

City Bar Panel - Careers in Media Law
(Perspective of one who does work in this area without it being his primary focus)
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Points

- In-house and law firm media law positions are quite coveted and hard to get, but opportunities to do some of that work do exist in other contexts; simply put, it is not all-or-none
- You can do such work in a law firm that does not have an existing active media law practice
 - For new clients you bring in: Such business development will likely be viewed positively (as long as bills are paid)
 - For existing clients: May allow firm to keep all aspects of client work within its walls

How To Do It

- You must be willing to put in the (non-billable) time to:
 - Gain the necessary command of the applicable law
 - Media Law Reporter, plus the national and local legal newspapers, general circulation newspapers, etc.
 - Attend relevant CLEs and other programs
 - Join the Media Law Committees of the City and State Bar
 - Participate in discussions with and hear from those leaders of the practice who are handling the cases and issues you are reading about
 - Take on very small matters including possibly some on a volunteer basis, etc.
 - Perhaps represent the other side
 - Propose and prepare articles for media business and related trade publications (see my website)
 - Folio, Editor & Publisher, Editors Only
 - Propose, prepare for, and deliver presentations to media organizations (see my website)
 - Folio, American Society of Magazine Editors
 - Can do so at individual media entities, but coordinate with GC

My Experience

- Some work was quasi-media in nature for existing non-media clients (need to make it known in your firm that you have interest and expertise -- if in fact you do)
 - Advertising, IP, review of custom publications, press releases, and other statements
 - Advised corporation regarding threatened libel claim by former employee and negotiated with employee's counsel
 - Successfully defended national trade organization in defamation action brought against it (summary judgment granted)
- I did some work for the other side
 - Represented a free-lance cartoonist in a contract suit against his publisher
- I brought in work for new small media clients, or small projects for new larger media clients
 - Contract drafting/revision in particular with regard to submissions by free-lance authors for one of the leading in-flight magazines, a leading celebrity magazine, and an international press magazine
 - Participated in defense of publisher of prominent educational book series in federal court lawsuit brought by writer claiming partial authorship of volume
- The Summit: Advising the leading metal industry national daily trade journal on potential libel issues
 - Provided legal advice throughout an extensive series of groundbreaking investigative reports uncovering and regarding an alleged massive (estimated at over \$600 million) international fraud within the metals industry
 - Performed immediate pre-publication libel and other review and revision on a daily (if not hourly) basis of articles on deadline
 - Worked closely with editors and reporters; reviewed backup material
 - Dealt with subjects' counsel
 - The series culminated in FBI raids and indictments of the subjects by federal prosecutors and proceedings by foreign authorities
 - Series was awarded the Jesse H. Neal National Business Journalism Award for Excellence in News Coverage (regarded by media entities to be "the Pulitzer Prize of the business press")