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# Choosing an Effective Form of Participation in the Legal Services Market as Part of an Image Microeconomic Strategy

**Abstract.** This article analyses the behavior of providers and consumers of legal services in order to determine the most effective microeconomic strategy for promoting lawyers online, where the majority of clients are members of Generation Z (Zoomers), whose choices and behavior are largely shaped by social media and influencers. Using empirical and theoretical research methods, the author concludes that the key factor in the success of a modern legal services provider is their positive image, which is almost the sole factor considered by people looking for a lawyer. After analysing various forms of participation in the legal services market it is clear that lawyers' microeconomic strategy should focus on their personality and image in order to appeal to potential clients and casual observers who, at any moment, could become clients. As a result, the author concludes that lawyers who develop their microeconomic strategies without relying on the theory of personal image for legal services market participants will gradually lose their positions or disappear from the market altogether. Therefore, a successful personal image strategy of these participants requires a market presence that provides additional competitive advantages.

**Keywords:** image, market entity, personal image, microeconomics, microeconomic strategy

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## 1. Introduction

Both the scientific literature and the behaviour of legal services market participants provide examples of various forms of image creation that are part of a microeconomic strategy and a means of demonstrating competitive advantage. These include personal image, corporate image, product image, enterprise image, brand image, and others. However, digital technologies have transformed approaches to microeconomic strategies, particularly in the field of legal services. As a result, the strategy of developing a legal service provider's personal image has taken prior-

ity over other strategies. At the same time, in order to successfully promote one's personal image a lawyer needs to select the most effective form of participation in the legal services market. Therefore, the following article provides an analysis of existing forms and offers recommendations to market participants on how to choose an approach that ensures a microeconomic strategy based on personal image delivers the best possible results.

## **2. Literature Review**

Many Ukrainian and foreign scholars have studied the concept of image and its role in building an image-based macroeconomic strategy. For instance, Kudina A.V. (2021) demonstrated the inevitability of developing a personal image in today's ever-changing world. Pidmolod S. and Prosyanyk O. (2024) explored the connection between social media and personal brand promotion, justifying the necessity of their application in business activities. Yankovets T. (2024) demonstrated that in the modern, rapidly evolving world, where technological changes have affected all economic entities, the use of brand image technologies should be designed for long-term implementation. The above studies highlight the importance of determining the most effective form in which this approach can yield the best results in the conditions of market competition, particularly in the field of legal services.

## **3. The Legal Services Market in Ukraine**

The legal services market includes lawyers, who provide legal services on a professional basis, as well as other legal professionals.

According to Article 2 of the Law of Ukraine "On the Bar and Legal Practice," the provision of legal services in Ukraine is carried out specifically by the Bar, which ensures legal defence, representation, and other types of legal assistance on a professional basis. The Bar also independently resolves matters related to its organization and its functioning in accordance with the procedure established by the Law "On the Bar and Legal Practice."

The Ukrainian Bar consists of all lawyers who have the right to engage in legal practice in Ukraine.

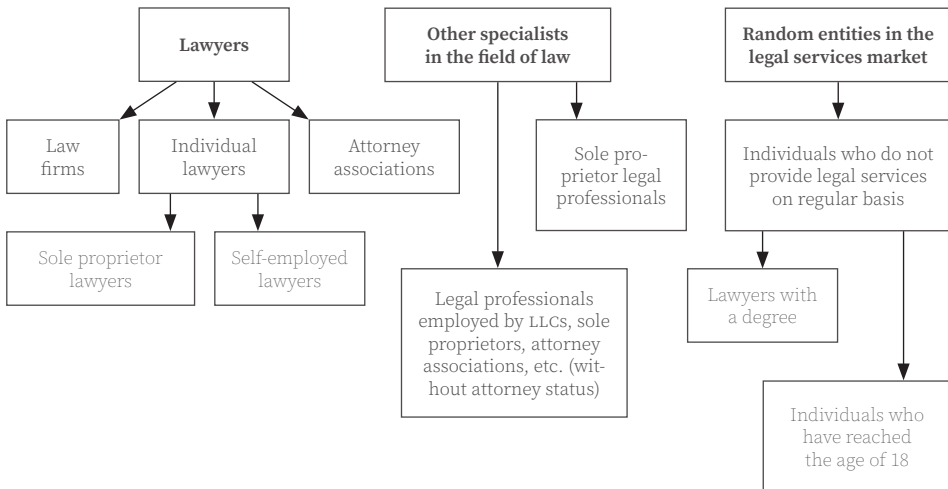
On a non-professional basis, legal services in minor civil, commercial, and administrative cases can be provided by other specialists in the field of law. At the same time, Ukrainian legislation does not define the term "legal specialist".

