

Law firms, a way to find your Peyton Manning

By [Steve R. Strahler](#) March 15, 2014



Mark Levin
 Credit: Kendall Karmanian

Big law firms suffer annual attrition rates of 17 percent. For new associates, the churn is 63 percent over five years.

Mark Levin, a former law firm chief marketing officer, is taking aim at those numbers, and the six-figure cost of replacing an attorney, with a Chicago-based startup, Right Profile LLC. Law firm managing partners, however, remain skeptical of an easy remedy.

Professional sports organizations, with huge outlays at stake, have pioneered the art of predicting who might help teams the most — or disrupt them the least. Mr. Levin, 46, is exporting the idea to the legal industry.

He's got help. His Right Profile partners include sports-oriented tester Robert Troutwine, 59, best known for **recommending quarterback Peyton Manning** to the Indianapolis Colts over eventual NFL bust Ryan Leaf.

While personality testing is old hat, Mr. Levin says it is quite unrefined in the legal realm, where nine out of 10 attorneys land in the “introversion, intuition, thinking, judgment” category on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator test.

But, wonders **Stephanie Scharf**, a Chicago lawyer with a doctorate in behavioral sciences and psychology: “Is there a personality that makes a good lawyer? There isn't one type, with law covering so many types of clients, substantive areas and practice settings.”

Michael Delharim, managing partner of Brown Udell Pomerantz & Delrahim Ltd. in Chicago, says he would pay to weed out job candidates who perform poorly under stress. Some lawyers may ace interviews but once hired, “just like in a marriage, the crazy comes out,” he says.

TAKE THE QUIZ

Mr. Levin is targeting the 250-largest law firms, asking for a flat fee based on size, he says. Meanwhile, he's building a data pool, hoping that 10,000 lawyers and would-be lawyers take a free (for now) online quiz. (One of its 23 personality indicators: “If a household appliance breaks, I often try to fix it first.”)

No matter what, with Mr. Troutwine on board and a planned expansion this year into collegiate athletics, sports are destined to remain Right Profile's dominant clientele.

Mr. Levin's own test results show him furthest outside the lawyer norm as an abstract thinker, extrovert and — surprise — self-starter.

The son of a neurosurgeon and a university professor in Madison, Wis., he ran a music management company as a Northwestern University student, becoming a talent scout for a company that managed Cheap Trick and other musical acts. He got a law degree but focused on marketing, most recently at Neal Gerber & Eisenberg LLP in Chicago.

Mr. Levin pitched Mr. Troutwine in early 2011. Before Mr. Troutwine said yes, the founder of Liberty, Mo.-based **Troutwine & Associates Inc.** made Mr. Levin sit for the Troutwine Athletic Profile test. After two years, they're still a team. Says Mr. Troutwine, “We just kind of enrich each other's skill set.”