



A Lawyer's Guide to Effective and Ethical Internet Marketing

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Lawyers' Principles of Professionalism

As a lawyer I must strive to make our system of justice work fairly and efficiently. In order to carry out that responsibility, not only will I comply with the letter and spirit of the disciplinary standards applicable to all lawyers, but I will also conduct myself in accordance with the following Principles of Professionalism when dealing with my client, opposing parties, their counsel, the courts and the general public.

Civility and courtesy are the hallmarks of professionalism and should not be equated with weakness;

I will endeavor to be courteous and civil, both in oral and in written communications;

I will not knowingly make statements of fact or of law that are untrue;

I will agree to reasonable requests for extensions of time or for waiver of procedural formalities when the legitimate interests of my client will not be adversely affected;

I will refrain from causing unreasonable delays;

I will endeavor to consult with opposing counsel before scheduling depositions and meetings and before rescheduling hearings, and I will cooperate with opposing counsel when scheduling changes are requested;

When scheduled hearings or depositions have to be canceled, I will notify opposing counsel, and if appropriate, the court (or other tribunal) as early as possible;

Before dates for hearings or trials are set, or if that is not feasible, immediately after such dates have been set, I will attempt to verify the availability of key participants and witnesses so that I can promptly notify the court (or other tribunal) and opposing counsel of any likely problem in that regard;

I will refrain from utilizing litigation or any other course of conduct to harass the opposing party;

I will refrain from engaging in excessive and abusive discovery, and I will comply with all reasonable discovery requests;

In depositions and other proceedings, and in negotiations, I will conduct myself with dignity, avoid making groundless objections and refrain from engaging in acts of rudeness or disrespect;

I will not serve motions and pleadings on the other party or counsel at such time or in such manner as will unfairly limit the other party's opportunity to respond;

In business transactions I will not quarrel over matters of form or style, but will concentrate on matters of substance and content;

I will be a vigorous and zealous advocate on behalf of my client, while recognizing, as an officer of the court, that excessive zeal may be detrimental to my client's interests as well as to the proper functioning of our system of justice;

While I must consider my client's decision concerning the objectives of the representation, I nevertheless will counsel my client that a willingness to initiate or engage in settlement discussions is consistent with zealous and effective representation;

Where consistent with my client's interests, I will communicate with opposing counsel in an effort to avoid litigation and to resolve litigation that has actually commenced;

I will withdraw voluntarily claims or defense when it becomes apparent that they do not have merit or are superfluous;

I will not file frivolous motions;

I will make every effort to agree with other counsel, as early as possible, on a voluntary exchange of information and on a plan for discovery;

I will attempt to resolve, by agreement, my objections to matters contained in my opponent's pleadings and discovery requests;

In civil matters, I will stipulate to facts as to which there is no genuine dispute;

I will endeavor to be punctual in attending court hearings, conferences, meetings and depositions;

I will at all times be candid with the court and its personnel;

I will remember that, in addition to commitment to my client's cause, my responsibilities as a lawyer include a devotion to the public good;

I will endeavor to keep myself current in the areas in which I practice and when necessary, will associate with, or refer my client to, counsel knowledgeable in another field of practice;

I will be mindful of the fact that, as a member of a self-regulating profession, it is incumbent on me to report violations by fellow lawyers as required by the Rules of Professional Conduct;

I will be mindful of the need to protect the image of the legal profession in the eyes of the public and will be so guided when considering methods and content of advertising;

I will be mindful that the law is a learned profession and that among its desirable goals are devotion to public service, improvement of administration of justice, and the contribution of uncompensated time and civic influence on behalf of those persons who cannot afford adequate legal assistance;

I will endeavor to ensure that all persons, regardless of race, age, gender, disability, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, color, or creed receive fair and equal treatment under the law, and will always conduct myself in such a way as to promote equality and justice for all.

It is understood that nothing in these Principles shall be deemed to supersede, supplement or in any way amend the Rules of Professional Conduct, alter existing standards of conduct against which lawyer conduct might be judged or become a basis for the imposition of civil liability of any kind.

--Adopted by the Connecticut Bar Association House of Delegates on June 6, 1994

Faculty Biographies

Mark Dubois has practiced law for over 40 years. He is counsel with the New London firm of Geraghty & Bonnano. He was Connecticut's first Chief Disciplinary Counsel from 2003 until 2011. In that position he established an office that investigated and prosecuted attorney misconduct and the unauthorized practice of law. He is co-author of *Connecticut Legal Ethics and Malpractice*, the first book devoted to the topic of attorney ethics in Connecticut. He is a contributor to the *Connecticut Law Tribune* where he wrote the *Ethics Matters* column for over 7 years. He now writes on matters related to senior attorneys.

Attorney Dubois has represented many individuals accused of ethical misconduct and malpractice. He has also served as an expert witness on matters of ethics and malpractice. He has taught ethics and lawyering skills at UConn Law School and has taught ethics as Quinnipiac University School of Law where he was Distinguished Practitioner in Residence in 2011. He has lectured in Connecticut and nationally on attorney ethics and has given or participated in over 100 presentations and symposia on attorney ethics and malpractice.

Attorney Dubois was board certified in civil trial advocacy by the National Board of Legal Specialty Certification for over 20 years. He has tried many cases to conclusion including jury trials, court matters and administrative hearings. He is former president of the Connecticut Bar Association. He remains active in the Bar Association where he is a member of the Professional Discipline, LGBT and Unauthorized Practice groups. He is also a member of the New Britain, New London, and American Bar Associations, the American Board of Trial Advocates and the Association of Professional Responsibility Lawyers. He is the recipient of the Quintin Johnstone Service to the Profession Award in 2012, the American Board of Trial Advocacy, Connecticut Chapter, Annual Award in 2007 and the Connecticut Bar Association's Edward F. Hennessey Professionalism Award in 2019.



Bill Jawitz is the founder of SuccessTrackESQ, an executive coaching and consulting firm that works exclusively with attorneys, their firms, corporate legal departments, and government agencies.

Since 2002, Bill has coached hundreds of lawyers and presented CLE programs to thousands more around the country helping them to grow their practices and improve their productivity and profitability -- *and* derive greater enjoyment from the practice of law.

Bill has conducted over 120 training programs for numerous state, city and regional Bar Associations, and national CLE providers. He teaches attorneys how to apply best practices in key areas such as time management, financial management, business development, workflow management, team building, and leadership development.

Bill holds a BA in Media Studies from Quinnipiac University and a Master's degree from Columbia University in Communications and Technology.

In his first professional life, Bill was an educator and author. He founded and ran Connecticut's first public charter school (The Odyssey Community School, in Manchester) and authored the nation's top-selling textbook on media literacy, *Understanding Mass Media*.

Bill volunteers time with *The Mankind Project*, a non-profit organization, and is an active guitarist and vocalist. He is a self-described C-SPAN and SCOTUS junkie. Bill lives with his wife, in Cheshire, CT.

A Lawyer's Guide to Effective and Ethical Internet Marketing (CLC2019-D07)

Agenda

- 3:30 p.m. Effective Online Marketing Overview
- 3:45 p.m. Ethical Considerations in Online Legal Marketing – Part One
- 4:00 p.m. Nine Key Components of Online Marketing
- 4:45 p.m. Ethical Considerations in Online Legal Marketing – Part Two
- 5:00 p.m. Online Marketing ROI, Contracts, and Budgets

Business Development Outline 2019

1. Set Your Course

- Goals
- Objectives
- Volume, levels of client/matters, ratio of matters, fees
- Review last two years of matters
- Analysis of current Client Development (CD) actions
- Definition of Insanity
- Measure inputs first, then outputs

2. Target work

- Niche practice areas/legal needs
- Sector/vertical/demographic research & expertise
- Geography
- Trends
- Competitive intelligence
- Profitability analysis

3. Convey effective messages & have effective conversations

- Detailed profile of your ideal client & ideal referral source
- Client-centricity vs. lawyer centricity
- Deep understanding of client condition/triggering events
- Create differentiation / demonstrate relevance
- What clients experience *while* they're working with you and *after* they work with you
- Focus on benefits, not features; results, not process
- The specific kind of cases you want
- Why you're passionate about your specific kind of work
- Authentic value proposition

4. Chart and navigate your universe of contacts

- Fill out your Contacts List
- Alum, affinity groups, neighbors, biz groups, vendors, boards, former colleagues, opposing counsel, COIs
- Categorize your Rolodex
- ALWAYS tend (update/cull) your list quarterly
- Who's not on it that should be?
 - ✓ Former Clients
 - ✓ Friend/Relatives
 - ✓ Neighbors
 - ✓ Connections through Hobbies/Sports
 - ✓ Undergrad classmates
 - ✓ Law School Classmates
 - ✓ Law School Professors
 - ✓ Attorney (by primary practice area)s
 - ✓ In-House Counsel
 - ✓ Judges
 - ✓ Trade Association Leaders
 - ✓ Professional Association Leaders
 - ✓ Target-related professionals (non-lawyer)
 - ✓ Suppliers
 - ✓ Consultants
 - ✓ Local/State Gov't Officials (Elected, Appointed, Career)
 - ✓ Non-profit and for Profit Board Members
 - ✓ Social group connections through children

5. Use multiple channels of outreach

- Organic search engine optimization (SEO)
- Paid search engine marketing (SEM))
- Writing (Public, target clients, target ref. sources, professional journals, blogs, newsletters, weekly e-tips)
- Speaking/seminars
- Video (Site, YouTube/Vimeo, social media)

- PR (writing for & being featured/quoted)
- Print advertising
- Lead generation services
- Print collateral for distribution
- Board and community service
- In-person and group networking
- Paid business development conferences
- Email signature

6. Build your online presence

- Effective main site, possible micro-sites
- SEO (optimization) / SEM (pay-per click) / SM (social media strategy)
- LinkedIn (keywords)
- Facebook/Twitter
- Blogs
- Video (Youtube)
- Avvo
- Web bios
- Lawyer Directories
- Local business directories
- Google Local

7. Activate your referral sources

- Take extraordinary care of your current referral sources
- Research and prep first
- Express interest in them
- How can you help them?
- Send note after meetings
- Track and calendar follow-up actions
- TOMA (top-of-mind awareness) 7 to 10 “touches” , Google Alerts, articles, RSS feeds
- Get a “next action” or ASK for the work!

8. Nurture existing and former clients

- COA (cost of acquisition)
- Research/understand their non-legal business needs
- Visit them at their work
- Deliver extra value (Day Pitney's Social Media Task Force)
- Promote them

9. Plan budgets and vendors

- Review and analyze ROI of previous and current marketing expenses
- Allocate 2.5 – 6% of previous year's gross collections
- Hire proven vendors with strong track records

10. Strengthen your client development habits

- Know your selling and communication preferences
- Learn/develop selling and closing skills
- Calendaring time for marketing
- Plan weekly and monthly activity
- Update contacts; reach out to top-20 sources, line-up gigs/articles, research
- Prep before each marketing event
- Follow up each event
- Reinforce your own positive attitude

Name:

Date:

Business Development Self-Assessment

Directions: Read through the following statements. On a scale of 1-5 (5 being the highest), rate how true each statement is for you.

A. Mindset

	Level of Agreement
1. I have in writing – and use – a well-thought-out business development plan.	
2. I feel I have control over whether or not A-level business comes through my door.	
3. I read at least three books on marketing and/or business development a year.	
4. I'm aware of how my beliefs about marketing – both negative and positive – impact my approach to business development.	
5. I have a clear picture of how my practice and life would change if I were able to fill my practice with the matters and clients of my choosing.	
Total	

B. Focus

	Level of Agreement
1. I know exactly what kind of clients and matters to cultivate and I know how and where to reach them.	
2. I can accurately and specifically describe the demographic and/or business profile of my most profitable and satisfying <i>clients</i> , whether individuals or entities.	
3. I can accurately describe the specific parameters of the kinds of <i>matters</i> I seek.	
4. I'm able to comfortably and authentically differentiate myself from the crowd of attorneys who target the same clients and matters.	
5. I actively work to promote myself as serving one or two well-defined niche practice areas and/or target markets.	
Total	

C. Relationships

	Level of Agreement
1. I know how to identify and reach new "Centers of Influence" – people who are influential among my client base or with other potential referral sources.	
2. I track the source of all files that I open or work on.	
3. I have an up-to-date, written list of my 20 top referral sources.	
4. I routinely devote time to educating myself about the key business opportunities and challenges faced by my target clients and my referral sources.	

5.	I can easily compile a list of past and present clients who are candidates for cross-selling.	
6.	On a regular basis I practice building rapport with clients and influencers by being genuinely interested in their likes and dislikes.	
7.	I routinely acknowledge and thank my clients or influencers who refer a matter to me.	
8.	I invite my clients and referral sources to participate with me in activities (sports, theater, etc.) that I enjoy outside of the practice of law.	
9.	I routinely plan at least ____ in-person marketing activities (lunch, breakfast, golfing) per week: 1 = 1 activity, 2 = 2 activities, 3 = 3 activities, 4 = 4 activities, 5 = 5 activities.	
10.	I routinely make at least ____ phone calls per week that contain some conversation to build rapport or market myself to clients and/or referral sources: 1 = 1 phone call, 2 = 2 phone calls, 3 = 3 phone calls, 4 = 4 phone calls, 5 = 5 phone calls.	
Total		

D. Message

		Level of Agreement
1.	I have a natural-sounding, but informative, encapsulated talk that I use when people ask me what I do.	
2.	I have an arsenal of stories that I tell that demonstrate the kind of attorney I am, the kinds of people I help, and why.	
3.	I comfortably use examples of the kind of results my clients have experienced that illustrate their improved personal or business condition.	
4.	I have interviewed enough of my clients, referral sources, and influencers to know what they are looking for in an attorney.	
5.	I take time educate my clients, referral sources, and influencers about how to best promote me; how to best talk about who I am, what I do, and for whom.	
6.	I have an ethical and comfortable way of asking existing <u>clients</u> for additional business or new referrals	
7.	I have an ethical and comfortable way for asking existing <u>referral sources</u> for new referrals.	
8.	I have an ethical and comfortable way for asking existing <u>influencers</u> for introductions to other referral sources.	
9.	I prepare for each business-building meeting in advance and have a list of questions to ask, things to listen for, and objectives for a "next step."	
10.	I train my secretary, or members of my staff, to market the firm and I acknowledge them for any work they bring in.	
Total		

E. Channels

	Level of Agreement
1. Our website is visually attractive, is search engine optimized, and is kept up-to-date with content that is meaningful to my target client base (i.e., that provides useful information to help them solve their problems).	
2. My bio page contains as much or more information about my clients, their needs, and the results they experience as it does about me and my credentials.	
3. I work at building my web/social media visibility through platforms such as LinkedIn, AVVO, JDSupra, etc. on a regular basis.	
4. Our print and collateral material is distinctive and first-class.	
5. I distribute a monthly or quarterly newsletter to clients and/or referral sources that contains advice and useful information.	
6. I publish at least two articles a year in targeted outlets such as association newsletters, industry publications, or professional journals.	
7. I speak at least three times a year at targeted events such as professional development seminars, industry conferences, chambers of commerce, etc.	
8. I am actively involved in at least two non-bar organizations.	
9. My firm sponsors or co-sponsors at least two events and/or organizations to build visibility with our target client base.	
10. We know how to generate local press coverage of our people and services and client results.	
Total	

Niche Analysis Tool, Part One: Your Experience

1	Identify and quantify as a % the matter types you've handled in the last 3-5 years	
2	Describe your unique experience, qualifications, abilities	
3	Identify any patterns found in the work from #1, above (e.g., industries, triggers, demographics)	
4	Describe your ideal client's personal and/or business characteristics	
5	List your personal values, passions, interests, causes, and motivators	
6	Rank the relative profitability of matter types from # 1, above	

Niche Analysis Tool, Part Two: The Marketplace

1	Nature of legal or business issue (i.e., specific matter type) NOTE: complete this form for each matter type	
2	Market Indicators: volume, trends, competitors, tiers of the issue/matter	
3	Situation/event that triggers expenditure of money and/or time on legal service	
4	Primary and secondary issues or challenges posed to client by those situations or events in #3	
5	Specific solutions and services you can provide to meet the needs in #4	
6	Outcomes: measures of success from client's point of view; value to them	

Social Media for Lawyers – An Overview^{1,2}

Jennifer Ellis

Social media has become a crucial part of the average American's life. As a result, whether they want to or not, attorneys must, at the very least, appreciate the impact of social media on their clients. Failure to understand how social media can impact clients' cases could lead to serious damage to a case which might result in a malpractice complaint. Further, wise attorneys will take advantage of social media to develop their practices through the networking and marketing opportunities provided by both their own websites and the various social media sites and applications.

The best way to appreciate how important social media has become in people's day-to-day lives is to look at some statistics for popular sites:

- Facebook – 2.13 billion monthly active users.³
 - 169.2 million users in the United States by 2018.⁴
- LinkedIn – 546 million users⁵
 - 146 million users in the United States.⁶
- Snapchat – over 187 million daily active users.⁷
- YouTube – Over 1 billion users.
 - “[A]lmost one-third of people on the Internet.”⁸
- Instagram – 800 million monthly active users.⁹
- Twitter – 330 million monthly active users¹⁰

A Pew study from 2015 showed that 74% of all Internet users use social media.¹¹ According to Statista.com, that number has increased to 78%.¹² Mobile use of cell phones is high and continues to increase. In 2015, “40% of cell phone owners use a social networking site on their

¹ These materials represent a portion of a chapter from the upcoming American Bar Association Solo and Small Firm Practice Technology Guide. This guide is available on the ABA's website. All rights are reserved.

² Last updated April 2018.

³ February 2018. <http://expandedramblings.com/index.php/by-the-numbers-17-amazing-facebook-stats/>

⁴ February 2018. <http://expandedramblings.com/index.php/by-the-numbers-17-amazing-facebook-stats/2/>

⁵ March 2018. <http://expandedramblings.com/index.php/by-the-numbers-a-few-important-linkedin-stats/>

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ <https://www.snapchat.com/ads/>

⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/yt/press/statistics.html>

⁹ <https://expandedramblings.com/index.php/important-instagram-stats/>

¹⁰ <https://about.twitter.com/company>

¹¹ <http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheets/social-networking-fact-sheet/>

¹² <http://www.statista.com/statistics/273476/percentage-of-us-population-with-a-social-network-profile/>

phone and 27% do so on a typical day.”¹³ This ease of access means people use social media on the go as a method to locate businesses they plan to hire. It also means people have a tendency to use social media to quickly share intimate details about their lives and activities. The former shows the value of social media as a marketing tool. The latter shows the amount of information people are sharing which can be harmful to their cases.

Attorneys who plan on using social media should keep in mind that the ethical risks involved with social media, both in terms of evidence collection and marketing, are very real. Therefore, a proper understanding of appropriate and ethical behavior is extremely important.

It is also important to understand that in certain areas of practice, it is now verging on malpractice, and the author would argue it *is* malpractice, to fail to communicate with clients about whether and how they use social media. Failing to warn the client to halt or at least limit social media use could result in that client posting materials that will harm his case. Failure to warn a client about evidence preservation could result in substantial sanctions for spoliation.¹⁴ In addition, it is quite conceivable that the opposing party will post information harmful to his case and failure on the part of the attorney to seek out possible harmful posts can result in loss of a substantially better bargaining position, or even loss of a case that might have been won.

