



# The AI Searchquake

Why PR and Earned Media Will Decide  
Which Law Firms Win in 2026

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Search has changed more in the last 12 months than the previous decade

And 95% of law firms are still playing the old game



# People don't search like they used to

The search:

“Best trucking lawyer near me”

“Who is the best law firm for...”

“Do I have a case if...”

The problem:

*AI answers before websites.*



When someone asks AI who the best lawyer is,  
does your firm show up?



Sooooo...why is any of this important?

Because AI search traffic converts at 9x-17x higher than traditional search traffic.

NOT. A. TYPO.

# The game has permanently changed

## Old School:

- Keywords
- Rankings
- Backlinks
- Pages

## New School:

- Entities
- Authority
- Mentions
- Reputation

*It's no longer "Do you rank?"  
It's "Are you recognized?"*



AI doesn't "rank," it *recognizes*

Pulls from multiple sources

Weighs consistency + repetition

Prefers third-party validation

Surfaces what is already trusted

AI reflects ***your firm's reputation at scale***



# Authority isn't built on your website, it's built offsite

Legal media coverage

Journalist quotes

Verdict reporting

Expert commentary

Awards that actually matter

# PR is no longer a tactic or a nice-to-have

## **It's infrastructure for visibility**

Defines what you're known for

Builds third-party validation

Feeds AI systems

Compounds over time



# These are the real authority signals

Quotes in breaking litigation story

Op-eds on emerging MDL

Coverage of major verdicts

Repeated commentary on one issue (*tip: the more ultra-niche the better*)

*Again...not one hit, but a serious, consistent presence (aka: PATIENCE IS A VIRTUE)*

# Where firms are getting stuck

You undervalue or ignore PR

You treat PR as an occasional nice-to-have

You over-rely on paid search

You focus only on firm brand, not lawyer authority

You publish without strategy (include a cadence strategy)

You chase visibility (and dem vanity metrics) instead of credibility



Lead generation is not the same as trust generation

And AI knows the difference.

# The firms that are pulling ahead

Build serious lawyer-level authority

Show up in credible media

Own specific topics for your geography and/or AOPs

Move SUPER-early on emerging and timely issues (Tiger Woods example)

Think long-term, not individual campaign-based

My free advice is: This is not DIY stuff

Work with the best people to:

1. Audit your authority footprint
2. Identify key topics to own
3. Build media relationships
4. Create a rapid-response commentary process
5. Track visibility beyond rankings

# Some new visibility metrics

Share of media mentions

Topic ownership

Geographic authority

AI answer presence

Consistency across platforms

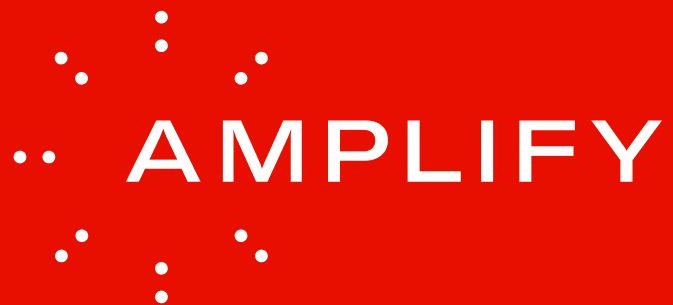


If AI is deciding who gets recommended,  
reputation is no longer optional

*It's your firm's infrastructure.*



If you want to be recommended by AI,  
you have to be recognized by humans first



Q&A

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