The essential page tools (print, email, share) are often hard to find – icons are too small, haphazardly appearing on the page or don't appear at all (even in 2016!).

Some sites offer visitors a "build a report" or "add to a binder" feature, enabling visitors to select and assemble several pages at a time. This is a desirable feature, but some firms require visitors to set up an account that is immediately diminishing to a positive visitor experience – a tipping point that may dissuade them from following through.

» This is the first Study where we have tested website compliance for those with disabilities. Testing the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) sponsored by the Bureau of Internet Accessibility (boia.com), we found that compliance varies immensely from site to site, but is generally strong among the Global 50.

BoIA states: Trying to understand the WCAG 2.0 Guidelines can be confusing, not to mention trying to figure out how they relate to the ADA, AODA, Section 508 and other compliance requirements. Putting the remediation into place to make your website accessible can get laborious as you try to weed through the requirements and implement the changes needed.

On the BoIA website, you can enter your URL and your site will be graded using the WCAG 2.0 Success Criteria and graded using the four principles: **Perceivable, Operable, Understandable** and **Robust.**

» The WCAG 2.0 Success Criteria includes:

Perceivable
Information and user interface components must be presentable to users in ways they can perceive.

Operable
User interface components and navigation must be operable.

Understandable
Information and the operation of the user interface must be understandable.

Robust
Content must be robust enough that it can be interpreted reliably by a wide variety of user agents, including assistive technologies.

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

Only 12 firms scored 100 on compliance with the W3C Level 1 guidelines.

» Generally sites are consistent across all browsers, with a few exceptions – sometimes they render differently browser to browser, with slightly different colors and sizes of bullets. We noticed that several sites are not rendering well on Microsoft's new browser, Edge.

STAND-OUT
FIRMS

⊕ **DLA Piper / dlapiper.com** / Overall the hygiene is really good. The website functioned well in all browsers, there were little to no W3C errors and the pages printed and emailed easily. ⊕ **Jones Day / jonesday.com** / Excellent hygiene and usability. The only problem we found was the website URL was a WWW versus HTTPS. ⊕ **Sidley & Austin / sidley.com** / Overall the site hygiene is great, however, there are over 15 errors on the homepage for W3C compliance and 16 alerts. **Note:** Many sites performed well on all the other Site "Hygiene" and Usability attributes, but they scored poorly on W3C compliance. This is an important area for improvement for all law firm websites, regardless of the size of the firm.

THE DO'S

FBP10 SITE "HYGIENE" + USABILITY DO'S

(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.

FBP10
Site "Hygiene" +Usability

(DO)

Realize that your visitors want to email your pages to others in their organizations — upstream and downstream. Make it easy for them to up-sell and down-sell your people and firm.

(DO)

Make a commitment to your visitors with disabilities.

(DO)

Include the option to share pages to the top social media sites -

and others.

THE DON'TS

FBP10 SITE "HYGIENE" + USABILITY DON'TS

(DON'T)

Let your website fall victim to users' **negativity biases.** Many scientific studies document negativity bias, which is defined as:
The negativity bias is the tendency for humans to pay more attention, or give more weight to negative experiences over neutral or positive experiences. Even when negative experiences are inconsequential, humans tend to focus on the negative.

According to Nielsen Norman Group, the global gurus of website usability, this is what negativity bias means on the web and to your firm:
A single usability flaw on your site will weigh more than the many positive features that you've struggled to implement. 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.

(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, on most sites the visitor must accept to continue).

(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 spinach in your teeth – now, that's a visual that you can't unsee.

TOP TEN
PERFORMERS **G50 SCORE/85.2**
SITE "HYGIENE" + USABILITY

G50 100 — DLA Piper

G50 100 — Jones Day

G50 99.4 — Dentons

G50 98.5 — Sidley & Austin

G50 98.5 — Wilmer Cutler

G50 97.5 — Kirkland & Ellis

G50 97.5 — Sullivan & Cromwell

G50 97.5 — Perkins Coie

G50 97.1 — Weil, Gotshal

G50 96.3 — CMS Legal Services

HIGHEST SCORE 100

LOWEST SCORE 67.1

FBP10
SITE "HYGIENE" +
USABILITY

2016 RESULTS

25 FIRMS
EXCELLENT

19 FIRMS
GOOD

06 FIRMS
FAIR

00 FIRMS
POOR

00 FIRMS
UNACCEPTABLE

content pilot®

ABOUT CONTENT PILOT

Content Pilot is a woman-owned company founded in 2006 as a nimble and entrepreneurial business that focuses on a "four-legged stool" of products and services: strategy, design, content and technology. Serving primarily law firms ranging in size from the largest global firms to prominent national, regional and local leaders, we take a strategic and holistic approach to everything we do.

Our mission is clear: Content Pilot uses strategy and technology to drive business forward—utilizing websites, experience databases, proposal centers, and other tools to leverage lawyer wisdom, knowledge and experience in ways that are meaningful to buyers of professional services.