Specific Sites and Applications

Social media essentially includes sites and applications that enable people to share information, pictures, videos, and the like at a rapid rate, and, in return, allows other people to respond to the shared content. In some cases, social media is referred to as Web 2.0. Web 1.0 refers to sites that serve to provide one-way communication, much like a newsletter or a book.

Traditional websites are Web 1.0.

Currently, some of the most popular social media sites and applications in the United States include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, YouTube, WhatsApp and Instagram.¹⁵ Further, blogs are sometimes considered part of social media and so will be included in this discussion. At this point, there are over 150 million blogs on the web and almost 50% of Internet users read blogs.

Marketing and Networking

It is not always easy to understand how social media can increase the potential for bringing in new clients. It is therefore important to think of social media as having uses for practice building.

¹³ Id.

¹⁴ See *Lester v. Allied Concrete Co., et al*; order dated September 1, 2011.

¹⁵ While Google+ has not served Google well as a social media site, Google Business remains an important part of being found on the web.

Advertising

Social media includes straightforward advertising. Sites such as Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn and others provide the opportunity to purchase small ads which appear on the top or side of the page. These ads are managed through varying means, demographics, keywords, areas of interest, and so on. Generally, the cost of the ads is controlled through a bidding process known as pay-per-click. The site provides a suggested fee that its algorithm suggests will be successful. The purchaser identifies the amount he is willing to pay and competes against those who are seeking to advertise to the same individuals. Normally, the purchaser only pays when someone clicks on an ad. Some sites allow advertisers to pay per impression. This means that the purchaser pays when the ad is shown.

Networking

Social media provides substantial opportunities for networking. It simply moves the networking from the bar association or educational program, to networking online. Providing information about interests, sharing day-to-day activities, responding to the posts of others - each of these behaviors is simply a way to connect with other people. Those people, in turn, may need an attorney or may need to refer someone else to an attorney - just as in the offline world. Further, people tend to recommend individuals who they know, or feel they know, and social media allows the formation of that kind of relationship.

Content

Sharing useful content is a crucial part of social media for attorneys. Providing high quality content that informs users about the areas of law in which an attorney practices is an excellent way to bring attention to that attorney. The content can be as simple as commenting on a case on Facebook, sharing a useful link on Twitter, or providing a detailed analysis of a specific issue on a blog. This content shows potential clients that the attorney is knowledgeable in her area(s) of practice. Further, well-written content, related to the work the attorney performs, provides a substantial boost to search engine optimization and online reputation.

Specific Sites

Different social media sites provide different tools. Further, some sites are better utilized by attorneys who tend to represent businesses, while others are better utilized by attorneys who represent individuals. It is important to target the correct site or mixture of sites for the best return on investment of time and/or money. Research the type of people and/or businesses that use a site before you make up your mind about where to extend your efforts.

Content of Posts

When you post on social media, you need to consider whether you are causing any ethical problems for yourself. Given the open nature of social media, a number of issues can arise

when lawyers post. Two important issues to focus on include: Is social media advertising and are you forming an attorney/client relationship by answering questions?

Is Social Media Advertising?

When choosing what to write on social media, it is important to determine whether your post is advertising under model rule 7.2 (or whatever rule applies in your jurisdiction.) If your account is completely private and you share only with friends and family, chances are very good that your posts would not be considered advertising. However, the question becomes cloudier when you open up your account to a larger group. The author's view is that if you are not certain whether your post is advertising, assume it is and act in accordance with your jurisdiction's rules. Some jurisdictions define advertising very clearly. Others do not.

As noted previously, Twitter is a site that is problematic for states such as Florida, where any posting might be considered advertising. In its guidelines on social media, Florida's advertising standing committee states about Twitter that Pages of individual lawyers on social networking sites that are used solely for social purposes, to maintain social contact with family and close friends, are not subject to the lawyer advertising rules. Pages appearing on networking sites that are used to promote the lawyer or law firm's practice are subject to the lawyer advertising rules. These pages must therefore comply with all of the general regulations set forth in Rules 4-7.11 through 4-7.18 and 4-7.21."¹⁶ This language means that many posts on Twitter would be considered advertising, simply because most people have their accounts entirely open and it is common for users to discuss a cross section of personal and work-related details of their lives.

Most problematic, given Twitter's 140 character limit, is that, in Florida, the Tweet must include geographic information as well as "the name of at least 1 lawyer in the firm." The attorney may use appropriate abbreviations for the geographic requirements which helps, to a degree. However, as soon as the poster puts both the full name of a lawyer and a geographic location, most of the allotted characters will be used up, substantially limiting the value of any tweet. Florida amended its guidelines in 2016 to allow lawyers to create a restricted account. When the account is restricted, then the rules change, because of the fact that the audience sought the communication.

If access to a lawyer's Twitter postings is restricted to the followers of the particular lawyer, the information posted there is information at the request of a prospective client and is subject to the lawyer advertising rules, but is exempt from the filing requirement under Rule 4-7.20(e). Any communications that a lawyer makes on an

¹⁶ The Florida Bar Standing Committee on Advertising Guidelines for Networking Sites (Revised, May 9, 2016.) [https://www.floridabar.org/TFB/TFBResources.nsf/Attachments/18BC39758BB54A5985257B590063EDA8/\\$FILE/Guidelines%20-%20Social%20Networking%20Sites.pdf?OpenElement](https://www.floridabar.org/TFB/TFBResources.nsf/Attachments/18BC39758BB54A5985257B590063EDA8/$FILE/Guidelines%20-%20Social%20Networking%20Sites.pdf?OpenElement)

unsolicited basis to prospective clients to obtain “followers” is subject to the lawyer advertising rules, as with any other social media...

Florida is not the only jurisdiction with special requirements for Twitter, so be certain to check your state’s rules before you Tweet. That said, many jurisdictions have not placed onerous requirements on lawyer’s abilities to use Twitter and a well-written tweet can be an excellent way to drive traffic to your website or share useful information. Fortunately, Twitter will very shortly do away with its 140 character limitation, which will make many of these issues a moot point.

Pennsylvania’s Analysis

In Formal Opinion 2014-300 (Ethical Obligations for Attorneys Using Social Media), the Pennsylvania Bar Association provides a detailed guidance opinion on social media use by attorneys. This includes analysis of what is acceptable for marketing purposes.

As related to advertising, and connecting with others on social media, the opinion offers the following:

1. Attorneys may advertise using social media.

There is nothing in the rules that prevents attorneys from utilizing social media for advertising purposes. In doing so, the attorney must follow all relevant ethical rules.

2. Attorneys may endorse other attorneys on social media

It is acceptable to endorse other lawyers; however, the endorsements must be accurate. If you choose to endorse a lawyer, it would be wise to make certain you actually know the lawyer and his or her skillset and abilities. Many attorneys on sites such as Avvo and LinkedIn provide endorsements when they are complete strangers to the lawyer they are endorsing.

3. Attorneys may respond to endorsements and reviews and may solicit them.

In Pennsylvania, under Rule 7.2, “no advertisement or public communication shall contain an endorsement by a celebrity or public figure. In addition, if an endorsement is paid, this must be revealed. Both of these rules apply to social media use in Pennsylvania. The latter rule, involving paid endorsements, is common in most states.

Regardless of who provides the review or endorsement, it must be honest. It is the job of the attorney to correct the review if it contains improper information, is dishonest or is false or misleading. “If the lawyer is unable to correct or remove the listing, he or she should contact

the person posting the information and request that the person remove or correct the item.”¹⁷ Attorneys in Pennsylvania may not pay for or offer anything of value in exchange for a review.

It is appropriate for an attorney to respond to a review, but he must be careful how he responds to a negative review. “[L]awyers may not reveal client confidential information in response to a negative online review.”¹⁸ Interpret the concept of confidential client information broadly. In the author’s experience, the best way to respond to a negative review is (1) no response at all, (2) a polite response asking for the person to phone or e-mail so you can see if you can resolve the problem, (3) a general response stating that you are sorry the person was displeased. An attorney in Illinois was reprimanded due to sharing confidential information in response to a negative review. She was suspended when she revealed that the client had engaged in a physical altercation and other confidential information, and that was why the client lost the case.¹⁹

Many other states have provided opinions on the subject of whether social media is advertising and ethical issues surrounding its use. The states have generally handled the issues much the same way Pennsylvania has. However, there are some unique opinions. New York, for example, released an opinion to analyze LinkedIn, in particular, in March, 2015.²⁰ In its opinion, the Ethics Committee found that a general LinkedIn profile listing education and employment experience is not enough to make the profile advertising. But, adding “a description of areas of practice or certain skills or endorsement” may make the profile advertising. Regardless, all content on the profile should be accurate.²¹

Is Blogging Advertising?

If you search “is blogging attorney advertising” online, you will find many different opinions. As with social media, California has established a bright line test for whether a blog is advertising. In California, a blog is advertising if it addresses the availability of a lawyer for employment.²² In that state, if a lawyer wants his blog to fall outside of attorney advertising, he would need to have a stand-alone blog, separate from his website, which does not, in *any* way, including by implication, express his availability for professional employment. Such a stand-alone blog would need to avoid discussing the qualifications and history of the lawyer as well.

¹⁷ Formal Opinion 2014-300.

¹⁸ Formal Opinion 2014-300, citing Formal Opinion 2014-200.

¹⁹ *In Re Tsamis*, Comm. File No 2013PR00095 (Ill. 2013)

²⁰ New York County Lawyers Association Professional Ethics Committee, Formal Opinion 748, March 10, 2015.

²¹ Opinion 748 references the Social Media Ethics Guidelines of the Commercial and Federal Litigation Section of the New York State Bar Association. As of this writing, the guide was updated in June, 2015, the guide provides a solid overview of social media ethics in New York.

<http://www.nysba.org/workarea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=47547>

²² The State Bar of California Standing Committee on Professional Responsibility and Conduct Formal Opinion Interim No. 12-006.

The seminal case on attorney blogs is *Hunter v. Virginia State Bar*. The rather convoluted history of this case involved an attorney who reported the results of cases with favorable results. He also posted about other issues. He did not, however, have a disclaimer on that blog. The Virginia State Bar found ethical violations under rules 1.6, 7.1 and 7.2. 1.6 involved “disclosure of client information” and the latter two rules involve attorney advertising. On appeal, the Circuit Court found no violation of the rules and determined that the blog was protected under the First Amendment. However, it also required that Hunter put a disclaimer on his blog. The Supreme Court of Virginia ruled that a blog is unprotected commercial speech and that Hunter did not violate rule 1.6. The Court felt that the blog was commercial speech for several reasons:

1. Motivation was, at least partly, economic
2. The majority of posts discussed favorable case results to show attorney’s skills
3. The blog was part of the firm’s website as opposed to a stand-alone website
4. There was no ability to interact with the blog. This suggests that Hunter’s blog did not allow for comments. It is important to note that most blogging software provides the ability to allow communication via a comments feature that may be turned on or off.²³

Are Blogs Advertising?

So, are blogs advertising? The answer is, it depends on how your blog is set up and what you post about. The safest answer is to treat blogging as if it is advertising. For this purpose, it is wise to include an appropriate disclaimer on your blog. The disclaimer should be much the same as the disclaimer you put on the rest of your website.

Is a Social Media Post Legal Advice?

The line for what is and what is not legal advice is a bit blurry. Given this, it is important that you stay on the right side of the line to make certain you are not inadvertently creating an attorney/client relationship. An attorney/client relationship is formed when a client has reason to believe that the attorney is handling his legal interests. The relationship can be formed expressly or it can be implied. The implied relationship is the one that can cause trouble online. The standard in determining whether an attorney/client relationship has been formed is based on what the objectively reasonable belief on the part of the client is. If you answer questions online, make certain there is an appropriate disclaimer, such as can be found on sites like Avvo and Quora. In addition, limit yourself to providing broad answers that are educational in nature as opposed to providing specific advice that directly answers the asker’s question. At this point, there have been no lawsuits involving attempts to claim a lawyer has formed an attorney/client relationship through an ask/answer site. Keep in mind, not only could you inadvertently form

²³ Attorney Blogger Runs Afoul of Ethics Rules on Advertising, Renee Choy Ohlendorf, 2013.
https://apps.americanbar.org/litigation/litigationnews/top_stories/053013-blog-ethics-advertising.html

an attorney/client relationship, but if you provide legal advice in a state in which you are not licensed, you could be engaging in the unauthorized practice of law.

Recommendations/Testimonials

The rules around recommendations and testimonials vary greatly across the United States. As a result, it is difficult to provide specific guidelines. Given this, it is crucial that you refer to the state(s) in which you are licensed to make certain you follow the rules. In most states, it is perfectly acceptable to ask for testimonials. However, those testimonials must follow all relevant rules. When clients write recommendations, those recommendations must not create false expectations and they must be correct. If a client writes a recommendation that violates the rules, it is the attorney's obligation to correct it. In some cases, for example LinkedIn, the attorney will be able to control whether an improper testimonial is posted. In other cases, for example Google+, Avvo and Facebook, the attorney is not able to approve the testimonial. In such cases the attorney must ask the client to remove the recommendation, or provide a correction in the comments.

Dealing with Negative Reviews

Negative reviews are a serious problem on social media and on the web in general. A negative review can be very harmful to a law firm. That said, no matter how negative the review, it is crucial that lawyers respond appropriately if a past client attacks them online. Most importantly, attorneys may not share confidential information about the client in a response to a negative review. For example, a lawyer from Illinois responded to a negative review on Avvo by providing confidential information about her client. The Hearing board found that she engaged in misconduct which included:

1. [R]evealing information relating to the representation of a client without the client's informed consent, in violation of Rule 1.6(a) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010);
2. [U]sing means in representing a client that have no substantial purpose other than to embarrass, delay, or burden a third person, in violation of Rule 4.4 of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010); and
3. [C]onduct which is prejudicial to the administration of justice or which tends to defeat the administration of justice or to bring the courts or the legal profession into disrepute.²⁴

²⁴ *In the Matter of Betty Tsamis*, Commission No. 2013PR00095 (August 26, 2013.)
<http://www.iardc.org/13PR0095CM.html>

The complaint against the attorney also involved a bounced check. For both the check and the comment on Avvo, the attorney was reprimanded by the disciplinary commission.²⁵

Keep in mind, an online review does not trigger the necessary controversy allowing the lawyer to reveal confidential information. The author has heard other ethics attorneys disagree with this concept, and feels that the attorney should be able to respond fully. But clearly, based on the sanctions and guidance opinions being handed out, the various disciplinary boards are falling on the side of confidentiality.²⁶ Therefore, it is critical to be careful about how you respond to reviews.

Should You Sue Over a Bad Review?

For the most part, suing over a bad review is a bad idea. There are a number of reasons for this. The first reason it is bad to sue is due to the Streisand Effect. The Streisand Effect is so named because of the efforts on behalf of Barbra Streisand to remove images of the California coastline which included pictures of Streisand's home. Once the lawsuit was filed, the picture that the attorneys had sought to suppress became very popular online. Prior to the suit, the image had been downloaded six times. After the suit, the image went viral and now is used as an example of the unintended consequences of intense publication that can result from trying to remove information from the web.²⁷ The second reason it is unwise to sue is because if potential clients learn about the suit, which they might well do because of the Streisand Effect, they may be concerned about retaining a firm that will sue its clients. However, it is also clear that filing a suit does trigger the controversy necessary to reveal confidential information as part of the suit.

Examples of Suits Over Negative Reviews

Over the past few years, a number of lawyers have sued over bad reviews, to mixed results as far as publicity.

Negative or Mixed Results from Suing

A suit from 2014 involved a Texas firm which sued over a negative review on Yelp.²⁸ The former client wrote, "this firm not only won't help you – they intend to do you harm if they can't

²⁵ http://www.iardc.org/HB_RB_Dispatch_Html.asp?id=11221

²⁶ The Bar Association of San Francisco, Legal Ethics Opinion 2014-1, (January 2014.) "The duty of confidentiality prevents the attorney from disclosing confidential information about the prior representation absent the former client's informed consent or waiver of confidentiality." http://www.sfbabar.org/ethics/opinion_2014-1.aspx

²⁷ Streisand Effect, <http://knowyourmeme.com/memes/streisand-effect>

²⁸ *Grissom & Thompson, LLP v. Browning*, <http://pdfserver.amlaw.com/tx/Grissom-ThompsonVBrowning-petition.pdf>

extract enough money of you[.] They are disorganized, deceptive, manipulative and largely disrespected....”

The defamation suit was successful, resulting in a \$100,000 verdict against the defendant. This was after the firm successfully sued its client for unpaid fees. However, when researching the firm online, readers will find a great deal of information about the suit. In fact, at the time of this writing, the first link on Google when searching the firm’s name is about the suit. In addition, for a brief period, there was another review on Yelp stating that the defendant’s review was correct, further attacking the firm. That review has since been removed. It is likely that some of the attention this particular suit received comes from the fact that it was, at that time, still relatively novel to sue over a negative online review. Therefore, while the suit was successful, the author wonders if the resulting negative online information has caused more damage than the original, negative review.

A much more recent suit is likely causing substantial damage to the reputation of the firm. In this case the firm is out of Houston, Texas. The client, who fired the firm prior to writing the review, wrote comments such as, “I wouldn’t even give this law firm a star,” Cai wrote of the law firm on Yelp on July 7. ‘When I first start (sic) talking to them they were very pushy. When I try to reach them, no one would answer my call or email. Please, don’t waste your time here.’”²⁹ She also accused the attorneys of bursting their way into her bedroom when she was in bed and not fully clothed. In response, the firm notes that it was directed to enter her room by the woman’s mother. It is also alleged that after the firm requested that the woman adjust her review to be more accurate, she wrote more negative reviews or added more negative information to her original reviews. After the suit was filed, the defendant amended her reviews to note that she was being sued. The result has been catastrophic in terms of the responses from the web. Negative reviews on Yelp, Google and Facebook now proliferate. Numerous articles have been written.³⁰ The firm’s website was even inaccessible for a time. (It is back up as of this writing.)

Generally Successful Results

There are at least two cases where there has been very little attention paid to the lawsuits by the general public. In addition, the verdicts have been substantial.

²⁹ <http://www.chron.com/neighborhood/fortbend/crime-courts/article/Law-firm-sues-woman-after-she-writes-bad-reviews-8468178.php>

³⁰ <http://www.houstonpress.com/news/student-sued-by-law-firm-for-bad-facebook-review-asks-judge-to-dismiss-case-8614075>

In *Blake v. Ann-Marie Giustibelli, P.A.*,³¹ the client and her husband wrote negative reviews about Giustibelli. The reviews included language such as:

- "No integrity. Will say one thing and do another. Her fees outweigh the truth."
- "Altered her charges to 4 times the original quote with no explanation."

The case was successful, resulting in a \$350,000 verdict which was upheld on appeal. The husband settled with the firm. The client set up a website attacking the firm, which is either gone or not easily findable as of this writing. The bulk, if not all of the commentary online has come from law-related websites and there has been no response from the general public. The first site found in a Google search is the site belonging to the law firm.

The case of *Pampattiwar v. Hinson*³² had similar results and a larger verdict of over \$400,00. This case was also upheld on appeal. The attack on Hinson called her a "crook lawyer" and an "extremely fraudulent lady." As with Giusibelli, there seems to have been no public fall-out; most attention has come from legal websites. The first result on Google is Hinson's website. The second and third though involve the lawsuit though, so even in suits where the general public fails to pay attention, the damage on Google can remain for a long period of time. This particular suit was filed in 2014.