According to the rules of formal logic, a legal specialist can be defined as someone who has attained a certain level of education — such as a bachelor's or master's degree in law. However, even obtaining a legal qualification is not mandatory. Ukrainian regulations allow individuals to provide legal services and participate in court proceedings even without any specific legal education or specialization.

The only criterion for obtaining the right to represent a person's interests in court proceedings and to be considered a participant in the legal services market — and thus a bearer of an image as an element of a microeconomic strategy — is reaching the age of eighteen.

Lawyers, in the course of their professional activities, participate in the competition for material benefits in the legal services market in the following forms:

1. As an independent business entity, registering as a self-employed individual or a sole proprietor in accordance with Clause 65.9 of Article 65 of the Tax Code of Ukraine.
2. As part of a law office, which has the status of a business entity and operates as a legal entity.
3. As part of a law association, which is also a legal entity formed by the union of two or more lawyers (members) and operates based on its charter.



**Figure 1.** Entities of the legal services market that can act as image carriers.

Source: Built by the author, based on: Law of Ukraine (2024, 2025), Civil Procedure Code of Ukraine (2025), Tax Code of Ukraine (2025)

Other legal specialists can provide legal services as employees of legal entities, most commonly working for companies, private enterprises, or by registering as sole proprietors in accordance with the Law of Ukraine “On State Registration of Legal Entities, Sole Proprietors, and Public Formations” and the Tax Code of Ukraine.

All forms of participation in the legal services market that can serve as carriers of an image are illustrated in Figure 1.

It can be concluded that, regardless of the form in which lawyers provide legal services, they must be specialists in the field of law and operate either independently or as part of a legal entity. Alternatively, they can temporarily take part in the legal services market without the need to develop a long-term microeconomic strategy, and therefore, they do not deliberately use image as an element of their strategy.

Entities participating in the legal services market that can be described as “initiators”, i.e. those acting as image carriers and subjects of a microeconomic strategy, are legal professionals, regardless of whether they hold the status of a lawyer or not, participate in economic relations independently or as part of legal entities.

#### **4. Personal Branding in the Legal Services Market**

The question which form of participation in the legal services market is optimal, especially in the context of digitalization, and which form provides competitive advantages, is closely linked to the special status of personal branding in the digitalized world.

A brand is a reflection of certain emotions in the consumer’s mind, achieved through the demonstration of specific elements, such as external appearance (colour, shape, imagery) as well as certain qualities of the brand’s carrier (commitment to quality, honesty, responsibility, environmental consciousness, etc.).

However, while in the field of product sales, a company can successfully promote its brand by developing the corporate identity of a legal entity, in the services sector — particularly in the case of legal services — brand promotion at the company level is more challenging and often does not provide a competitive advantage. As previously mentioned, providers of legal services can compete in two ways: either as part of a legal entity or individually. The difficulty arises from the fact that most legal services are provided personally by a specific individual rather than by a company as a whole.