PRODUCTS + SERVICES

» Website design, development and hosting

» Microsites and blogs

» Proposal automation centers

» Multilingual content management for proposals and experience

» Experience management databases

» 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

» Website and proposal content strategy, overhauls, rewrites – both comprehensive restructuring and rewriting, and writing new biographies and service/sector descriptions

» Website audits based on the Ten Foundational Best Practices

» Positioning and branding strategy for professional services firms, practice and industry groups, other teams

» Marketing technology audits and planning

» Strategic consulting on the successful implementation and adoption of marketing technologies

CONTACT

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

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2016 GLOBAL 50 WEBSITES
TEN FOUNDATIONAL BEST PRACTICES

GLOBAL CONTENT

MARKETING CHEAT SHEET FOR LAW FIRMS

Leigh Dance
ELD International

Deborah McMurray
Content Pilot

TOP TIPS

Use short, clear sentences, avoid complex words, compound phrases and legal or business jargon. Remember: in much of the world, the language of business is not English but the local language.

» Avoid what you perceive to be common figures of speech, idioms, cultural references and presumed-understood shared knowledge. They are often misunderstood across borders, or are altogether unfamiliar.

» Research spotlights that differences in culture and business practices can be a bigger barrier than words in cross-border digital communications. Frequently your target client may understand the *words* but have no idea what you *mean.*

» Never publish content for your global target markets without having your local lawyers and staff scour it. Their critical review is essential to ensure that the message you want to send is the message locally received.

» Require consistent labels/terms for your services and expertise in digital, print and verbal communications. International clients may have multiple contact points with your firm. Inconsistent terminology diminishes effective communication.

» Tell your story with pictures, graphs and infographics in digital communications to a multinational audience. They can convey your message more effectively than words.

» Translating content is hard, expensive and time-consuming. It can cause costly timing and launch delays. Ruthlessly prioritize your highest potential target services and markets, and translate or trans-create where the benefit outweighs the cost. Add translations in stages.

» One of the greatest values of digital content is that it provides an at-the-fingertips "script" for your people internationally when they speak about the firm. Read your script aloud to make sure it flows, is truly informative and is easy enough for a non-native English speaker to repeat.

» When crossing countries and cultures, pay heed to Bernard Shaw's famous quote: "*The biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.*"

» American lawyers are selling globally all the time. Train them on how to sell to global clients headquartered outside the U.S. Help them rehearse the script so they are convincingly the right solution for a non-U.S. company and matter.

TOP 7 COMMON ERRORS
IN GLOBAL DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

» Practice and industry pages and experience that describe the practice from an American perspective only, with mostly U.S. representative matters handled in U.S. jurisdictions.

» A global site architecture that obscures the firm's global footprint, languages and legal qualifications of the non-English legal professionals.

» A lack of differentiation of the firm's truly multinational practices. Too many global firms over-reach with their claims, without demonstrating proof.

» Using the term "attorney" to refer to lawyers. Beyond the U.S., a legal professional is mostly referred to as a lawyer ("attorney" may mean something else). In the UK, Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, the term is solicitor, but lawyer is commonly used.

» Hiding your firm's international assets, by making it hard to find lawyers' language skills, nationality and foreign studies in bios and practice group descriptions. Bring them right up front.

» Using domestic references in digital communications, such as east/west coast, Midwest, Washington, etc. Such words make the firm look very U.S.-centric.

» When your firm's online list of Johannesburg lawyers includes those with London phone numbers, or Beijing lawyers with Hong Kong numbers, some clients see it as exaggerating your local capability. Add credibility with a brief explanation.

CONTENT TRENDS
AMONG THE GLOBAL 50

» Several firms have specific pages for locations where they don't even have offices. They advertise their "presence" in those locations without having local phone numbers or contacts. For example, when you visit the "Africa" page and the contacts listed are all in the US and Europe, it does more to harm the firm's global image than to promote it.

» News, events and publications are rarely translated into any foreign languages and mostly represent issues and legal/business developments within the US and Europe. Only five firms among the Global 50 fully translated their news, or had news tailored to specific locations in the relevant languages.

» There is a definite cliché among the Global 50 of "global reach, local expertise." Many firms have variations of this unoriginal slogan on their homepage or "locations" pages. These statements are difficult to prove and not differentiating.

» Social media content was overall strong among the Global 50 firms: most firms featured regularly updated social media pages (notably Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook) with a variety of photos, videos and news from around the world, not just the US and Europe.

However, too many social media pages focused almost entirely on news within the firm, such as new partners, awards/rankings and office retreats worldwide. This -- although global — is not geared to the most burning issues of clients and prospects.

» The strongest social media pages were sponsored by those firms that shared significant current world news and offered their take on it -- Baker McKenzie was a good example of this, posting about subjects such as women's rights in business, healthcare in Asia Pacific, Brexit (all featured in June 2016 on its Twitter page) and offering lawyers' personal take on them.

» Social media content is almost always in English and non-translatable. White & Case was an outlier to this trend, featuring varied content in different languages from around the world.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
About how to maximize the impact of your content around the world

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GLOBAL 50 INDEX
OF FIRMS

GLOBAL 50 INDEX
OF TERMS

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with direction™

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