Before you make the decision to sue, it is best to evaluate the amount of damage one negative review will actually cause to your firm versus the potential negativity which *could* result as the news of your suit is brought to the public's attention. In some cases, a suit may well be necessary. But in others, in the majority, a better response may be to (appropriately) seek out positive reviews to minimize the potential damage of a negative one.

The Best Way to Handle a Negative Review

Unfortunately, in many cases, it is not possible to get a review removed from the Web. On sites such as Avvo, if you believe the review is from someone who was not actually a client, you can ask Avvo to look into the situation. Avvo will ask the reviewer to confirm the review.³³ This, at least, should mean that if the person does not provide a real e-mail address that Avvo will remove the review. The author can confirm that reviews from non-clients have been removed on Avvo.

In the end, the best way to deal with a negative review is to provide a polite response. If you are too angry to give a polite response, the best response is none at all or to wait until you are calm. Remember, it is very unlikely that one negative review will have a huge impact on your

³¹ *Blake v. Ann-Marie Giustibelli, P.A.*, 182 So.3d 881 (2016).

³² *Pampattiwar v. Hinson*, 756 S.E.2d 246 (2014).

³³ http://www.avvo.com/support/What_if_I_get_a_negative_Client_Review

practice. As noted, the best way to deal with reviews is to consistently ask for them from satisfied clients at the end of representation - assuming, of course, that it is acceptable for you to do so in your jurisdiction(s). Never offer your clients anything in return for the review.

Specific Rules

Honest Communication & 8.x Integrity

The first two rules for online behavior should be considered an umbrella under which all behavior is judged. First, attorneys should never be misleading in their communications in relation to their services. No communication should contain a material misrepresentation of either fact or law, nor should any statement omit facts necessary to make the statement appropriate under rule 7.1. This concept flows throughout all communications by attorneys when discussing their services. The second set of rules, 8.x, involve maintaining the integrity of the profession; in other words, not holding the profession up to ridicule through one's behavior.

Advertising

The first rule of which attorneys need to be aware relates directly to advertising and it is Model Rule 7.2. One of the issues that can be a problem under Rule 7.2 is that various states require attorneys to keep all ads for a certain period of time. In Pennsylvania, for example, attorneys must keep copies of ads for 2 years. Other states have longer requirements. It is also important to note that a specific attorney must take responsibility for the ad and its placement, so make certain that a specific attorney is responsible for every action, even if performed by a non-attorney. Fortunately, the various accounts are meant to stay intact, so it is easy to keep records. If a post needs to be deleted, grab a screenshot of it and store it where it will be easily located. Make certain to identify the attorney responsible for the item.

Various states have other requirements, so attorneys should check Rule 7.2 in every state in which they are licensed.

Solicitation of Clients

Also implicated by use of social media for communication with potential clients is Model Rule 7.3. Attorneys may not solicit potential clients through real-time communication. This aspect of the rule does not apply to family members, current clients or other attorneys. Real-time communication includes telephone, in-person and real-time electronic chat. There is disagreement as to whether attorneys may solicit new clients through large chat rooms in which a large number of people are present, versus instant messages which are more personal and direct. Given this, it is safe to assume that starting a chat on Facebook is real-time communication and should be avoided. E-mail is considered written communication. To obey the rule, at a minimum, attorneys must label advertising as such and comply with Rule 7.1.

Attorneys may not solicit a client who has already made it clear he does not wish to be contacted, or if, “the solicitation involves coercion, duress or harassment.” This means if someone has made it clear through social media that he desires not to be contacted, it would be a violation of the rule to contact him. The tone of writing matters as well. If the content is seen as inappropriate, it violates the rule.

In most states, it is also improper to seek to communicate with a potential client who the “lawyer knows or reasonably should know that the physical, emotional or mental state of the person is such that the person could not exercise reasonable judgment in employing a lawyer.” Given this, it is inappropriate to seek to directly communicate via social media with someone the lawyer knows or should know is in the midst of a crisis. For example, tweeting at someone who just lost a loved one or sending a direct message to such a person. Also, tagging someone in a Facebook post when you know the person just suffered a loss would be inappropriate in the author’s opinion.

Multi-State Practice

An area in which it is easy to get in trouble, due to the vast and multi-jurisdictional nature of the Internet, is multi-state practice. Attorneys must comply with their home state rules in relation to:

- Where the office is located
- Where the attorneys are admitted
- How they are seeking clients
- How they engage in advertising
- All states’ rules in which they market

Additional Ethical Issues

Aside from advertising, communication with potential clients, and inappropriate use of social media in discovery, there are other ways in which legal professionals have gotten themselves in trouble using social media.

Confidentiality and Honesty

One potential area of trouble involves confidentiality, Rule 1.6. An attorney got herself in trouble by sharing confidential information about a case in such a way as to make it possible to identify her client. She also provided information that suggested that she knew her client had lied on the stand and did nothing about it. In addition to Rule 1.6, the attorney was accused of

violating other rules involving honesty, fraud, and more.³⁴ In the end, the attorney lost her job of 19 years³⁵ and was suspended for 90 days by two different jurisdictions.^{36,37}

Another serious consequence the attorney suffered is that when searching her name online; page after page of results show her disciplinary problems. Though she has since opened her own firm, it is difficult to find anything positive about her on the web in a Google search. Unfortunately, a check in August 2016 shows that the majority of information about the attorney still involves her disciplinary proceedings.

While it is perfectly acceptable to discuss one's life, and even one's professional activities, it is important to obey the ethical rules while doing so. Discussing a case on a blog while it is going on, outside of appropriate PR, is a bad idea. Failing to protect a client's confidentiality is even worse. And, of course, failing to properly inform the court of inappropriate conduct by the client was a serious mistake. Judgment is a critical part of both practicing law and posting online.

Jokes & Satire

Jokes can also be a serious problem online. It is impossible to see body language or hear the tone in a person's voice. Something one person might find amusing might not be so funny to another. As a result, joking through social media can be problematic, especially on a politically charged topic. An Indiana deputy attorney general learned this the hard way when he tweeted an unfortunate joke surrounding protests in Wisconsin in 2011. His tweet led to an argument with the editor of Mother Jones Magazine. In turn, the magazine researched the attorney and found similar comments on his blog. In the end, the price of the attorney's online behavior was his job.³⁸ The attorney general's office stated that it chose to fire the attorney after a "thorough and expeditious review," noting that it respects First Amendment rights, but expects civility from its public servants.

Seeking Attention for a Client or Friend

There are rules about how members of the bar may use the press. Similar rules apply to using social media to advocate for a client, or even for a friend. As an example, a lawyer in Louisiana was disbarred due to a Twitter and blog campaign in which she created a petition and

³⁴ *In the Matter of Kristine Ann Peshek, Commission No. 09 CH 89*, Illinois Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission (2009.)

³⁵ Debra Cassens Weiss, *Blogging Assistant PD Accused of Revealing Secrets of Little –Disguised Clients* (2009.) http://www.abajournal.com/news/article/blogging_assistant_pd_accused_of_revealing_secrets_of_little-disguised_clie/

³⁶ Illinois Supreme Court disbars 12, suspends 26, <http://iln.isba.org/2010/05/18/illinois-supreme-court-disbars-12-suspends-26>

³⁷ *Office of Lawyer Regulation v. Peshek*, 2011 WI 47 (2011.)

³⁸ Indiana state prosecutor fired over remarks about Wisconsin protests (2011.) <http://www.cnn.com/2011/US/02/23/indiana.ammo.tweet/>

encouraged the public to directly contact two judges in a custody case involving a friend.³⁹ To facilitate communication with the judges, she provided their contact information. She also revealed confidential information, including linking to an audio recording of the children talking about the alleged sexual abuse they suffered. The disbarred attorney was not admitted in Mississippi, the state where the case was located. A judge involved in the custody case filed a complaint with Louisiana. The attorney felt that she was protected by the First Amendment and that she did not engage in any ethical misconduct.

The Hearing Committee determined that the lawyer violated Rules 3.5(a) and (b) as well as 8.4(a), (c) and (d). The Committee determined that, among other violations, the attorney disseminated false, misleading and inflammatory information about how the judges handled the case and encouraged *ex parte* contact with the judges in an effort to influence rulings. The committee felt that the attorney, “acted knowingly, if not intentionally” and “caused actual and potential harm by threatening the independence and integrity of the judicial system and caused the judges concern for their personal safety and well-being.” The end result is that the attorney was, as previously noted, disbarred.

Given the opportunity for easy sharing of information on social media, it is critical that attorneys think carefully before using the web to seek to encourage action on behalf of their clients. They would do well to advise their clients to use the same level of caution.

Personal v. Private

Sometimes attorneys will develop both a private and public persona on the Web, believing the two will remain separate. Unfortunately, this is simply not the case. It takes very little effort to perform research on the Web and to connect the public and private behaviors of someone who has written something offensive or upsetting. In an infamous case, an assistant Michigan attorney general was fired due to his online (and perhaps offline) behavior surrounding the student body president of the University of Michigan. The attorney argued that his speech was political and also had nothing to do with his work as an assistant attorney general. But in the end, the public and private became much too intertwined, and the attorney general was left with no choice but to fire him. Recently the student won a verdict of \$4.5 million for invasion of privacy, defamation, abuse of process, and intentional infliction of emotional distress.⁴⁰

The attorney in this case did not hide who he was, but he did try to argue that his actions had nothing to do with his work. However, as a public servant and as an attorney, it was simply impossible to separate the public employee from the (not so) private behavior, and that cost

³⁹ *In Re: Joyce Nanine McCool*, Attorney Disciplinary Proceeding,
<http://www.lasc.org/opinions/2015/15B0284.opn.pdf>

⁴⁰ Kevin Dolak, Attorney Andrew Shirvell Ordered to Pay 4.5 Million for Attacks on Gay Student (2012.)
<http://abcnews.go.com/US/attorney-andrew-shirvell-ordered-pay-45-million-attacks/story?id=17028621>

him his job. He was fired for, “violat[ing] office policies, engag[ing] in borderline stalking behavior,” and more. The attorney sometimes posted his online attacks while at work, and engaged in behavior that was, “not protected by the First Amendment...”⁴¹ Much of his behavior was offline, but it was his online behavior that brought an incredible amount of attention to what he was doing, so much so that he ended up on TV shows including *Anderson Cooper* on CNN.⁴²

More recently, a bankruptcy attorney who posted angry statements about a car crash in which a corrections officer was killed ended up creating a huge mess for himself on Facebook. In the end he posted an apology and resigned from the law firm at which he worked.⁴³

It is unwise to believe that anyone can live two separate lives online. If one engages in controversial behavior, the result will be a magnifying glass of attention. In turn, it is virtually impossible for the individual to keep his private and public online lives from colliding.

Conclusion

Attorneys need to understand how the public uses social media so they can reach potential clients, but also must understand how the ethical rules apply to its use. Make sure you familiarize yourself with this everchanging landscape so you can take advantage of the benefits while mitigating any risks.

41 David Jesse, Andrew Shirvell fired from job at Michigan Attorney General’s Office (2010.)
<http://www.annarbor.com/news/andrew-shirvell-fired-from-job-at-attorney-generals-office/#.UFQIPVEQd60>

42 Anderson Cooper: Andrew Shirvell Responsible For His Firing Not ‘Liberal Media,’
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/11/09/anderson-cooper-andrew-sh_n_780874.html

43 Len Wells, A bankruptcy attorney’s Facebook mess, Courier & Press (January 23, 2016).
<http://www.courierpress.com/columnists/len-wells/len-wells-a-bankruptcy-attorneys-facebook-mess-29a20fb1-8d56-3de0-e053-0100007fc312-366304311.html>

LOCAL SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION



A GUIDE FOR ATTORNEYS

BY: Chris Dreyer

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INTRODUCTION

Disclaimer: *The following guide contains information that will help you rank on page one for local searches. It assumes that you have consulted your respective state code of conduct for advertising online.*



87% of U.S. Adults use the internet according to a Pew Research Center report.ⁱ People log on day and night to search for products, services, organizations, events and virtually any other kind of content related you can think of.

This guide is about how attorneys can leverage organic search on a local level to market their practice. At the beginning of the internet boom, it was like icing on the cake to have a website. As personal computing became more affordable and the internet more accessible, a website became a necessity for doing business.

Today, just having a website is not good enough. That site must be structured in a way that makes it easy to find online. For attorneys serving a local market, there are a specific set of tasks that can help them gain more visibility in search.

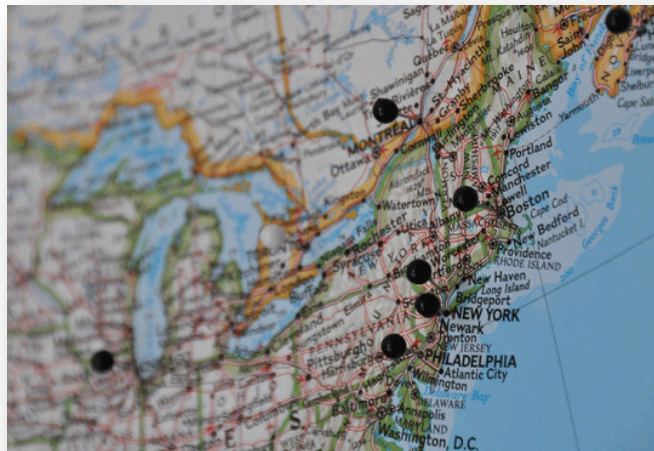
By harnessing the organic (or natural) traffic from search engines, attorneys can drive more traffic to their sites. More traffic means more chances to convert visitors into loyal clients.

This guide is specifically made for legal professionals. Some of the search engine optimization tactics mentioned in the following pages can be applied across many industries but others are uniquely tailored for attorneys. The purpose of this guide is to help you understand how important local SEO is to your success in marketing online. You will learn why local citations are important, why search engines need help understanding

the information on your website and why having a mobile-friendly design is better for your visitors among many other things. Most importantly, you will learn how to make search work for you.

WHAT IS LOCAL SEO?

Searcher intent is a large part of search engine optimization (SEO). You must understand what people are looking for as it relates to your business in order to optimize your website. Local SEO is all about making your site accessible to local searchers and relevant for search engines looking to serve location-specific content to their users. It is also about making your website relevant for local searchers who often have unique motivations for using search to find a local law firm.



Why Should You Care?

As recently as December of 2011, ¹Pew Research reported that some 55% of adults got news and information about local businesses from the internet and search. Personal computing is becoming more powerful and more convenient. Mobile device usage has already overtaken that of traditional desktop computing. What does all this mean? People use the internet for information. It has become incredibly easy to get access to a wealth of information on all sorts of topics (including about local businesses). This has made more traditional channels of buyer research (i.e. phone books, printed business directories, mailers and print advertisements) virtually obsolete.

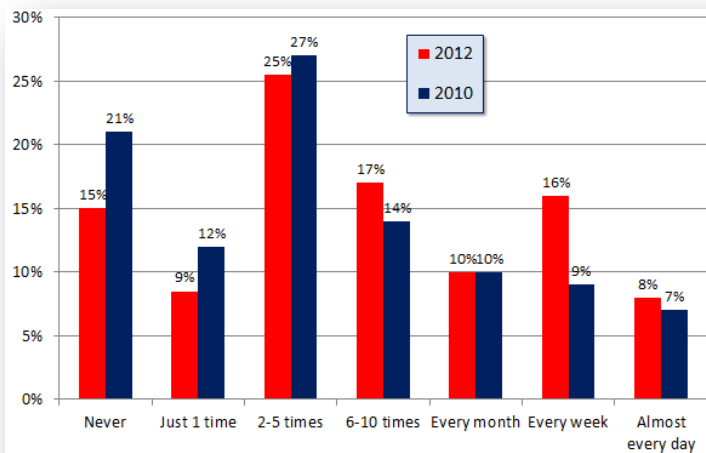


Photo Credit Search Engine Land: Graph showing how many times consumers used the internet to find a local business in the past 12 months.

A study performed by ²Search Engine Land in 2012 and featured on the ³Yelp Blog reported that 85% of consumers use the internet to find local businesses. The survey conducted used local consumers in the U.S., Canada and U.K. There were over 2,800 respondents. The survey showed that only 15% of consumers had not used the internet to find a local business.

Benefits for Your Practice

Enhancing your presence in local search is also an opportunity to market your business. By performing some simple (and some not so simple) tasks related to SEO, attorneys have a chance to show up in front of customers that may not have known they were out there.

¹ <http://www.pewinternet.org/2011/12/14/where-people-get-information-about-restaurants-and-other-local-businesses/>

² <http://searchengineland.com/study-72-of-consumers-trust-online-reviews-as-much-as-personal-recommendations-114152>

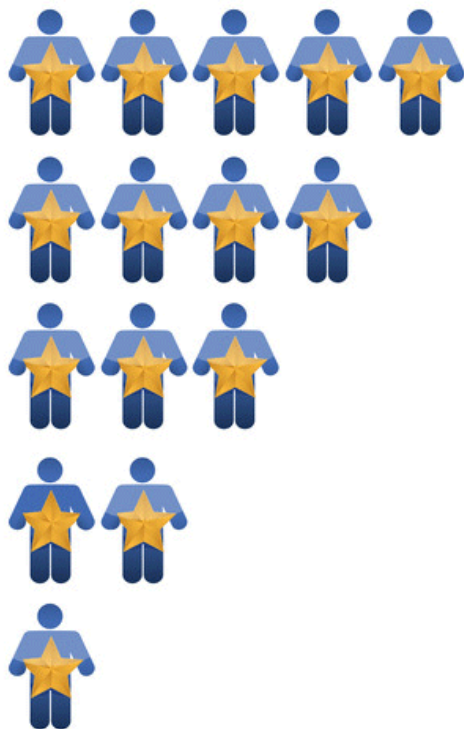
³ <http://biz.yelp.com/blog/survey-85-of-consumers-use-the-internet-to-find-local-businesses>

I. WHAT DOES LOCAL SEO LOOK LIKE?

If you are new to optimizing a site for search, it can be hard to visualize all of the components. The diagram below outlines many common tasks and how they fit into the local SEO landscape.



In the diagram above, the location-specific page can play an important role in local SEO. Content that is relevant to local searchers or relevant to their location can be placed on pages like these. Citations (or mentions of a business's name on other websites) are important for enhancing the overall online presence of a local business. Having a business listing on authority sites like Google My Business is another way to increase the likelihood you will show up on the first page.



Local links (or inbound links from other organizations that are close to yours geographically) are also part of the equation. Links from websites that are relevant to a user's location are powerful indicators of relevance.

Reviews help searchers make purchasing decisions and for local businesses, these can make or break an online presence. User generated content that has location information attached to it is great for local SEO.

Optimizing a site (whether for a local or national audience) used to be about technical tasks and shifty practices⁴. While many of these things used to work, search engine optimization has shifted focus onto user experience rather than satisfying a search engine spider.

⁵There are still some technical tasks for both local and national SEO however, in recent years Google and other search engines have looked favorably on sites that provide a good user experience. It isn't enough anymore to have all the right words in all the right places. It's also about how visitors to your site are able to get the information they need to solve their problems.

The basic premise is this. A primary goal of leading search engines is to deliver relevant content to their users. People look for all kinds of things online and they often want content that helps them solve their problems. When search engines see that a website is achieving this goal for their users, they are more likely to serve that page to other users looking for similar content.

Writing for Visitors

For any kind of SEO campaign, you should design and write for users first and think about search engines second. The content on your website contributes to a favorable ranking in search. The following are some examples of content written for search engines and content written for real people.

