

**TIPS FOR MAKING AN ATTRACTIVE AND EFFECTIVE PITCH TO A LAW FIRM OR IN-HOUSE LEGAL TEAM TO START A NEW PRO BONO PROJECT
TAKEN FROM VARIOUS SPEAKERS AT THE US PRO BONO INSTITUTE
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Tips from Esther Lardent, Director, US Pro Bono Institute

Some factors that are likely to make an effective and attractive pitch from the law firm and in-house perspective are to:

- identify a compelling cause (lawyers like to solve problems) and sell it like “this is an opportunity to help in the community in which your staff live”). Pitch the desired outcome – e.g “this is the community we envision”
- include elements of variety in the project pitch (so lawyers can do different things and a wider range of staff can be involved). Some lawyers have a lot of time and others have little time so if the project can provide discrete tasks which are of varied length, this can be attractive to a firm. “whether your lawyers are looking for individual managed litigation or matters that require a team, we can deliver both.”
- include training opportunities for firm lawyers and the availability of follow up mentoring services for issues that arise after training and during implementation. (a video of training sessions is very useful for new law firm staff to get involved)
- provide effective screening of cases before they get to the firm. If this can be offered, it is very attractive to a firm..
- make the project time confined (go for a pilot if in doubt) and stress that it can deliver an outcome in that time frame.

Tips from Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Association about getting a new project up and running with a law firm or in-house team

- provide an opportunity for as many personnel as possible in the firm to participate
- make it simple-then grow it later
- pitch a project with a finite time commitment. If it works well, the time can be extended.
- emphasise a ‘pilot’ program
- tie the project idea to the overall concerns of the company (for in-house team)
- recognise that there is a role of responding to firms as the project develops and be in a position to do this.
- seek visible buy-in from firm leaders
- assure training and mentoring/supervision as required.
- don’t make any assumptions about what the firm can and cant do-you might be surprised.

Tips from a partner at law firm Piper Rudnick (directed to other firms)

- pick the right project area

- pick the right project partner
- pick a project that will not be fraught with conflicts
- establish realistic goals and timeframes and outcomes
- be ambitious
- promote what you are doing at the firm
- you can have an hourly cap for lawyers working on the project unless it is a signature project than no cap
- provide billable hours credit for lawyers doing pro bono work
- be sensitive to other stakeholders working in that area of law.
- don't exit abruptly
- A long consultation with the community concerned is beneficial (aim for organic ownership by both parties).

SO GO AHEAD - DESIGN A PROJECT – TALK TO THE NATIONAL PRO BONO RESOURCE CENTRE ABOUT WHO TO PITCH IT TO!