Most products sold by law firms and individual lawyers are services delivered directly by specific people rather than anonymous company employees. These services have no tangible form and are almost inseparable from the individual providing them. For instance, success in a court case often depends not only

on the diligence of staff handling technical tasks but also on the personal qualities of the individual delivering the service. Ingenuity, persuasiveness, and the ability to quickly adapt to changing circumstances are crucial components of a personal brand and a key competitive advantage in the legal services market. These traits do not belong to a legal entity, an organization, or an abstract product offered by a company or an independent entrepreneur, but rather to a specific individual — a legal professional or a lawyer. When purchasing a legal service, the consumer directly interacts with a particular person rather than a company, and their satisfaction with the service is directly tied to the professional providing it.

Today, an individual has become the primary tool for brand promotion, even in industries where personal branding was previously considered irrelevant. People prefer to buy from people, not from impersonal corporations. Even multi-billion-dollar companies have started using personal branding strategies to promote their products, recognizing that personal identity plays a crucial role in a consumer's decision to purchase a particular product or service.

For example, it is now difficult to imagine Apple without Steve Jobs or Tim Cook, Tesla without Elon Musk, or Meta without Mark Zuckerberg. All of these executives have added significant competitive advantages to their products and companies through their personal image and brand. At the same time, political parties and politicians also actively utilize personal branding strategies, focusing their election campaigns on the personal qualities and beliefs of a particular individual rather than on a political program. Examples include Petro Poroshenko's Bloc, Yulia Tymoshenko's Bloc, Volodymyr Zelensky's Servant of the People party, and others, where particular attention is given to the top five candidates on the party list for parliamentary elections. Behind a well-known individual, there may be an entire team, company, or party, but it is the personal brand that remains the primary driver of success.

Under such circumstances, the role of personal brand promotion in building a microeconomic strategy becomes particularly important, especially in an era of rapid social media development. Social media enable individuals to enter various markets — including the legal services market — almost free of charge. Even beginner professionals can establish themselves successfully by developing an effective strategy for promoting their personal image and brand.

The legal services market is, more than any other sector of the economy, highly dependent on personal brand promotion. This is because 95% of a legal service provider's success depends on the individual rather than the team or company. A strong indicator of this dependency is the fact that court rulings typically mention the name of the specific lawyer involved, rather than the name of their firm

or legal entity. The digitization of the economy, the growth of social media, and the accessibility of court rulings to the public have further reinforced this trend.

Most social media platforms used by legal professionals to market their services are designed primarily for promoting individuals rather than companies. That is why the most popular platforms provide tools aimed at developing personal brands rather than selling products or services. Attempts to market services or products in these spaces are typically reduced to traditional advertising campaigns, which fail to provide significant advantages and are as effective as conventional television ads.

At the same time, modern technology has eliminated geographical barriers between service providers and consumers. Clients are no longer limited to legal service providers within their own region. Furthermore, the legal restriction introduced on June 29, 2023, which prohibits the acceptance of documents from lawyers and legal entities not registered in the electronic court system, along with the technical and legislative advancements allowing Ukrainians to participate in court proceedings remotely and access most legal services online, has fully integrated the legal services market into the digital economy.

These changes have enabled legal service providers, regardless of their location, to offer services to clients both within Ukraine and abroad. As a result, the legal services market has effectively become unified and unrestricted by regional boundaries. Previously, legal services were generally provided within a limited geographical range from the provider's office, or large law firms had to establish regional branches to facilitate in-person participation in court proceedings or interactions with law enforcement agencies. Now, however, digitalization has removed these constraints, allowing legal professionals to operate without the need for physical presence in a particular region.

At the same time, the digitalization of the legal services market has had several consequences for legal service providers:

- ▶ Legal professionals who have shifted their focus to clients from other regions have seen an increase in income, while lawyers operating in small towns who have failed to digitalize their businesses have been pushed out of the market. This has been due both to the migration of consumers and the emergence of new competitors from other regions.
- ▶ There has been a demand for new methods of promoting legal services using tools specific to the digital economy, primarily through social media.
- ▶ The ability to participate in the distribution of income within the legal services market has become directly dependent on the business reputation of the legal service provider.