Examples of content written for search engines include:

- **Spun content:** This is content written by a software program. In general, they are hard for real people to read and have little to know editorial value.
- **Keyword-stuffed content:** This is blog posts, articles, web page copy or any other text that is filled with a target keyword phrase. Generally



⁴ <https://www.reliablesoft.net/10-bad-seo-practices-that-will-destroy-your-google-rankings/>

⁵ <http://moz.com/beginners-guide-to-seo/how-usability-experience-and-content-affect-search-engine-rankings>

these types of articles are so packed with one keyword phrase and its variants that it doesn't sound natural when read.

- **Cloaked Content:** This is an advanced technique where a webmaster will show one type of content to users and another type to search engines. Search engines will think a page is about one particular topic or at least more relevant and display that page to users even if the content that users see isn't really relevant to their query.

Examples of content written for real people include:

- Well researched articles, blog posts, or other copy that provide true value to website visitors.
- Images, video and other non-text-based content that provides value to visitors of websites.

No matter what you write about, try and approach it from the perspective of helping your readers. What content would they find useful? How can it help alleviate some kind of pain they are having? Consistently producing content that satisfies those things will create loyalty for your brand.

For any kind of SEO campaign, you should design and write for users first and think about search engines second.

II. OPTIMIZE FOR SEARCH AND FOR VISITORS

On-Page Optimization

Before we dive into the next section, it is helpful to understand what “on-site” optimization is. For SEO, there are some tasks that can be performed to a website directly (such as having the right keywords in text) and others that are performed elsewhere on the internet (known as off-site tasks). Off-site activities still influence the ranking of a website but they are performed on other websites.

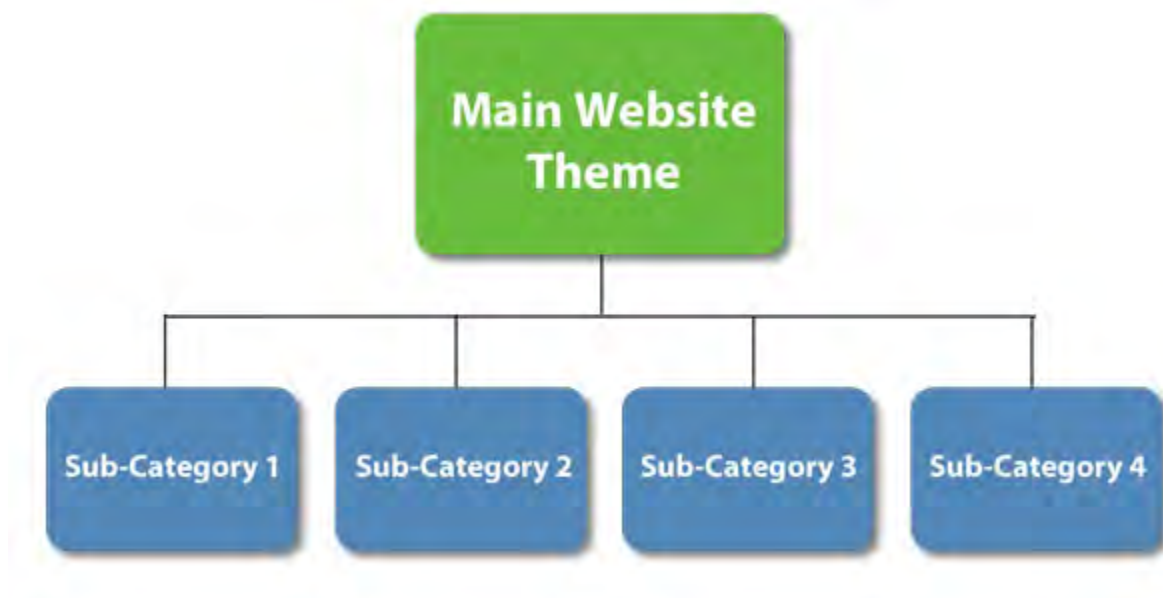
You will want to make sure you have the following elements squared away for your on-page optimization:

- Keyword + Location in meta description and title tag
- Keyword + Location in copy of page
- Your Business address
- Local Business schema on the page (more on this later)
- Keyword + Location in URL of page
- Keyword + Location as file name of images rendered on the page and in their alt attributes if appropriate

Keyword + Location

Your website should have an overall theme. For instance, a specialty-trained clinician may focus on one area of the body for all patients that they see. There may be subsets of that specialty as well. That practitioner’s website should have the main overall theme at the top (i.e. home page) and the sub-sections as other pages of the site.

Each page of the site should be focused on a specific keyword. For location pages, there should be one page for each specific location or office that the attorney has. Then if a user searches for *personal injury lawyer Detroit*, a page optimized for that phrase (and if the practice is actually located in Detroit), it will rank very well for that localized query. In the image below, a simple content umbrella architecture is illustrated.



Keyword + Location in copy of page

In the actual paragraphs of information on your page, you should have a target keyword phrase (for example “lawyers”) and the location your office is located in (i.e. Philadelphia). Your page would then be trying to rank for the phrase “lawyers Philadelphia”. Note that you could also rank for variations of this phrase like “Lawyers in Philadelphia”, “Philadelphia lawyers”, or “find a lawyer in Philadelphia”.

Address relevant to location on page

This would simply be your business address. It should be located somewhere on your location-specific page.

III. ATTORNEY SCHEMA

Technically schema should be used in the location-specific page however because of its complexity we decided to make a chapter for it. If you aren’t familiar with schema, it is simply HTML markup that is used to make content machine understandable. Search engines can find and index content but they have a harder time understanding the deeper meaning of text and the relationship the content has with other things.

Schema will not cause your site to rank better in search but it will enhance the way results for your website appear in search. This can then make it more likely that a searcher will click on your SERP result.

The screenshot shows the 'Attorney Schema Generator' website. A red box highlights the 'Attorney Schema' section, which includes a 4.6/5 star rating (93% from 11 votes) and a description: 'The "Attorney Schema Generator" can be applicable to all attorneys that would like to mark up their name, address, and phone number using schema.org vocabulary.' A red line points from this section to a callout box on the right. The callout box contains the title 'Attorney Schema Generator Using Schema.org | Schema ...', the URL 'www.microdatagenerator.com/attorney-schema/', the same 4.6/5 star rating, and a description: 'The "Attorney Schema Generator" can be applicable to all attorneys that would like to mark up their name, address, and phone number using schema.org ...'. Below the callout box, there are links for 'Join The Community (it's free!)', 'Login | Register', 'Post Questions | Give Answers', and a 'Donate' button. At the bottom of the page, there is a 'GENERATE IT:' section with a 'Business Name:' input field.

There are different types of schema and within those types there are specific schemas for different people, places, things and concepts. For the purposes of this eBook, we’ll be talking about microdata. For an in-depth education on schema, you can learn more at schema.org.

Attorney Specific Schema

In this section we’ll talk about two ways to add schema to your site.

1. Manually add HTML code to your content
2. Use The Google Data Highlighter

Manually Adding Code to Your Website

If you are familiar with HTML, it's pretty simple to add schema markup to your content. There are dozens of different kinds of content you can markup but we will only focus on adding it to contact information (name, address phone number, etc), reviews, business or office hours and GeoCoordinates.

schema.org

The Itemtype

For all of the information you want a search engine to understand as being related to your law firm, it must be encased in markup defining the item type as attorney. The most common way to do that is with a <div></div> tag within which all of your other markup will go (i.e. address, phone number, office hours, etc).

It will look like this:

```
<div itemscope itemtype="http://schema.org/Attorney">  
  <!--Other markup and your content goes in between these tags-->  
</div>
```

Your Firm Name and Address

Next put the firm's name and address within the <div> tag that you just made. Note that address has its own item scope which we will make next. First write the name of your firm encased in a tag with the item property "name". The syntax looks like this:

```
<span itemtype="name">Sam & Sam LLC</span>
```

So far your markup should look like this:

```
<div itemscope itemtype="http://schema.org/Attorney">  
  <span itemtype="name">Sam & Sam LLC</span>  
</div>
```

Next add the address item scope (note it should be in a new <div> tag):

```
<div itemprop="address" itemscope  
  itemtype="http://schema.org/PostalAddress">  
</div>
```

Now your markup should look like this:

```
<div itemscope itemtype="http://schema.org/Attorney">
  <span itemtype="name">Sam & Sam LLC</span>
  <div itemprop="address" itemscope
    itemtype="http://schema.org/PostalAddress">
  </div>
</div>
```

Now you can add your address information. Each part of an address has its own property. They would be written as follows.

```
<span itemprop="streetAddress">1234 Street Name Blvd.</span>
<span itemprop="addressLocality">City Name</span>,
<span itemprop="addressRegion">MI</span>
<span itemprop="postalCode">48102</span>
```

Your finished attorney name and address markup should look like this:

```
<div itemscope itemtype="http://schema.org/Attorney">
  <span itemtype="name">Sam & Sam LLC</span>
  <div itemprop="address" itemscope
    itemtype="http://schema.org/PostalAddress">
    <span itemprop="streetAddress">1234 Street Name Blvd.</span>
    <span itemprop="addressLocality">City Name</span>,
    <span itemprop="addressRegion">MI</span>
    <span itemprop="postalCode">48102</span>
  </div>
</div>
```

[Schema.org](http://schema.org/)⁶ is an excellent resource for visual aids when marking up content. You can refer back to it as you go through your site. The site also contains references for markup on all kinds of content.

⁶ <http://schema.org/>

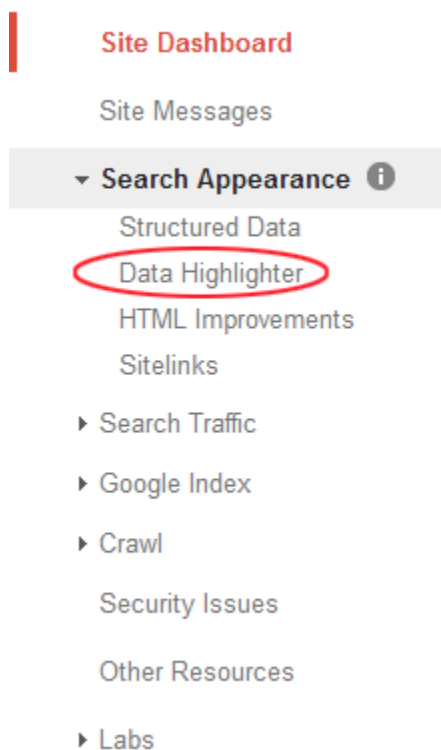
IV. USING GOOGLE'S DATA HIGHLIGHTER

If you don't have a working knowledge of HTML, you can still markup content on your site. Google has an excellent tool called the Data Highlighter in the Search Console interface. Attorneys can use point and click functionality to highlight text, images and URLs on their site to help Google learn about their content.

Note that you must have your website configured in Search Console in order to use Data Highlighter.

Start by logging into your account and visiting google.com/webmasters/tools.

Once you're in the Search Console interface, click on Search Appearance -> Data Highlighter.



The default page has a lot of information and a video on how to use the Data Highlighter. If you feel comfortable go ahead and click the "Start Highlighting" button.

Data Highlighter. Show off your site's data in search.

Introduction to Data Highlighter



0:00 / 1:34

YouTube

Start Highlighting

Does your site contain structured data like event listings or review ratings?

Now there's a new alternative to [webmaster markup](#) for helping Google understand your site's data. With Data Highlighter, you simply "tag" each data field with your mouse.

Then Google can present your data more attractively, and in new ways, in search results.

After you click the button, a prompt will appear asking for the page and type of data that you want to teach Google about.

Enter the URL of a typical page on your site

Type of information to highlight ▾

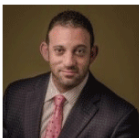
☒ Tag this page and others like it

☐ Tag just this page

Once you submit the URL and other information, you'll be taken to a view of the page from within the Search Console interface.

Testimonials

*"Chris has literally delivered on every idea or marketing concept we have discussed which is rare in his industry. I have worked with a number of so called experts in the past and **no one has approached the level of customer service or results that Chris has.**"*



- Matthew Dolman - Managing Partner at the [Dolman Law Group](#)

*"Chris is **exceptional and above the others in the SEO field** which is filled with people who overpromise and under-deliver. I had Findlaw which provided a good return on my investment but they are solely directory based and slow to react to google trends or customer needs. I've had companies which professed to get me on the*

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 Email: chris@attorneyrankings.org

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PUBLISH Cancel ⚙

My Data Items

Local business

Name: required
 Address: required
 Telephone: required
 Opening hours:
 Category:
 Department
 Name:
 Telephone:
 Opening hours:
 Image:
 URL:
 Average rating:
 Rating:
 Vote: **Highlight data on the page to the left**
 Review:
 Reviewer:
 Review rating:
 Review date:

Now all you have to do is highlight the text or images you want to submit to Google. Once you highlight something, a drop down menu will appear asking for the type of content that you've highlighted.

When you are done, click the red publish button in the top right corner of the page.

The Data Highlighter works in the same way schema does. It creates structured data that Google can have a deeper understanding of. Note that marking up your content won't help your pages rank any higher in search but it will help Google to display your data more accurately and in new ways. This can help increase click through rates to your site.

V. LOCAL DIRECTORIES FOR ATTORNEYS

Directories are still a good source of links and traffic for attorneys. The trick is to submit your site to attorney-specific directories. You should also watch out for ones that provide little value. These are often easy to spot because they are shallow in terms of content and easy to submit your site to.

Attorney-Specific Directories

The following are some directories (and their corresponding PageRank) specific to the legal profession:

PageRank	URL
PR7	http://lawyers.justia.com/new-profile – requires fax
PR6	http://www.avvo.com/free-lawyer-advertising – credit card confirmation (Avvo law firm group claim: http://www.avvo.com/support/all-firm-claim)
PR6	http://washlaw.edu/ – Sadly, this directory has been discontinued. See: http://www.washlaw.edu/lfirms/
PR4	http://attorneydirectorydb.org/
PR5	http://www.elocallawyers.com/
PR5	http://lawyers.uslegal.com/
PR4	http://lawlink.com/ - need years of school & bar #
PR4	(-1 PR) – http://www.lawyercentral.com/claim-my-attorney-profile.html – pic & bar verification
PR4	http://attorneypages.com/ - bar # and law school required
PR4	http://attorneyfee.com/ - credit card confirmation
PR4	http://targetlaw.com/
PR4	http://www.lawyerratingz.com/
PR3	http://www.lawqa.com/
PR3	(+1 PR) – http://attorney-online.info/dir – requires client assistance
PR3	http://www.alphalegal.com/
PR3	http://www.dilawctory.com/
PR3	http://www.lawnosh.net/
PR3	http://www.ilawyerdirectory.com/ (GEO directory for Southern California law firms)
PR2	(+2 PR) – http://lawyers.lawyerlegion.com/create.php – requires bar #
PR2	http://www.legalwebfinder.com/
PR2	http://www.attorneyprofile.org/ – Not available currently.
PR1	http://www.findlawyersbycity.com/
PR1	http://www.mylegalpractice.com/

PageRank 0

PR0	(-1 PR)- http://directoryoflawyer.com/
PR0	http://lawyersinfo.org/
PR0	indexlawyer.com

Free Local Lawyer Directories (Citations Only)

PR7	http://www.hg.org/
PR6	http://www.lawguru.com/
PR2	http://attorneyyellowpages.com/
PR1	http://www.lawyersattorneysguide.com/

Top 100 Law Firm Directories

We have compiled [a list of the top 100 law firm directories](#)⁷ on attorneyrankings.org. It is one of the most comprehensive sources of directory references in one place. Lawyers can sort by price, legal niche, and domain rating to see which directories are right for them.

Content Development

Attorneys are unique when it comes to content marketing. Information related to their practice and to the law is highly technical, dependent on context and if written improperly, could cause problems.

When looking for someone to generate content for an attorney website, find someone who has a JD. This goes for articles on web pages and blog posts or any content that could be seen as legal advice.

VI. LOCAL CITATIONS

⁸It is estimated that more than 80% of internet users leverage a search engine to find what they are looking for online. The more opportunities you can provide yourself to show up in search results, the more traffic you are likely to receive. Local citations are simply mentions of your business name and information on some other website. These may include links and they may not.

NAP: This acronym stands for name, address and phone number.

The primary goal should be to drive people to your website but you can increase the chances of that happening by making local citations. These are third party websites where you can list your business information. Common examples from listing sites include a Google Places Page, a Bing Business listing, Yahoo's business directory, Yellowpages.com, etc.

Creating Your Business Listings

Whether you have filled out 1 or 100 citation profiles online it is vital that you do it right, therefore *here are some quick tips for filling out profiles correctly:*

- NAP: This acronym stands for name, address and phone number. Make sure all profiles you fill out have at least your name, address and phone number (NAP)
- Keep the information consistent across all profiles
- Fill out listings completely

⁷ <http://www.attorneyrankings.org/top-100-law-firm-directories/>

⁸ <http://searchengineland.com/study-72-of-consumers-trust-online-reviews-as-much-as-personal-recommendations-114152>

- Use keywords related to your practice
- Include your website and links to any social sites you are active on
- Remove duplicate listings

If you've been in business for a while, chances are that there is already basic business information on many of these kinds of sites (i.e. business listing websites). Claiming your profile on these sites is all that is necessary instead of starting up new accounts.

If you are filling out profiles manually, make sure you search for your business name on a website first to see if a default profile already exists. If it does, follow the site's instructions on how to claim the listing.

Filling Out Your Profiles Completely

This deserves some special attention because of its importance to the impact of your citation work. Each area of a profile online where is an opportunity to make the profile more relevant to things your target market might be searching for. When you don't fill out a profile completely, these are missed opportunities.

- Add images and logos
- Add videos if you have them
- Fill out category information accurately and sub-category information as well. For example if you are a an attorney select that and if your practice area is available (such as personal injury), make sure that is selected as well
- Add keywords relevant to your practice if a space exists for that
- When you add images or video, make sure their file names, descriptions or other keyword fields associated with them have geo-specific keywords in them
- Make sure the description in a profile has your geo-specific location keywords inserted

NAP Consistency

It's important to make sure your name, address and phone number are consistent across your profiles. In accurate information can result in confusion among searchers and search engines as to which information is the correct information.

Data Aggregators

Aside from smaller business listing sites, there are much larger data aggregation companies. Smaller websites typically get their information from these larger data distributors. These are important because if you don't have the right information with these entities, chances are the rest of the information across the web about your business will also be inaccurate.

The major data aggregators include: (See appendix for a comprehensive list of smaller business listing sites)

- Infogroup
- Acxiom
- Neustar Localeze
- Factual



If you do not fill out business listing profiles on any other sites, you should still make sure your information is accurate with the larger organizations.

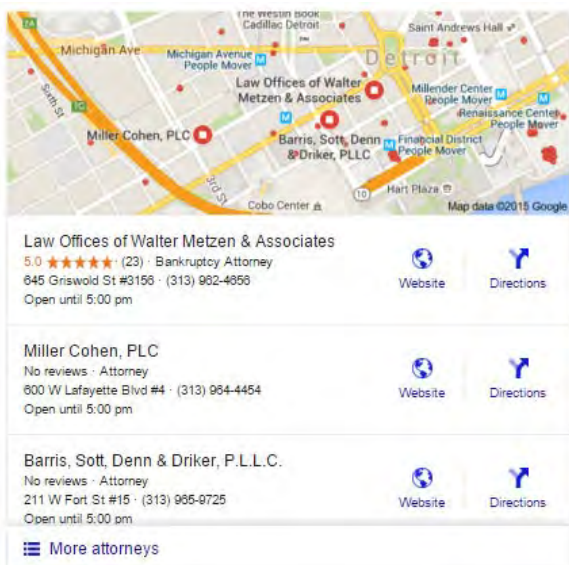
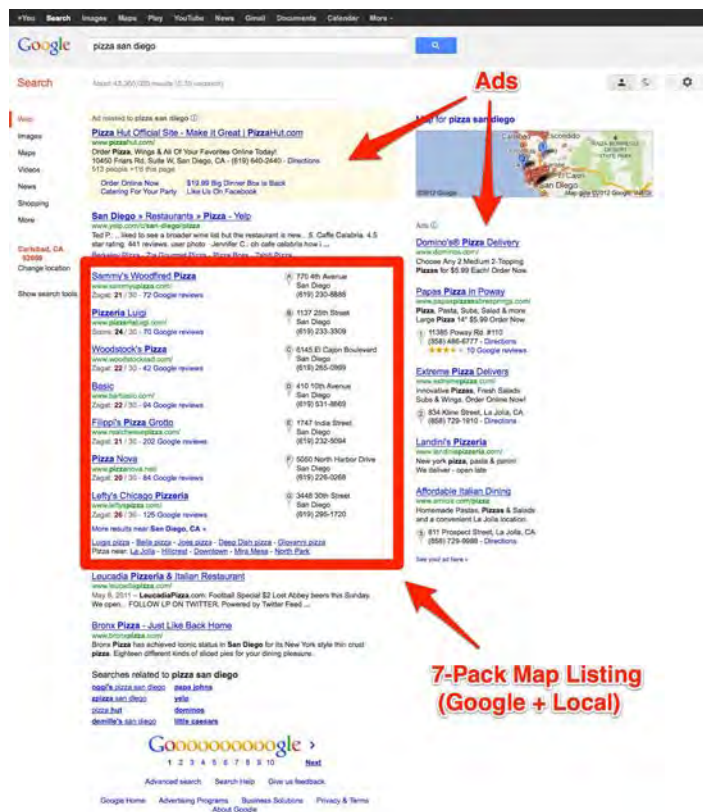
VII. GOOGLE PLACES FOR BUSINESS

We separate Google Places from the rest of citation work because it is a little bit different. Google has an extremely strong presence in local search making it a must have listing for lawyers. Some of the first results to appear for users looking for local businesses are Google business listings.

The Ever-Changing Local Pack

The group of listings that shows in maps when a user's search is specific to local businesses is known as the local pack of results. For a long time it was populated by a group of seven listings in any given area. In mid-2014, Google changed it so that there were only 3 results showing instead of 7 making the top spot that much more valuable.

Google had a lot of data points as its motivation for making the change. For lawyers, having a listing that stands out is increasingly important in Google Business Listings. Strategies like getting reviews, making sure your firm is listed in the



appropriate category, and filling out your profile completely can help make a difference in search.

The New Local SEO 3 Pack

Here is what things look like now in search. The default number of listings that show up in an SERP is 3. If you click on any result you are taken to a larger map showing you more listings.

VIII.TOOLS FOR LOCAL SEO

If you are submitting local citations yourself, you will find that it is extremely tedious and time-consuming work. Websites that populate business-listing profiles allow you to get back to what you do best, working with patients.

Yext

This is one of the leading citation companies on the market. For a fee, Yext will populate dozens and dozens of business listing profiles on sites like Yellowpages.com, Superpages.com, Yelp.com, and many others.



The way it works is that you create an account, log in and then fill out one profile on Yext's interface with all of your business information. You can include name, phone number, URL, social profiles, business description, keywords, photos, logos, videos and a host of other information.

You then sit back and relax while Yext disseminates the information to dozens of different websites. This comes in extremely handy when you don't have a lot of time to do the work yourself or if you need to change a lot of listings quickly.

Of all the citation services, Yext has a reasonable monthly service plan however, you have to sign up for a year in advance and you can't actually pay monthly. Not a bad deal if you are a large organization but a hefty cost for small businesses who may find better use for budgets elsewhere.

UBL (Universal Business Listing)

For 79 dollars per year, Universal Business Listing will distribute your information to core databases that are said to be the foundation of the majority of U.S. search platforms. The "Essential" package includes listings set up on sites like ShowMeLocal, Verizon, Company.com and a dozen or more others.

The company's core distribution serve pushes data to major search engines like Google and Bing. They also push information to some of the larger data aggregators. In addition to the listings you can also get a web card (which is pretty much a web page) that can show you how your data appears online.



Moz Local

Back to citations only with Moz Local. Moz has been in the SEO business for a while this is their first appearance in the citation business (as of 2014). Moz provides a basic local citation service that pushes data to leading aggregators.

Moz Local is definitely the most reasonable at 84 dollars per year per location. You do not get as many listings as you do with Yext though. Like the other services, you can

upload one set of information that is sent to a number of different data sources and business listing websites. *Again do not forget that your information **MUST BE** consistent across all citation listing sources, whether for small site or larger aggregators.

Moz does not distribute to as many second tier listings as Yext does but it finds duplicate listings for you and pushes information to more data aggregators.

				
Cost per Year	\$84	\$79	\$499	*
Major Data Aggregators	5	2	2	5
Top-Tier Listings	1	0	7	2
Lower Tier Listings	1	14+	44	3-5
Your Time	15 min	15 min	15 min	5-7 hours
Finds Duplicate Listings	Yes	No	No	No

*As a attorney, your time is very valuable. Take the amount of hours in the "your time" row and multiply it by your billable hours and this is how much it's costing you to populate your own local citation sites. Prices as of 11/01/2015

Other Tools

There are other providers that do local citations. They can't really be compared apples-to-apples with the services above but they do provide citation type services. Bright Local provides significant details around citations and helps you find ones you may have missed. In addition, Whitepark helps to identify them as well.

Bright Local

Unlike the services mentioned above, Bright Local is a web-based SEO software package. More on the non-citation related tools in a moment.

For citations, Bright Local takes it to the next level. It does a whole lot more than distribute information to business listing websites and data aggregators. Similar to other providers, it allows you to find sites where there are already mentions of your business name and information. It shows you which sites have your info and how consistent that information is across sites. This allows you to see if your information is accurate. So that's where the similarities end.

Bright Local takes things a couple steps further with interactive charts that allow you to track the growth of your citations. For example if you launched a campaign to grow your online presence through different business listing websites, you can use the service to see how successful you are.

Another cool feature is that you can check out what your competitors are doing. Maybe there are other attorneys in your local area that are doing better online than you are. Bright Local can help you identify which local citations they have that perhaps you don't.

BrightLocal

Bright Local also provides data on which citations are the most beneficial as well as their cost. In a nutshell, you get a much more detailed look at how citations can help your site instead of a more generic approach.

Other Bright Local Features

Remember that this is an SEO tool and not just a citation tool. You can analyze a website and generate reports on how it shapes up in search. You can check your ranking in results pages, optimize your Google Plus Local profile, monitor reviews and add functionality related to reviews to your website.

Tip: If you are just looking to add some citations around the web and not intent on doing a lot of your own online marketing, Bright Local is probably overkill for you. If however you plan on taking a more hands-on approach to your online presence, it's definitely worth a look.

White Spark

This is another local SEO tool that also happens to do citation-related tasks. White Spark is a Canadian based firm that specializes in local SEO software. It's very similar to Bright Local in that you can track search results rankings, find and optimize local citations, prospect for links, and manage reviews online.

If there is one thing I love about businesses like these, it's that they share their knowledge and tools freely without expecting anything in return. A cool (and completely free) feature of White Spark's site is their [Review Handout Generator](#). You can use the generator to make printable instructions to hand out to your customers on how to leave a Google review for you.

Tip: Again, if you aren't into doing a lot of your own SEO work, White Spark will be over-kill for you. They are a great company to compare however if you are looking to get more hands-on with your search marketing.

Google Search Console

This is a free service from Google that can tell you all sorts of things about your site. It used to be pretty limited but these days you can do and learn a lot with your site. For example with Search Console you can:



- Test how a site appears in search
- Highlight data for Google to learn about
- Monitor HTML improvements
- Learn about your site links and demote them if necessary
- Learn about search queries people are using to find your site
- See data on internal links on your site

- Get alerted to any manual web spam actions leveled against your site
- Monitor your site's index status
- Remove URLs from search
- Evaluate the keywords most prevalent on your site
- Submit URLs to Google's index
- Identify security issues
- Get links to helpful resources
- Check out new tools that Google is testing out

In addition to all that you can monitor multiple sites, invite others to monitor your site, submit sitemaps, and export all of the data you see as many times as you want.

Google Analytics

Ironically Google's free web analytics tool is also one of the most widely used and it isn't because it's free. Google's analytics platform is one of the most robust and versatile in the industry. Granted you need some know-how to get it to work for you but other than that it's completely free.

With Google Analytics you can see:

- Visits
- Page views
- Bounce rate
- Number of pages viewed per visit
- Custom interactions like clicks on links and buttons
- Visitors common paths through your site
- Geo-location, device usage, browser usage and other data on visitors
- Real time information on your site

Other features include:

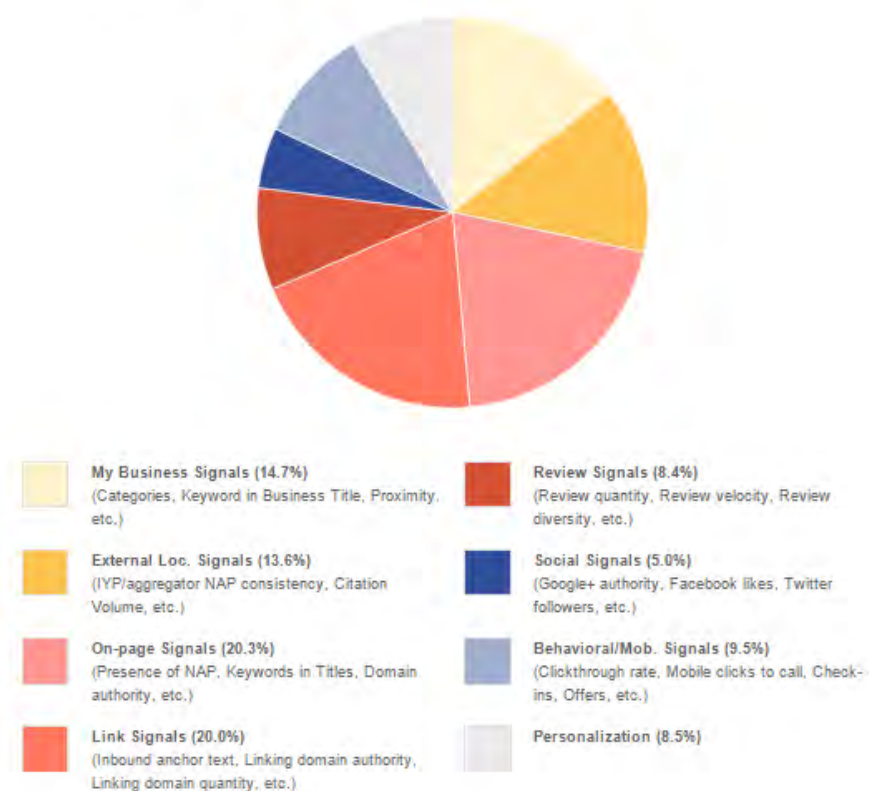
- The ability to export reports in a variety of formats
- Set up email alerts and automated reporting
- Filters for data
- Customizable dashboards and reporting

That's only a fraction of the reporting and features you can get with analytics. Google also provides a library of videos call Conversion University where people can get tutorials on how to use features of analytics.

IX. LOCAL SEARCH RANKING FACTORS

Each year Moz compiles and publishes [a list of local search ranking factors](https://moz.com/local-search-ranking-factors)⁹. The data comes from a survey presented to dozens of top SEO industry professionals. They are asked to rank factors that influence a website's position in SERPs based on different scenarios.

Overall Ranking Factors



The study is especially useful to get a perspective on how others doing SEO work are able to achieve success. In other words, these are the people who are involved in ranking websites as a part of their profession. The results of the survey are comprised of things they have seen work for them and their clients or employers.

After data is collected by Moz, it is broken down into the top 50 ranking factors as well as an easy-to-understand graph on the most important overall ranking factors. Lawyers can use this study as a guide for where they should be focusing their efforts. It's sort of like a cheat sheet for local SEO as well as broader strategies.

X. SOCIAL PROOF

Social proof is all about how your practice looks online. What professional organizations you belong to, the accomplishments you've had, and the visual representations that go along with these are all great for your online presence.

A great resource for attorneys is local trade organizations, chambers of commerce, Better Business Bureau branches, and other similar authoritative entities. When consumers can see that your practice belongs to these trustworthy organizations, it proves to them that you are a part of a community.

Getting Social Proof

There are many universal ways to display social proof on your site:

- Join major social networks and be active on them
- Participate in seminars
- Write books
- Try and get nominated for Super Lawyers
- Try and get nominated for Rising Stars (a sub-set of Super Lawyers)

⁹ <https://moz.com/local-search-ranking-factors>

- Join AVVO and become a top contributor

Why is Social Proof Important?

The more you can position yourself and your firm as an authority in your practice area, the more positive exposure you'll receive. People gravitate toward those businesses and individuals who are helpful online. People want to work with those who are constantly improving themselves and helping others. Social proof and the activities that help build it can do that for you.

XI. REVIEWS

For local search, reviews are extremely important for your firm image, social proof and SEO. Getting reviews (especially good ones) can be a time consuming and tedious process but if you stay consistent you can start to build up a good presence.

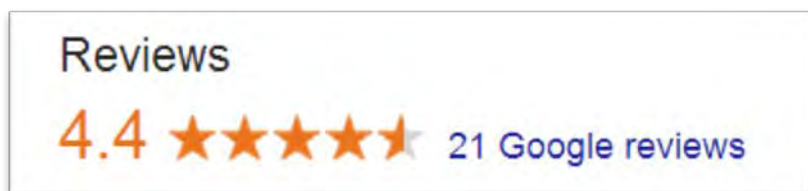
Reviews for any kind of business have become a very influential conversion factor in search results pages. Star ratings and user generated content make relevant search results even more appealing than they otherwise would be. Consumers tend to click on results that have better review ratings or review ratings at all as opposed to those with low or no ratings.

Methods for Getting Reviews

Follow up Emails with Templates

When you ask your clients for reviews, you have to keep it as simple as possible. If people have to work or muddle through something, they are less likely to do it. You can make leaving a review easier by providing multiple options for networks to leave it on as well as creating a basic template for them to follow.

For example give them the option of leaving a review on Yelp, Google and/or Yahoo (if they want to do all three that's even better). The idea here is that not everyone has a Google or Yahoo account (which you need to have in order to leave the review).



Next outline your steps and questions. People sometimes feel reluctant to leave a review because they don't know what to say. Provide questions that the person can answer as a part of their review.

Lastly, you have to find a way to deliver all of these instructions to them. Your clients undoubtedly get a lot of emails anyway so sending an email for the sole purpose of soliciting a review from them is probably overkill. Include it in a follow up email instead. For instance when you send out a follow up email to see how they are doing after a case or any other services you provided to them, include your review template there.

Common Obstacles for Attorney Reviews

Legal services are (by nature) not always a service that people want the world knowing they used. For non-embarrassing or stigmatizing situations, you probably won't have much trouble getting clients to agree to leave a review. For criminal, bankruptcy or divorce clients, you may have some trouble getting them on board.

For clients like these, you can have them leave anonymous reviews at sites like AVVO. Another strategy you can employ is to have your clients email you their reviews and you can place them on your website as either anonymous or under a pseudonym.

Avoid doing in-house reviews. That is, don't have people write their reviews down and then later use fake accounts to submit the review online. You might get away with it for a while but you will eventually be flagged by the site where reviews are hosted.

Reviews on Yelp

If you can get clients to do it, Yelp is one of the more beneficial review sites out there. Yelp is one of the largest data sources online for reviews and information about local businesses. Yelp reviews are also prominently displayed in Siri searches (Apple's proprietary voice search assistant).

XII. DEVELOPING A PRACTICE AREA-SPECIFIC PAGE

Location-specific pages are good for businesses including law firms but practice area-specific pages are a unique task that attorneys can take advantage of. Building a practice area specific page is a lot like building a location specific page.

Finding your Target Keyword Phrase

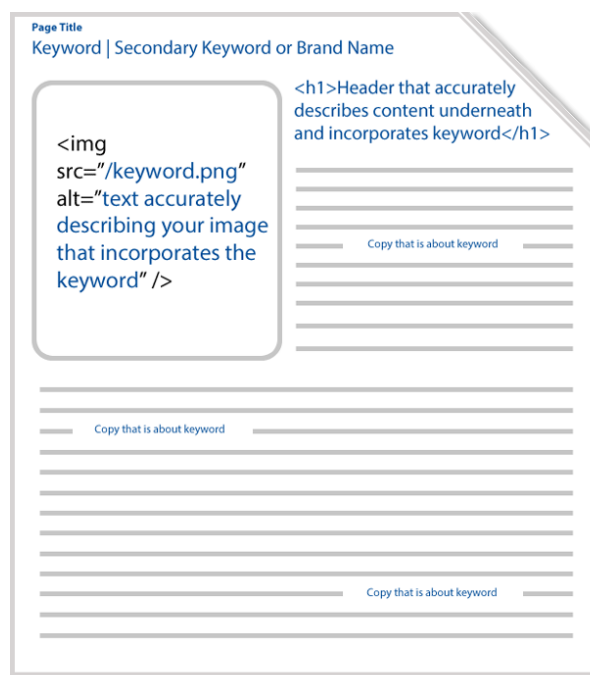
For location pages you're looking for keyword + location to optimize a page for. This time you'll be optimizing for just practice area. You can use another term with practice area however if you do a little bit of research, you'll find that most combinations that aren't just the practice area also include a location.

Structure of Your Page

Like other pages on your site, your practice area specific page should be just about the practice area. You should only use the keyword phrase (i.e. personal injury lawyers) along with its close variations. Density of the keyword isn't as important as that the overall theme of the page is about the practice area.

Semantics

Keep the semantic web in mind when writing your practice area specific page. Words that are synonymous with the target keyword phrase, variations and relevant concepts should be used in your copy. For instance if



your practice area specific page focuses on the phrase “*divorce lawyer*”, using the terms lawyer and divorce in other combinations throughout the copy as well as the term “*attorney*” and “*divorce attorney*” is ok.

CONCLUSION

Search has become the method by which people find information about local businesses. Phone books and 411 has gone the way of the VCR, the Walkman and home phones. Increasingly, people are using laptops, tablets and mobile smart phones to look up addresses, phone numbers, directions and a host of other locally relevant information.

Local practitioners like attorneys who do not have sites optimized for local are missing out. These days if you can't be found online, you aren't relevant. This guide is here to help you bring your website to the next level and you should be well on your way if you apply these practices.

We understand that Local SEO is a highly technical, complicated (and boring) practice. Not everyone can do their own SEO work so if you're finding yourself stuck in one spot with your search marketing efforts, contact Attorney Rankings today! We can help you articulate your goals and show you how local SEO can help you meet them.

NEED HELP ENHANCING YOUR LAW FIRM'S PRESENCE IN LOCAL SEARCH? WE CAN HELP!