New opportunities have also created new challenges for law firms (associations of lawyers or attorneys) and individual lawyers (operating as self-employed individuals or sole proprietors). As the legal services market has gone digital, service providers' profitability have become increasingly dependent on client reviews, which are permanently accessible online. As a result, legal professionals now have to develop a microeconomic strategy focused on building a strong personal brand and a positive public image.

Under these circumstances, a microeconomic strategy based on personal brand development has become essential. This shift is driven by the nature of legal services, which are provided personally by individuals, the inseparability of the service from its provider, and the lasting impact of consumer reviews on the economic success of a legal service provider.

A key element of this strategy is direct engagement with clients and potential clients, primarily through fostering positive communication — most notably by encouraging and managing client reviews. Communicating with consumers on a personal level, rather than through an impersonal corporate entity, has a positive impact on overall image and personal brand development.

The effectiveness of focusing on personal branding is also supported by statistical data. The largest and most successful law firms in both Ukraine and abroad typically incorporate the surname of a specific legal professional into their company name rather than using an abstract business name.

Table 1 presents the top 10 law firms in the United States and Ukraine, as well as the percentage of legal firms that incorporate a legal professional's surname into their brand name.

**Table 1.** The use of a legal professional's surname in the name of a law firm in top 10 leading law firms in the United States and Ukraine.

Law Firm (USA)	Use of surname in name	Law Firm (Ukraine)	Use of surname in name
Baker McKenzie	Yes	Саєнко та Харенко	Yes
DLA Piper	Yes	Ілляшев та партнери	Yes
Norton, Rose & Fullbright	Yes	AEQUO	No
Hogan Lovells	Yes	GOLAW	No
Jones Day	Yes	ADER HABER	No
Latham & Watkins LLP	Yes	Алексеев, Боярунюков та партнери	Yes
White & Case	Yes	Грамацький та партнери	Yes

Law Firm (USA)	Use of surname in name	Law Firm (Ukraine)	Use of surname in name
Kirkland Ellis LLP	Yes	MORIS	No
Greenberg Traurig	Yes	AVER LEX	No
Morgan	Yes	Василь Кісіль та партнери	Yes
Total	10/10	Total	5/10

Source: Built by the author, based on: Pravo (2024)

It can be concluded that the most successful law firms in Ukraine and the United States have incorporated personal branding into their microeconomic strategies by leveraging the reputation of their founders or key executives. The companies in the table are real-life examples of the effectiveness of personal brand development and image-building strategies in microeconomic planning, highlighting the need for further research in this area.

In recent years, particularly due to external economic factors such as the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which has dispersed the target audience of many legal service providers across the world, social media have become the primary tool for building microeconomic strategies. Social platforms have allowed legal professionals to offer services regardless of their physical location. This shift has made the development of a personal brand and image a necessary component of a microeconomic strategy. The growing consumer interest not only in the service itself but also in the personal life, views, and lifestyle of particular service providers has forced legal professionals to shape their online presence to meet consumer expectations. As a result, their personal image has become a crucial factor in driving sales and providing competitive advantages in the legal services market.

The use of social media in microeconomic strategies has become an integral part of market competition, also in the legal services sector. This imposes certain responsibilities on market participants, requiring them to adhere to specific rules. Using social media as a marketing tool generally means positioning oneself not as a company but as an individual — with a name, surname, workplace, personal interests, and more. This is evident in the registration processes of platforms such as TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram, which primarily require personal information rather than corporate details. As a result, the structure of social media encourages legal professionals to promote their individual identity rather than a company brand.

Additionally, the tools provided by social media are designed primarily for personal engagement, focusing on showcasing individual qualities, preferences, habits, and opinions. In contrast, companies are limited to traditional advertising,



which does not fully utilize the core purpose of social networks as envisioned by their creators. For businesses, social media serves only as a marketing channel for demonstrating products or services, while lacking the personal traits that attract potential consumers. Corporate accounts, unlike personal profiles, tend to have low engagement and receive minimal interaction from followers. As a result, companies are often forced to rely on paid advertisements to promote their services. Meanwhile, indirect service sales through personal branding and long-term relationship building with followers provide a significant competitive advantage in microeconomic strategies compared to corporate accounts.