[Request A Local SEO Review](#)

XII. About The Author

I began my Internet marketing journey sometime in 2004. I was working at a small high school in Southern Illinois when the allure of making money online took hold. I paid for several Internet marketing courses like [Ed Dale's 30 Day Challenge](#), [Courtney Tuttle's Keyword Academy](#) and had a great friend who was already heavily involved in SEO, Ryan Carter, now a [poker super star](#), teach me the ropes. I started an affiliate company and at one point had around 70+ AdSense, Amazon affiliate and CJ based websites that I managed. Soon after, I became interested in the agency side of Internet marketing.



I started consulting for Intuitive Websites; a fantastic Web company in Colorado founded by [Tom Young](#), The Timmermann Group; a cutting edge STL digital agency; and then I began working at PowerAdvocates as their head SEO legal marketing specialist. It wasn't until around February of 2013 that I decided to launch Attorney Rankings, LLC. Over the last few years, I've had the privilege of watching Attorney Rankings grow into a very successful law firm marketing agency with the help of a great team. Attorney Rankings works with many accomplished law firms throughout the U.S. including [Dolman Law Group](#), [The Levin Firm](#), [Albertson & Davidson, LLP](#) and many more. I've contributed to top legal marketing publications such as Legal Ink Magazine, Circle of Legal Trust, Law Marketing, JD Supra, Ahrefs SEO blog and more. I also spoke at the Vegas Circle of Legal Trust convention and contributed to the SEO Mythbusters Production for Legal Ink Magazine.



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Editor's Note

In the past couple of years, social media has exploded — moving well beyond the sharing of selfies and updates around the virtual watercooler and establishing itself in the marketing mainstream. It's where big brands and small businesses are putting mega advertising dollars. It's where at least 50 percent of Americans are getting their news. And it's where professionals like you are engaging with clients every day.

Today, social media isn't about experimenting with a new marketing platform for your firm. It's about connecting with clients and prospects, because that's where they are now — and where more are sure to be in the coming years. Look at your client base. Who are the decision-makers? Who's following in their footsteps? How do they engage with the world around them? Where do you fit in that orbit?

Especially if your client base includes Gen Yers and millennials, the question isn't whether you should be on social — it's how long will it take you to get up to speed. These generations are media and tech-savvy; the youngest are even called "digital natives." They don't know a life without smartphones and social media.

For "Engage! A Lawyer's Guide to Social Media Marketing," we reached out to top law firm marketers and digital marketing

pros for advice on where lawyers should focus their efforts — and their best tips on how to do it.

If you're just getting started with social media marketing — baby boomer, digital native or somewhere in between — this guide will help you cover the bases for your law practice. Does your social media presence need an upgrade? The guide will help you rethink social media's role in your firm's marketing strategy. Along with best practices to help you up your game, there are sections on leveraging LinkedIn and Twitter — plus a section devoted to Facebook, Instagram and video.

Social media is full of humorous memes explaining hand-cranked pencil sharpeners, fax machines and dial-up phones to younger generations. Don't become a meme.

A lawyer can shake hands, network, speak and write all day long, but if you can't comfortably engage in social media, you could get left behind.

— *Joan Feldman, Attorney at Work Editor-in-Chief*

— *Susan Kostal, Attorney at Work Contributing Editor and Special Guide Editor*

Attorney at Work Reader Survey

This is the third year Attorney at Work asked lawyers about their social media habits, preferences and attitudes. Here is what we learned from the 302 lawyers who responded to the survey, conducted in February. Where do you fit in?

96%

OF RESPONDENTS USE SOCIAL MEDIA

70%

SAY THEIR USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IS PART OF
AN OVERALL MARKETING STRATEGY

84%

ARE ON LINKEDIN — STILL NO. 1 AMONG LAWYERS —
BUT FACEBOOK AND TWITTER ARE CLOSING IN

31%

SAY FACEBOOK IS MOST EFFECTIVE AT BRINGING IN
BUSINESS (OVER LINKEDIN AT 27%)

7%

SAY SOCIAL MEDIA IS "VERY" RESPONSIBLE
FOR GETTING THEM NEW CLIENTS

42%

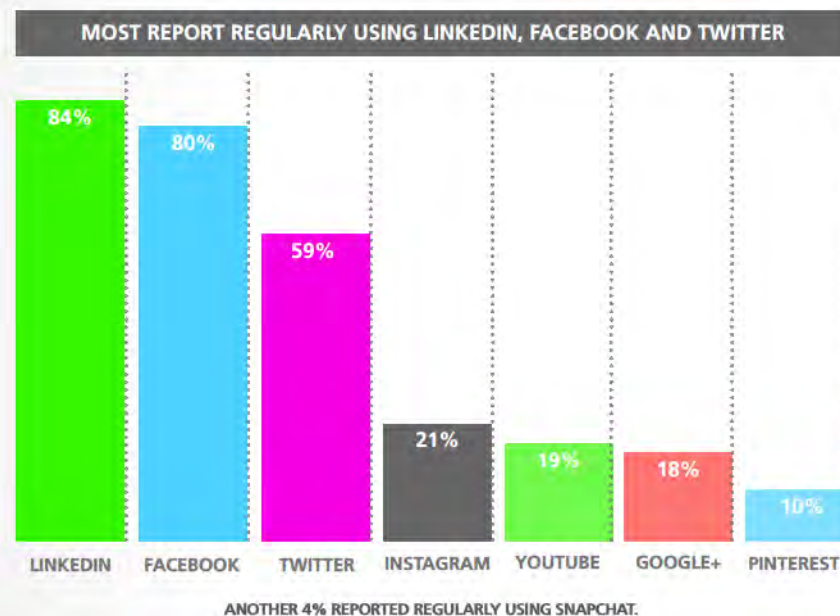
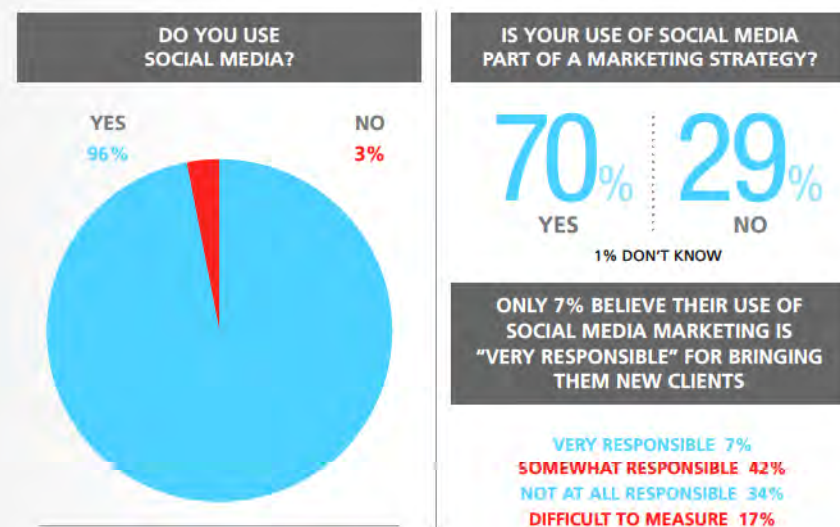
SAY SOCIAL MEDIA IS "SOMEWHAT" RESPONSIBLE
FOR GETTING THEM NEW CLIENTS

- **What's the social media story for lawyers this year?** Nearly everybody is now using social media: 96 percent of responding lawyers say they do. What's more, 70 percent of this year's respondents say it's actually part of their overall marketing strategy (compare that with 60 percent just two years ago).
- **Which sites are regularly used?** Facebook is getting more love than ever — 80 percent of lawyers responding say they use it regularly, up from 72 percent last year. Twitter use is growing, too. Last year, 47 percent of lawyers said they regularly use Twitter — that has jumped to 59 percent. LinkedIn is still No. 1 among lawyers, but it is lagging a bit — 89 percent reported using it regularly last year compared with 84 percent this year.
- **What's used most often?** When asked which platform they use most often, Facebook came out on top: 48 percent of the lawyers cited Facebook compared with 27 percent who said they spend more time on LinkedIn.
- **But is it working?** Only 7 percent of responding lawyers say they believe their use of social media is *directly* responsible for bringing in new clients. (That's an increase over last year, when only 3 percent said it was directly responsible.) However, 42 percent say it is "somewhat" responsible. As for which platforms are most effective for bringing in new business, Facebook took first place at 31 percent with LinkedIn second at 27 percent. "None" was a close third, at 26 percent, and Twitter a distant fourth at only 5 percent. When asked, "Do you believe lawyers are actively using social media for marketing purposes or is it really more hype than reality?" lawyers were split: 44 percent say they do believe lawyers are actively using it, while 43 percent think it is hype.

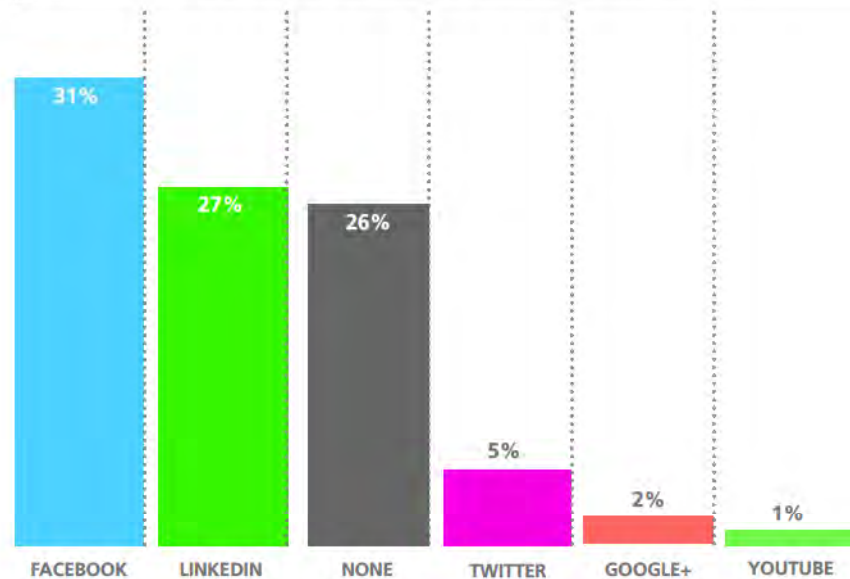
- **Do lawyers handle all of their social media marketing activities themselves?** Most do, according to the survey results: 67 percent do it all, while 23 percent say they get some help, and 10 percent say it is all handled by someone else.
- **How are lawyers managing multiple social accounts and scheduling their marketing activities?** When asked, “Do you use any social media management tools such as Hootsuite, Google Analytics, TweetDeck, Buffer, etc.?” 38 percent say they take advantage of management tools, while 58 percent say they do not.
- **About solo practitioners.** Compared with last year’s results, more solos are talking the social media talk and walking the social media walk: 94 percent say they are using social media — 10 percent more than last year. In addition, 75 percent say they use social as part of their marketing plan, compared with 70 percent of all lawyers surveyed. Solos continue to use LinkedIn first (82 percent) and Facebook second (78 percent), but Twitter is gaining a greater following over past years. Almost 60 percent of solos reported using Twitter — a 14 percent increase over 2016. However, Facebook pulled into first place — at 34 percent compared with 22 percent for LinkedIn — when we asked which platforms are most effective for bringing in new business. Twitter was next, pulling only 3 percent.
- **Paid social advertising.** For the first time, we asked respondents if they are using paid social media advertising to market their firms. Of the 40 percent who said yes, 50 percent regularly use Facebook ads, the most popular platform for this by far. In contrast, only 8 percent pay for LinkedIn ads and only 4 percent purchase Twitter ads.
- **Content sharing.** We also inquired about content-sharing platforms — websites that help lawyers and law firms distribute articles. We learned that of the 31 percent who reported using a platform beyond their own blog, website or social media accounts, 32 percent are using LinkedIn’s publishing platforms and 26 percent are using Facebook publishing tools, while 9 percent use JD Supra and 7 percent use Medium.

Lawyers on Social Media: 2017 Survey Results

Here’s how the 302 lawyers who responded to Attorney at Work’s 2017 Social Media Marketing Survey tell us they are using social media.



WHICH DO YOU THINK ARE THE MOST EFFECTIVE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS FOR BRINGING IN NEW BUSINESS?



DO YOU BELIEVE LAWYERS ARE ACTIVELY USING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR MARKETING PURPOSES OR IS IT REALLY MORE HYPE THAN REALITY?

44%

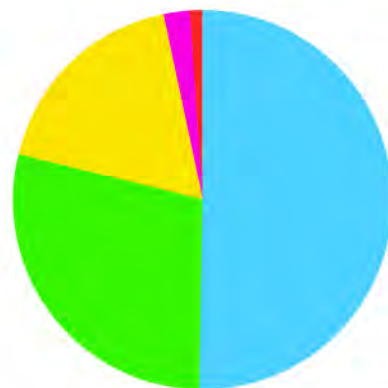
ACTIVELY USING

43%

MORE HYPE

WHEN ASKED WHICH PLATFORM THEY USE MOST OFTEN, FACEBOOK IS NO. 1

Facebook 48%
LinkedIn 27%
Twitter 17%
Instagram 2%
Google+ 1%



Who Does the Social Media Work?

When asked, "Do you handle all the writing and updating for social media marketing yourself, or does someone else assist you?" 67 percent said they do it all themselves.

WHO HANDLES YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITIES?

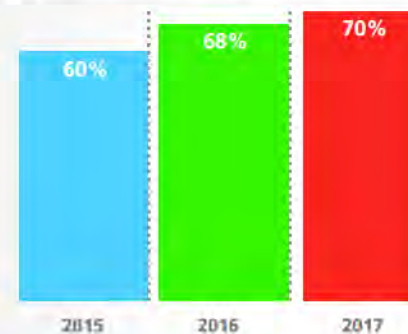
I handle it all myself 67%
I have assistance from someone else 23%
It is handled by someone else 10%



Lawyers on Social Media: 2015-2017 Trends

Comparing the past three years of survey data, a couple of trends emerge. First, more lawyers are incorporating social media into their marketing plans: 70 percent in 2017 compared with 60 percent in 2015. And LinkedIn seems to be stuttering slightly, while Facebook is gaining ground.

PERCENTAGE OF LAWYERS WHO USE SOCIAL MEDIA AS PART OF A MARKETING STRATEGY



THE BIG TWO

In terms of frequency of use, Facebook pulled ahead slightly. Since 2015, we've seen a 5 percent bump in the number of lawyers citing Facebook as the platform they use most often, while 7 percent fewer lawyers choose LinkedIn. More interesting: LinkedIn dropped from first to second place in perceived effectiveness at bringing in business, down from 39 percent in 2015 to 27 percent in 2017. Meanwhile, Facebook has taken the lead, moving up from 22 to 31 percent.

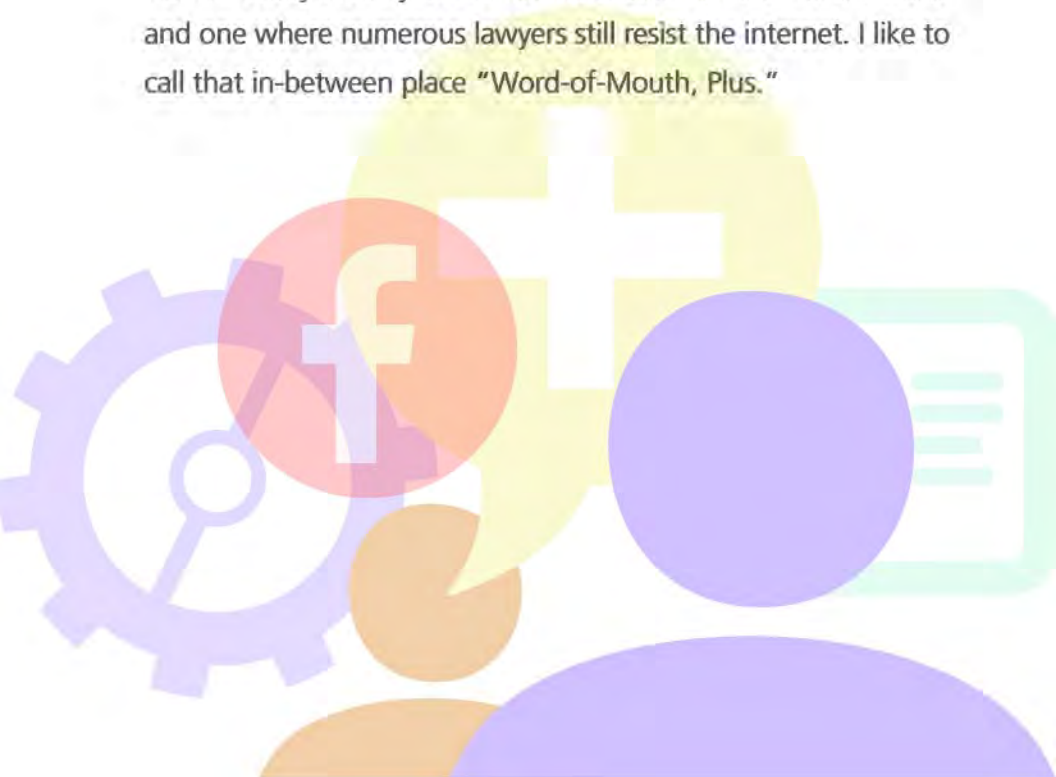
The background is a solid light blue. It features several white silhouettes: a profile of a head in the top left, a speech bubble in the top center, a profile of a head in the bottom left, and a large gear on the right side. The text 'Rethinking Social Media' is centered in a white serif font.

Rethinking Social Media

Word-of-Mouth Marketing, Plus

BY DAN LEAR

A decade from now, consumers of legal services will use the internet and mobile technology to do it all: research legal issues, find and engage an attorney, even have legal services delivered to them. But when answering the question “Where do clients come from?” today’s reality lies somewhere between that future world and one where numerous lawyers still resist the internet. I like to call that in-between place “Word-of-Mouth, Plus.”



Today, most people still rely on their networks (be they in-person or electronic) to get an attorney’s name. But what they will do next is key. They’ll type the attorney’s name, or the name of the firm, or some combination of the names — possibly with a geographic location — into an internet search engine.

What do they want to know? Perhaps the attorney’s background, or the firm size. Perhaps how long and where the attorney has been practicing, or whether there’s a history of disciplinary action. They may even be searching for information about what others say about the attorney in online reviews. This is the “plus” part of Word-of-Mouth, Plus.

To test this out, I did internet searches for lawyers whose business cards I’ve collected over a period of months. It was interesting. I limited my focus to the first page of results, because between 75 and 90 percent of searchers never move past the first page. And here’s what I found when I searched for the lawyers’ names.

What’s on Your First Page?

For most of the lawyers, the first search result was their law firm website. For a few more, the firm website was not the top link but it appeared on the first page. This is ideal search engine optimization (SEO), since first-page placement in search results is extremely valuable, although the crowd of attorneys with whom I generally interact is probably more attuned to the need to be online than the average attorney. I’d venture to say there are many whose firm sites do not appear at the top or even on the first page.

For one young lawyer in my test, the first result was a link to her online wedding album. The pictures were nice, and it looked as if she’d

had a beautiful wedding, but it certainly didn't help me as a potential consumer learn more about whether I'd want to hire her.

Not surprisingly, among other first-page results, I found links to sites where attorneys have profiles. In some cases they set up the profiles themselves. In others, the companies set up the profiles based on publicly available information. The profiles were, for the most part, on social networks such as LinkedIn and a few large online legal directories (Superlawyers, Avvo.com, Lawyers.com).

Potential clients will click on these links, too. What are they looking for? They may want to find information that isn't listed on the attorney's website, or to verify information from the site. Avvo research also shows that consumers give significant weight to online reviews when deciding which attorney to hire. For a variety of reasons, lawyers have long resisted or ignored online reviews but one only need visit Amazon, Yelp or Airbnb to appreciate that the review economy is upon us and that reviews are no less relevant for lawyers than they are for any number of other providers of goods and services in today's economy.

The good news is that, for the most part, attorneys have the ability to influence if not largely control what these online directory sites say. Most allow you to fill out or otherwise expand on the existing profile in order to market yourself more effectively on those platforms.

But besides the firm websites and links to online profiles, there was still more. For one lawyer, I found a link that appeared to be a personal inheritance dispute related to his family. This attorney may very well be in the right but it may not be one of the first things you want prospective clients to know.

How to Improve Your Word-of-Mouth, Plus

So, how is your Word-of-Mouth, Plus marketing going, and what can you do to improve it?

1. Your website. If you don't have a website, get one (ideally, a well-designed one). If you must build your own, you will find lots of tools online. Squarespace and Wordpress are both cheap and easy ways to make a good website. And both allow you to use a custom domain,

which is fairly straightforward to implement within the tools. Once you have a site, you want it to appear as the first or one of the first results in an internet search for your name. If it doesn't, look into getting some SEO help to improve your ranking.

2. Claim your profiles. In addition to your site (or instead, if you're operating on a shoestring), you need — at the very least — to claim or create and fill out profiles on all the key legal directories that commonly appear on the first page of most searches. Not sure where to start? Type your name into a search engine and see which directories pop up, then do your best to complete those profiles.

3. Clean it up! Now, strive to move or reduce any lingering negative or undesirable information about you elsewhere on the web. Determine an appropriate response to bad reviews or any personal opinions about you. Sometimes, instead of a direct response to negative content about you online, it might be best to (1) try to counterbalance it with positive content — new articles and newer reviews, for example, or (2) hire an SEO pro to attempt to displace negative content from the first page.

4. Be proactive about the message you're sending out online.

Gone are the days when lawyers could avoid internet communication tools, like social media or online reviews, let alone the internet itself. Besides the fact that search engines are taking social media activity and online reviews more heavily into account when returning search results, today's social media users are tomorrow's clients. If you want to remain in practice and find new clients, you need to go where they are — Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.

Taking these simple steps can help you to establish, develop or enhance your online profile, make it easier for clients to find you and help you build your practice.

Dan Lear (@rightbrainlaw) is Director of Industry Relations at Avvo and legal innovator and blogger at Right Brain Law. In 2015 he was named to the FastCase 50 and in 2014 Dan was honored with the Washington State Bar Association President's Award for his participation in and advocacy of legal technology projects.

Assess Your Online Image

BY MERRILYN ASTIN TARLTON

Before you ramp up your use of social media to market your law practice, you are going to need to take stock of your online image. Click on the Google search bar. Type in your name (surround it with quotation marks to get an exact match) and hit Enter. (Run the search twice if you use different versions of your name — say, with a middle or maiden name.) And there you are. That's how you look to a stranger seeking information about you. What kind of impression do you make?

You're Famous!

You'll find the good stuff over which you've had some control: your LinkedIn profile, your firm's website, complete with lovely photo and bio, links to articles you've published, blog posts you've written, speeches you're scheduled to make. You'll find the big lawyer directories. (Wonder what they have to say about you?) You'll also find some surprises, like unsolicited reviews of your services by former and existing clients. Maybe even a few from former employees. (Hope they're good!)

But there will also be some things you wish weren't there: Facebook photos tagged by others. Instagram selfies you actually posted yourself. Ancient news items, links that go nowhere or, worse, that connect to dicey sites. Letters to the editor. Complaints to city council. ...

Is there no end? It can seem that way. Merely one version of my name brings up 1,750 hits! No client in their right mind will go through all of them. But, still.

Ask Some Questions

If I do that search on your name and rummage through a few pages of hits, the nature of your practice should be obvious. But will it be?

Can I tell from the list of articles, speeches, biographies and news articles that you are a West Virginia litigator focused on big tobacco and mesothelioma defense — just as you wish? Or will you look more like a lawyer who has bounced all over the place in the past two decades — trademarks, Brownfields, oil and gas, and the five years you spent as special master on construction disputes? There's nothing wrong with any of that, but if you're presenting yourself as a big tobacco defense guy, be prepared to respond to questions about why you've been so

fickle and how those skills translate. (And think hard before accepting that invitation to speak at a conference about trends in tax law.)

Or maybe when I run that search, you will look like someone who doesn't care what the world thinks about her. Two different LinkedIn profiles with your name on them, but none with a photo, and none with complete information? Four years since you've posted on the blog you started in 2010? Have you neglected to provide current contact information to online directories or professional associations, resulting in five different email addresses with three different firms?

Or perhaps I will stumble onto a side of you that you'd rather keep from clients' eyes. No client wants to know you celebrate July 14 by dressing as Marie Antoinette and storming the men's room. Or that your Star Wars name is Bulsar Vulcan. While you don't want to completely sanitize your personality, certain things just don't shout "effective professional," or leave the impression you'll understand the import of a client's concern.

Checklist: Clean Up Your Act

Before you jump into doubling your Twitter followers, branching into Instagram or launching a YouTube channel, let's get your current act cleaned up. Do a sweep of every social network where you have an account.

- ☐ **Get squeaky clean.** Go back in time and eliminate rough language or references. You know what I'm talking about. Not just on Facebook and Twitter, either. Photo-sharing sites as well as video-sharing sites may contain unflattering content. (While you are checking, watch for language that may run afoul of ethics rules.)
- ☐ **Hush it up.** Learn about privacy settings and change them to support the brand, or personal image, you seek to project. Don't get too heavy-handed — people like to know you're hip to the internet and not a trembling wad of social media paranoia.
- ☐ **Update everything.** Make certain your bios and profiles are up to date. Schedule time to refresh them regularly. New job? Of course that goes in there. Publish something new? Elected to head a nonprofit board? Changed your name? It all needs to be current. And consistent.
- ☐ **Put a good face on it.** Admit it. That LinkedIn photo was taken 10 years ago. Replace it with something a little more current — and not something taken with a smartphone. Look as professional as you are. Pay for a good photo this once.
- ☐ **Redecorate.** Most social media sites provide a way to personalize your page with cover and background images. Do it. But be tasteful. Keep it fresh. Here's an incentive: Every time you change your cover image on Facebook it provides another opportunity for you to reconnect with people.
- ☐ **Who loves ya?** You are who you hang out with. Maybe it's time to do a little housecleaning among your followers and friends?
- ☐ **Consolidate.** With a gazillion social media apps and growing, it's easy to get overwhelmed and do a rotten job with everything. Look into management tools like Hootsuite, which let you engage with people from a single screen. Consider signing off a few platforms. Some of the best Twitterers do nothing but tweet.
- ☐ **Visit competitors.** What does she look like? How much information does he share? Take a tour (do it periodically). Potential clients will compare you, so why not know what you're up against.

Now you're ready: Dust off your best game and get going!

Merrilyn Astin Tarlton (@AstinTarlton) is the author of "Getting Clients: For Lawyers Starting Out or Starting Over." She has been helping lawyers and law firms think differently about the business of practicing law since 1984. She is a founding member of the Legal Marketing Association, an LMA Hall of Fame inductee, a past President of the College of Law Practice Management, and a founding partner of Attorney at Work.

Use Social Media Like Social Media Didn't Exist

BY GYI TSAKALAKIS



A long time ago, lawyers earned new business by developing a reputation and building relationships. In the age of the social web, this really hasn't changed at all.

But somewhere along the way, many lawyers forgot about the reputation and relationship part. They went online and did a bunch of “stuff” that was at best silly, and at worst harmful to their reputation. Of course none of it led to new clients. So, many of them concluded that social media and the internet are largely a waste of time and just don't work for lawyers.

Social media isn't broken. The way that many lawyers are using it is.

That's why I'm recommending that you use social media as if social media didn't exist.

You see, while the tools that lawyers have to develop relationships have changed a bunch, it's still all about the relationships. For example:

- When you go out into the world, do you wear a mask? No? Then why are you using stock imagery in your social media profiles?
- Do you introduce yourself as “Los Angeles personal injury lawyer”? No? Then why is that your Twitter handle?
- Do you start conversations with “free consultation”? Then why is that in your bio?
- Do you pay people to be your friends? (I know some of you are thinking, well, yes, sort of, but bear with me here.) Then why are you buying followers?

Creating Relationships with Social Media

How many new people did you meet last year? If the success of your practice relies on relationships, creating new relationships should be near the top of your client development priority list.

We are expected to be more accessible. We are expected to be more findable. As a means of communication, online social networks provide a powerful, public and permanent platform.

But let's not be silly. I'm not encouraging you to stand on a busy street corner soliciting handshakes. Likewise, I'm not encouraging you to get on Twitter to @reply and mention your way to new friends.

Instead, start listening. Use Twitter Trends to see what folks are chatting about. If the automatically tailored trends don't match your interests or are too broad, change them. If your potential client pool is a local community, change your trends to reflect that. This way, you can see what your local community is discussing. This is a much more effective way to begin a conversation and even forge a new relationship.

Maybe Twitter isn't your thing. Try LinkedIn. Again, stay off the street corner. Don't send out a bunch of unsolicited connection requests to people you don't know.

Instead, find a group to join. It doesn't even have to be anything related to law. (Imagine that!) Again, if you serve a local community, find local groups. If you grew up in the community you serve, try high school alumni groups, local sports teams and community organizations. Not feeling LinkedIn? There's always Facebook.

You see, this is the stuff you should be doing even if social media didn't exist.

Nurturing Relationships

Having trouble creating new relationships through social media? Focus on nurturing existing relationships. It's a bit easier. You're just connecting with people online who you already know in real life. If you're not a complete jerk, these people probably want to connect with you online anyway. All you have to do is find them.

Unless your peer group consists of English workers who destroy machinery that they believe is threatening their jobs, you probably know people who use Facebook.

Warning: Your family, friends and colleagues don't like legal marketing either.

Posting about free consultations on Facebook is a surefire way to be unfriended or blocked. And if your friends are anything like mine, you would gladly exchange the unfriending for the public ridicule that you're likely to endure. It amazes me how many lawyers think tactics like these are a good idea. I know some of you are thinking, "That's not the lawyer, it's their social media consultant." Yes, sometimes it is. But a lot of the time, it's actually the lawyer!

Nurture your relationships on Facebook like Facebook didn't exist. Socialize. Stay in touch. Tell a joke.

Where's the Marketing?

Wondering where the marketing advice is? I have failed you.

There's really no doubt that the social web is changing the world. We are more connected to more people than ever before. With this connectivity, expectations are shifting. We are expected to be more accessible. We are expected to be more findable. As a means of communication, online social networks provide a powerful, public and permanent platform.

Social networks can be an excellent way for you to keep in touch with people in your professional network. They can also be a powerful way to meet someone new or access someone you might not otherwise be able to connect with. And when these people you meet, socialize with and remain in regular contact with online and offline begin to wonder whether they might need a lawyer, you may find they are considering you.

But people aren't on these platforms to read your thin self-promotional updates.

Gyi Tsakalakis (@GyiTsakalakis) helps lawyers put their best foot forward online because clients are looking for them there. He is a co-founder of AttorneySync, a digital marketing agency for law firms.

Crushin' It: 10 Social Media Misconceptions, Revised

BY JARED CORREIA

Let's run down some common misconceptions about social media, and rotate the conversation.

Misconception 1: "Oh, No, My Privacy!"

Revision: Connect Widely

Now, in case you hadn't heard, this is social media. If you're using it to market your business, you'll want as many people to see what you're doing as you can corral. I understand if you want to have private accounts, where you don't post work-related items, or where you can finally say what you really mean. But if your intention is to generate clients and referrals and you want to leverage private accounts, you're better off not having any social media profile at all, since you'd then be unwilling to publicize it. I mean, what do you have to hide? Posts about a recent Supreme Court decision and its impact on your clients and potential clients? Dear me! If you're worried about personal or limited release messages, use email instead, like any normal person would. Connections have intrinsic value. Connections expand your reach. Acquire as many of them as you can, by going public.

Misconception 2: 'I've Got to Be on There All the Time, Right?'

Revision: Schedule Dutifully

Of course not all the time; but, really, that is going to destroy your productivity. The idea of the perpetual internet participant is a myth. No one can be "on" all the time, nor should they be. It has always been the case that quality trumps bulk, so go for fewer, higher-quality posts. Do

make regular posts, but schedule them. Block out time to respond to connections, and to review new information to post. Schedule posts for the weekend, but spend that real time offline.

Misconception 3: “I Can’t Manage One More Thing”

Revision: Oversee Intermittently

Managing a law firm, in a lot of ways, is like a slow death from a thousand cuts. There are so many little things to manage that they mass to form one big thing. So, yeah, block your time, and use a scheduling tool to set up posts days and weeks ahead. I use Hootsuite.

Misconception 4: “I’m Just Gonna Get Lost in the Shuffle”

Revision: Repeat Regularly

If you feel less like a card in the shuffle and more like a microbe in a tidal wave, making regular posts, at determined intervals, will likely improve your outlook, and impress upon the outlook of others. Two major strategies are as follows: Post your new content, then post it again. Post your old content, then post it again. Rinse and repeat. Staying “top of mind” equals continually reminding people of your existence, preferably in a form that is not overtly salesy, and is the singular touchstone for effective marketing. Neither do folks much mind — there’s so much information flowing through their social media channels, they won’t notice whether it’s your first duplicative post or your fifth. Sprinkle in content from other experts in your field, to even it out.

Misconception 5: “It’s All Selfies and Work-from-Home Adverts”

Revision: Discover Contently

When Queen Elizabeth II is photobombing selfies, I’d say we’ve jumped the shark. (Actually, that’s kind of awesome, and I take it back: Do your thing, QE2.) But there is actually useful content online as well. You’ll have to trust me on this one. Even if social media is almost never the primary publication tool (usually that’s a blog), it’s often the primary dissemination tool. The trick here is to dive into the content stream in a certain

area, and figure out who the active experts are. Aggregate them in some fashion so that you become aware of their posts, and repost what they write in your stream, which will also include your own content, which is then perceptually improved by association. Hashtags and lists can be useful for discovering the right people.

Misconception 6: “I Don’t Want to Blog, or Microblog, or Blawg”

Revision: Curate Effectively

Content marketing is in vogue, especially for lawyers, and it makes sense. It’s a way to broadcast expertise, which is what attorneys have been using as a lynchpin of their marketing since the Stone Age (or at least since the late 1970s). And much of the effectiveness, or lack of effectiveness, of your social media presence will be built on the relative strength of your content management protocol — that is, your ability to curate consistently excellent content. Take the time to get it right, especially since by introducing, and reintroducing, others’ content, they’re more likely to return the favor. If you begin to influence the influencers, then that’s when you can invade their class.

Misconception 7: “Oh, Great, More Internet Weirdos and Losers”

Revision: Develop Professionally

I guess nerds are cool now, or at least mainstream. However, while the internet has its oddballs, certainly, that designation does not represent the totality of the population. There are plenty of persons invested in creating and maintaining online personae that match the professionalism they impart to their offline dealings. Many of these folks are other lawyers — or, at least, are people other lawyers want to interact with. This is mostly a matter of vetting. So, the thrust here is that you want to figure out who is worth following, and who isn’t. Most of the time, it’s pretty easy to figure out who is a legitimate businessperson. Avatars are a major tell, as are bios. The interesting thing about social media is that while it imparts to you a basically unlimited network, you really define the value of that network when you limit it to other professionals from whom you could secure referrals.

You're not going to create a social media profile, or four, and just sit down to watch the phone ring — or, more appropriately, perhaps, the email pile up. One pipeline flows into another ... such that you're never operating your marketing in silos. What clients and referral sources see is the combination that represents your business profile.

Misconception 8: "That's Not Going to Make Me Any Money"

Revision: Not Directly

It's a long game, as with any other form of marketing. You're not going to create a social media profile, or four, and just sit down to watch the phone ring — or, more appropriately, perhaps, the email pile up. One pipeline flows into another (you push your blog posts through your social media channels, for example), such that you're never operating your marketing in silos. What clients and referral sources see is the combination that represents your business profile. You may never find out, and your connection may not even recall, what it was that pushed them over the top of making a referral, or engaging your services; but, it's likely that it was a combination of things, including your web presence. If you divvied up every dollar you made, percentages would likely be allocated to your various offline and online activities. We're not talking about a magic bullet here, but then we never are.

Misconception 9: "It's an Ethics Minefield"

Revision: Not Exactly

To put it bluntly, many of the more garish ethics blunders attorneys make that are related to marketing and technology are rooted in a lack of common sense. The battleground of much of modern legal ethics analysis surrounds real-time interaction, and that is likely what scares many attorneys away from social media. But it is a rarer occasion than you might think when potential clients are trolling for your business in a public, online forum.

Many potential clients still follow the traditional decorums and will find their way to your website contact form, or your phone number — and you can direct them there, too. List your jurisdictional limitations. Include truncated disclaimers. Don't discuss your clients' legal issues in online public forums. Your activities as a wannabe ostrich might even include using social media profiles solely as content aggregators for your various productions, and nothing more. Though if you're using your social media profiles most effectively, you're spending your time engaging with potential referral sources, and directing (or having them direct) clients and potential clients to more appropriate, alternative spaces.


Misconception 10: "I've Got Far More Important Things to Do"

Revision: Well, Admittedly

Tell me about it. Being online all the time is lame. I mostly blame the internet; but, if we're parsing out the blame pie, we're also sort of too weak (or too encumbered, in many circumstances) to truly become disengaged. So, we have to commandeer our wills, and apply rigid time management and task management protocols, including, among other things, blocking out time and adhering to the tenets of a marketing plan.

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Note: This article is based on a presentation originally designed for Andrea Cannavina, Legal Typist.



Social 2.0 Best Practices

A Roaring Sea of Noise — and How to Rise Above It

BY KEVIN IREDELL

In-house counsel are drowning in content, and yet law firms keep piling it on, according to Greentarget's 2017 State of Digital & Content Marketing Survey. Ninety-six percent of in-house counsel said information overload is a problem in consuming information about business, industry and legal topics. And 76 percent said it is a big problem or somewhat of a problem.

In a world where we all have endless streams of information rushing at us wherever we go, the survey results show that law firms must strategically focus on giving in-house counsel content and social media interactions of value. Doing so provides the only hope of rising above the noise and gaining clients' attention and trust.