From this it follows that the optimal **organizational and legal form** of participation for legal service providers is through **individual positioning**, i.e. the personal brand of a specific individual rather than a company. The role of personal identity in the promotion of legal services is far greater than in product sales. Therefore, lawyers and other legal professionals who compete for material benefits in the legal services market under their own name will gain greater competitive advantages in the digitalized world than those who focus their microeconomic strategies on promoting a company brand.

At the same time, this strategy does not restrict legal professionals from forming lawyer associations or establishing legal entities and hiring legal staff. If a legal firm is viewed as a business based on investment and corporate governance, the founder does not necessarily have to be the “face” of the company or even a legal specialist. Instead, this role can be performed by an employed legal expert with a strong personal brand. However, this approach presents certain risks, as the hired expert could become a competitor if they leave the firm or join another law practice. This risk can, of course, be mitigated through long-term contracts with such brand-oriented employees.

## 5. Conclusions

Summarizing the above, it can be concluded that participants of the legal services market that can be described as “initiators”, i.e. serve as image carriers and subjects of a microeconomic strategy, are legal professionals — with the status of a lawyer or without it — who engage in economic relations independently or as part of legal entities and compete in the legal services market.

The most optimal organizational and legal form of participation for such market players is individual positioning, which means that their microeconomic strategy should be built around a specific person, with their team or company standing behind them.

However, an image carrier cannot develop their microeconomic strategy in a chaotic manner, as mistakes in this process can cost them their place in the legal services market. In a digitalized economy the consequences of such strategic errors are permanently accessible to consumers. Therefore, building a microeconomic strategy based on personal branding requires direct communication with consumers and continuous work with feedback, which ultimately shapes a positive image in the eyes of clients and serves as the foundation of a legal service provider's competitive advantage.

Since consumers increasingly prefer to trust individuals rather than corporations and are willing to entrust their fate and finances only to those they know or recognize from social media, a strategy of personal brand promotion and positive personal image development can significantly increase the likelihood of success in the highly competitive legal services market.

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## Wybór skutecznej formy uczestnictwa w rynku usług prawnych w ramach tworzenia mikroekonomicznej strategii wizerunkowej

**Streszczenie.** Przedmiotem artykułu jest analiza zachowań dostawców i konsumentów usług prawnych w celu określenia najsukuteczniejszej mikroekonomicznej strategii promowania prawników w internecie, gdzie większość klientów należy do pokolenia Z (zoomerów), a ich wybory i zachowania są w dużej mierze kształtowane przez media społecznościowe i influencerów. Opierając się na badaniach empirycznych i teoretycznych, autor dochodzi do wniosku, że kluczowym czynnikiem sukcesu nowoczesnego dostawcy usług prawnych

jest jego pozytywny wizerunek, który jest niemal jedynym czynnikiem brany pod uwagę przez osoby poszukujące prawnika. Po przeanalizowaniu różnych form uczestnictwa w rynku usług prawnych nie ulega wątpliwości, że mikroekonomiczna strategia prawników powinna koncentrować się na ich osobowości i wizerunku, aby przyciągnąć potencjalnych klientów i przypadkowych obserwatorów, którzy w każdej chwili mogą stać się klientami. W rezultacie autor dochodzi do wniosku, że prawnicy, którzy opracowują swoje strategie mikroekonomiczne bez opierania się na teorii wizerunku osobistego uczestników rynku usług prawnych, będą stopniowo tracić pozycję lub całkowicie zniknąć z rynku. Dlatego skuteczna strategia wizerunku osobistego wymaga obecności na rynku, która zapewnia dodatkową przewagę konkurencyjną.

**Słowa kluczowe:** wizerunek, podmiot rynkowy, wizerunek osobisty, mikroekonomia, strategia mikroekonomiczna