Plenty of Content, Not Enough Strategy

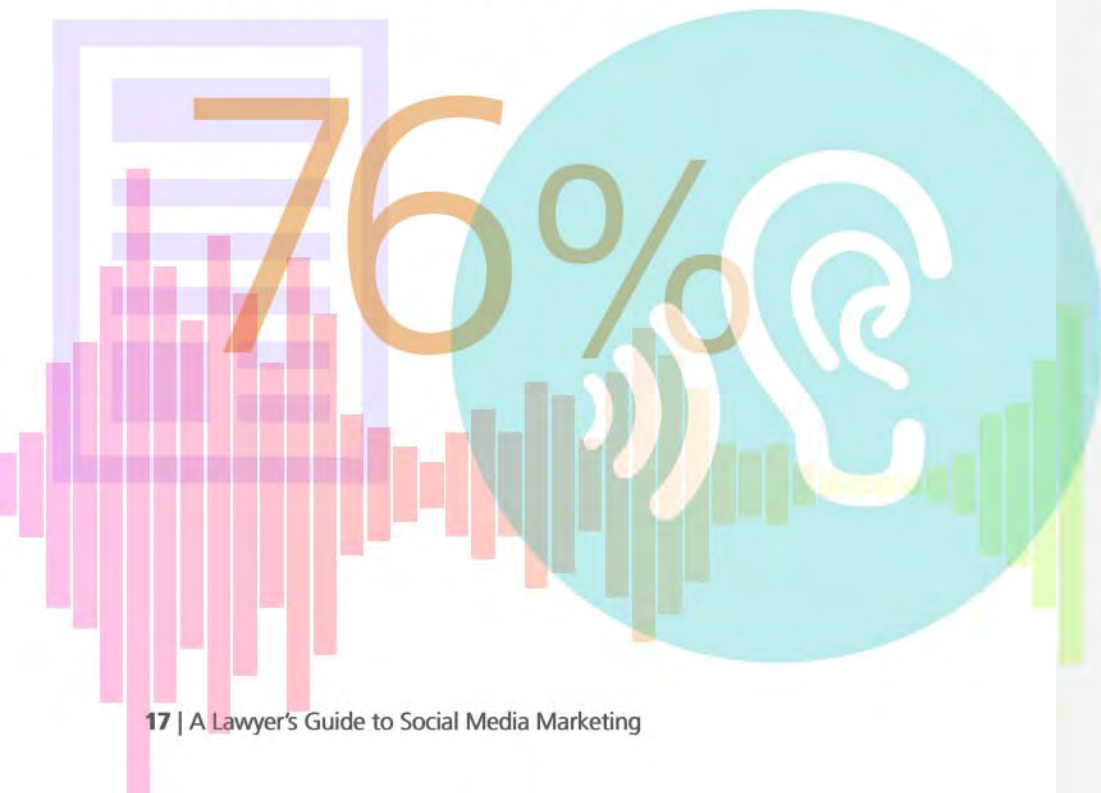
Eighty-one percent of law firm CMOs said they will produce more content in 2017 than in 2016. None said they will produce less.

The onslaught of content is also evident in the swelling population of firm-branded blogs and microsites. Yet few firms report that they have a formal content strategy.

Client alerts, practice group newsletters and blogs all came in just behind traditional media in terms of credibility, pointing to the value that clients place on law-firm generated content. In fact, 52 percent of in-house counsel ranked firm content very good to excellent in 2017, up from 43 percent in 2015. To the extent that firms are spending money to focus on the distribution of content, including social media sharing and amplification, they're making smart decisions.

LinkedIn Continues to Dominate Social Media

LinkedIn continues to dominate in-house counsel social media habits. This year, 73 percent of in-house counsel said they had used it for professional reasons within the past week, up from 68 percent in 2015. Only 32 percent had used Facebook in that time frame. LinkedIn was



Without "tilting" your content just enough to tell a truly unique story, you risk blending into the rest of the noise and being forgotten.

also the only social media platform considered particularly credible. In-house counsel said that when reviewing profiles of outside counsel on LinkedIn, they focus on experience and relevant client matters more than any other criteria.

In-house counsel are slightly more engaged on social media than previously, but mostly sticking to the silent listener role they've had for the past several years. Almost 50 percent said they use LinkedIn to consume information and only 7 percent said they use the platform to share information.

What Firms Need to Do — and Do Soon

Create a documented content strategy. Research by the Content Marketing Institute has consistently shown that marketers get better results from content when it's part of a documented strategy that is supported by the firm's social media strategy.

Define the purpose. Identify the specific purpose of your content. "Raise visibility" is too vague. Be as detailed as possible.

Find your "tilt." Your content tilt is your unique voice on a subject, targeted to a specific audience. Joe Pulizzi of the Content Marketing Institute defines it this way: "Your content tilt is what separates you from everyone else in your market area. It's your unique perspective on your niche, which creates an opportunity for you to attack, lead and, ultimately, own the category. Without 'tilting' your content just enough to tell a truly unique story, you risk blending into the rest of the noise and being forgotten."

Distribute wisely. When it comes to distribution, it's important to identify the intended audience as early as possible — even before the content is drafted. Firms need to go where their audience goes. Social media can be an important part of verifying what your readers want, and where they go to find it, and thus how to best deliver it to them.

Time it right. It's important to know when, exactly, they're most likely to find content. Studies have shown business readers engage with social media on weekday mornings, before and during their commute, starting around 5:30 a.m. EST. That's the best time to deliver your content.

Evaluate and experiment. Learn to use your social media metrics to test which messages resonate with your audience. Then test, evaluate and test again. Try different headlines, subject lines, infographic data and charts, and different Twitter messages.

***Kevin Iredell** (@Kevin_Iredell), Director of Research & Market Intelligence at Greentarget, has spent the past two decades building a career in B2B and the legal industry, leading efforts in research, marketing, business development and communications. At Greentarget, he leads a full-service research offering that encompasses data science, quantitative and qualitative research.*

Social Media and the Media: Increasing Your Visibility With the Press

BY JOHN J. BUCHANAN

Social media is everywhere and everyone is using it. And, of course, journalists are knee-deep — even thigh-deep — in social media. The 24/7/365 news cycle has had a dramatic impact on journalism and has made the news business an ever-more insatiable beast.

As a lawyer, you not only need to practice great law — you also need to practice great marketing. One aspect of marketing yourself and your practice is managing your external profile — and that can mean working with the press. So, if one of a journalist's critical tools is social media, how should you use social media as a vehicle for raising your visibility with the press?

By the Numbers

Surveys of journalists clearly demonstrate that social media is part of their daily professional lives. For example:

- 80 percent of journalists use at least three social media platforms for sourcing (2016 Cision Global Social Journalism Study).
- 43 percent of journalists verify existing stories using social media (2012 Oriella Digital Journalism Study).
- Journalists make up the largest category of Twitter's verified users (according to a 2015 report by Triggertrap former CEO Haje Jan Kamps).

It's a great place for journalists and lawyers to intersect.

- 96 percent of lawyers use social media and 70 percent say it's part of their marketing strategy (2017 Attorney at Work Social Media Marketing Survey).

- 74 percent of lawyers maintain a personal presence on LinkedIn (ABA Legal Technology Survey Report).
- 91 percent of law firm marketers said their firms actively invest in social media, while 86 percent of in-house counsel said LinkedIn was a credible source of industry news and information (2017 Greentarget State of Digital & Content Marketing Survey).

With statistics like these (and the percentages appear to be increasing annually), it's clear that social media must be a part of any visibility plan.

How Journalists Use Social Media

So now that we know the press uses social media, how specifically do they use the various tools? Here are a few ways, though there are probably hundreds more:

- Reporters routinely Google sources and use Google Alerts to track trends, companies and individuals.
- They follow people on Twitter and read their blogs.
- They read comments and posts connected to stories they've written.
- Some journalists use filters on Twitter to help them identify what's trending — and then they use that to find story ideas and spokespeople.
- Major online news outlets routinely feature tweets (most often from celebrities or political figures) in stories.
- Some reporters find Twitter the perfect place to post queries and get *lots* of responses. (If you tweet back a good answer, you may get selected to be quoted or to be interviewed).
- HARO (helpareporter.com) is a free service offered to journalists so that they can reach out to a very broad audience. Reporters post queries on HARO and you respond directly to them with a pitch.

HARO is a free service offered to journalists so that they can reach out to a very broad audience. Reporters post queries on HARO and you respond directly to them with a pitch.

- Some reporters post rough drafts of articles on their blogs and then ask for feedback and comments via Twitter.
- LinkedIn is a great source for reporters who are looking for experts, because LinkedIn profiles are often expanded versions of resumes and bios.

10 How-To's to Get Started

Just as there are perhaps hundreds of ways that journalists use social media, there are hundreds of ways to effectively use social media to get in front of the press. Here are 10 tips that can help you quickly start to build your visibility with the media using various social media platforms:

1. The first (and most important) thing to do is to familiarize yourself with your firm's social media guidelines and policies. Ignorance is no excuse if you make a social media blunder.
2. Set up Google Alerts to follow your areas of expertise.
3. Use Feedly or Digg Reader to follow journalists' blogs and websites in your area of interest or expertise.
4. Read the blogs that your clients are reading and comment. If you don't know what blogs they read, ask them.
5. Post frequently on your firm's blogs.
6. Regularly update your LinkedIn profile by linking to articles and presentations (especially if they're on the firm's website) and by starting conversations.
7. Invite journalists to connect on LinkedIn once you've worked with them.

A writer for The Huffington Post needed someone to comment on former Supreme Court Justice David Souter's retirement ... so she approached a conservative attorney on Facebook whom she'd never met. She ended up quoting a haiku he wrote about the changes on the Supreme Court.

8. Follow reporters on Twitter and tweet or comment on what they tweet and comment on.
9. Tweet links back to articles you've written, presentations you've given or content posted on the firm's website (use bity.ly. for linking).
10. Cross-pollinate your social media platforms. The more links, the better.

Success Stories

Now that you've seen the statistics and have some good background on the whys and how-to's, here are a few success stories (some from personal experience) that show how you can use social media to make yourself visible in the press:

- An attorney at one of my former firms wrote a short blog post on "How to Use an Advisory Board" and about three months later a reporter from Inc. magazine requested an interview about the topic.
- Another attorney at one of my former firms posted on a California land use blog, and a reporter from Law360 contacted him within days. The attorney was quoted throughout a lengthy article.
- A writer for The Huffington Post needed someone to comment on former Supreme Court Justice David Souter's retirement and his replacement, Justice Sonia Sotomayor, so she approached a conservative attorney on Facebook whom she'd never met. She saw that

he had organized a New York-based attorney networking group on Facebook and thought he might be a good source. She ended up quoting a haiku he wrote about the changes on the Supreme Court.

- A solo ERISA practitioner on Long Island posted his opinion regarding the use of exchange-traded funds in 401(k) plans on Twitter. Two months later he was quoted in The Wall Street Journal.

These successes could be yours. Engaging with the press is possible, and social media makes it easier than ever.

John J. Buchanan is a marketing and communications leader with more than 25 years of strategic marketing, communications, business development and branding experience. Most recently, he served as Global Director of Public Relations at Reed Smith LLP.

Storytelling: Bring Your Message Alive!

BY DREW KELLER

Your clients are paying attention. They are threading together moments of interest, forming ideas and opinions about you, your practice and your place in their world. And the primary focus of this attention is social media. Which begs the question: How actively are you working to engage and shape their opinion?

For most users, the benefit of social media is to communicate with one another, not endure a sales pitch. When people engage in your message they are showing interest in you and what you promise. They want to feel good about knowing you as a trusted advisor. They consider the interaction more of a conversation on the town square than fending off a barker on a carnival midway.

The failure of most social marketing stems from categorizing the platforms as distribution channels — or in the same light as television, radio and newspapers. They are not. These are conversation channels. A place for the transmission of experiences, feelings, values, dreams, failures, successes and opinions.

To harness the power of social networks, and I don't mean just hitting the share button on Facebook, you need to narrate the story of your practice. To succeed you need to tell stories about people, not concepts or things. Stories that reflect the human experience.

Good Storytelling Evokes an Emotional Response

Good storytelling is about engaging the emotional self, not the logical self. Retention reveals the power of a story. What we remember from a story is not fact but feeling. All storytelling, good and bad, evokes an emotional response in your audience. Unfortunately, the memory from a poorly executed message can be one of disinterest, mistrust or confusion.

The association of feelings with ideas is an important part of learning. Storytelling's "cause and effect" narrative structure is the same one our brain uses to configure thoughts, everyday speech and decisions. And I mean every day, all day. It is how we tell our spouse about our day over dinner, describe an experience to a friend and share life skills with our kids. When the characters we describe in our personal stories are authentic, we paint a picture of the scene and the people who populate our story. When we combine our tale with a simple plot (beginning, middle and end) and a singular point, the viewer trusts that we will guide them to an interesting destination.

Too many of the blog posts, videos and articles I see in the legal community feel like a closing argument. Your storytelling needs to reflect the human experience.

So if we are hard-wired as storytellers, why is legal marketing so flat and lifeless? I have my theories.

The legal community, like engineering, finance and medicine, tends to measure credibility among peers by accuracy, research, data and hard facts. These are critical metrics when presenting an idea for peer review, auditing a financial statement or shaping a legal argument. Unfortunately, they are not the priority when engaging an audience.

This does not mean you ignore facts or create tales of fancy. Quite the contrary. A story needs to be based on a singular fact or idea to give it relevance and merit. But too many of the blog posts, videos and articles I see in the legal community feel like a closing argument. Your social media storytelling needs to reflect the human experience. Authenticity, simplicity, universality, emotion ... these are just some of the elements of a successful story.

Storytelling is the art of giving shape and meaning to a piece of information that's dull and boring. You are combining an idea with an emotion. The stories you create should reveal something personal, intimate or unknown about the person or topic, otherwise it's boring. An effective story takes us on a narrative journey, one with an emotional destination.

Improving Your Storytelling

As viewers, listeners and readers we want sincere stories. We want to believe we are seeing the “real” side of things. That is why your articles, videos and social postings need to tell genuine stories. If you are creating a video, don't just stand in front of a bookshelf and list your experience, have a client share their story and illustrate it. Include cover footage to show, not tell, the story. If it is an article, leverage photographs and graphics. Give examples your potential clients can identify with, stories where they project themselves making the same decisions as your subject.

Reflect your values in your content. Most people want to be represented by a better version of themselves. They want their counsel to be smart and experienced, but they also want someone who can frame their story as they navigate the legal system. They want to trust that you understand their needs and that you will guide them. By sharing your values and principles, your viewers will know if theirs are in alignment. Frankly, we are less likely to trust a stranger. Sharing your values helps potential clients feel comfortable with your counsel and your advocacy.

One last piece of advice. It is important to understand that each social network has a unique culture. The Reddit community is significantly different from Pinterest's. We connect through Facebook differently than we communicate through YouTube. Creating a singular universal message and blasting it across all your channels is a waste. At best, you will be ignored. At worst, you will be scorned. Be thoughtful about the culture of a specific channel's community — that means do your homework. What are the demographics you intend to reach? If you are looking for adults nearing retirement, then Snapchat is probably a poor choice. Men 18 to 35? You are unlikely to find many of them on Pinterest.

Tailor your story to the needs of your intended audience, and be nimble with your strategy. Social networks are ever-changing. Their features are in a state of constant competition and improvement. To ensure success you should conduct a “social media audit” and decide which social channels are best for you and your practice.

Best Use of Storytelling Is Building Credibility

Stories are a powerful way to guide a viewer's perceptions, helping them see you and your practice as trusted advisors. Don't lose sight of your client's emotional needs when telling your story. It is what drives their actions.

Drew Keller (@drewkeller) of StoryGuide.net focuses on digital and social media, working with customers to develop successful media strategies. An award-winning television producer, video editor, web developer and educator, Drew writes frequently for StoryGuide.net and distributes videos via [The Story Guide](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvXpYpYpYpYpYpYpYpYpYpY) YouTube channel.

Does Your Online Reputation Need Tending? Tips to Help

BY HELEN BERTELLI

Sometimes lawyers and law firms need to clean up online reputations sullied by lawsuits, bad press, negative reviews or poor social media choices. While there's no magic bullet, reputation management is possible. There are two approaches you can take: Either hire a company to help you, or do it yourself. Here are the pros, cons and considerations related to both options.

Hired Hands

Reputation.com, which has been around since 2006, is the oldest of a growing number of services that advertise help with managing or cleaning up online reputations. These services purport to employ strategies to make positive information about you rise to the top of search results, but a few words of warning:

- They can be expensive, adding up to thousands of dollars annually.
- A few are scams — companies that will take your money and run — so be careful.
- Critics argue that they don't provide anything above and beyond what you can easily do yourself to protect your online identity.

However, such services can be a good choice if you have plenty of money, are strapped for time or have a complicated problem that can't be buried by other means.

Do It Yourself

With time and a bit of work, it's possible to safeguard your online reputation on your own. Here are six tips to help if you choose to go this direction.

1. Begin monitoring. Set up a Google alert on your name, or if you have a complicated issue such as a lawsuit, consider a service such as

Signal, Klout or Brandwatch that will provide social media as well as general web monitoring.

2. Google yourself. When you get a handle on online content about yourself, you can start to change it. A typical order of appearance for top search engine results is:

- LinkedIn profile
- Company web bio
- Facebook profile
- Twitter profile
- Images of you from around the web
- Articles about you or by you

Start with the first four items in this list. The good news is that they are completely within your power to edit.

It's especially important to keep your company web bio/profile up to date. Google rewards pages that are recently refreshed over stagnant ones. Every time you write an article or complete a major project, make sure your bio is updated and you'll help your page to stay high in rankings. This pushes pages with unflattering information lower in your search results.

3. Protect what you can. Pay attention to social media privacy settings, and lock down as much as you can. Then go through your personal networks and eliminate language or photos you don't like; this ensures that inappropriate content falling outside the privacy shield won't be visible.

4. Address negative reviews. While there are competing opinions as to whether you should claim your Avvo listing, for example, unless you do, you do not have control over content published there. However, one thing you should *never* do on Avvo (or any other site) is respond in an-

ger to a negative review. Not only will this look bad to potential clients, it may get you reprimanded by your state bar. A measured response is a more appropriate choice and will often actually make you look better and more professional in your online profile.

5. Combat negative or fake news. The rise of fake news complicates communications today, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach when addressing it. While you might be able to approach a professional journalist to ask for a retraction (though only if it's categorically wrong, and if other options, like pitching an update, are off the table), approaching a blogger intent on digging for dirt will make your situation worse. Nefarious bloggers have been known to publish and sometimes alter correspondence with their targets, so your only option in such a scenario is to try to bury them in a flood of other press.

6. Get proactive. While you can't control everything that is written about you, you can control what you write, create or produce. Content in credentialed publications appears high in search engine results. Ensuring you have a stream of this content (bylined articles, features on pro bono work, podcast appearances, etc.) will be one of the most powerful gifts you can give your online self.

Whether you have something as serious as a malpractice suit or as simple as photos from a party you'd rather forget, know that clients are searching for you on the web. Even attorneys without reputation issues need to regularly attend to their digital identity. Monitoring your online reputation and keeping it clean are integral parts of building and sustaining your practice, and should be ongoing priorities.

Helen Bertelli (@HelenBertelli3) is a marketer and entrepreneur, having helped to build two PR startups as well as founding the marketing department for a national law firm and her own digital publishing company. She is now Vice President with Infinite Global, an international communications and public relations firm serving the legal industry.

Copyright Concerns and Social Media

BY RUTH CARTER



When it comes to social media, lawyers must abide by the same rules as everyone else regarding content creation, cultivation and distribution. In fact, it is imperative for lawyers to understand and abide by the rules because it looks very bad when a lawyer is accused of behaving poorly or breaking the law using the internet. The court of public opinion is merciless.

While there are a host of legal implications that apply to content marketing, this article focuses on copyright.

Copyright Issues: Overview

The U.S. Copyright Act provides protection for original literary, pictorial, musical and other creative works. The person who owns the copyright has the exclusive right to copy, distribute, display, perform and make derivative works from the work.

It is a low bar to clear to obtain a copyright. All that is required is an original work of authorship that is fixed in any tangible medium. A work can be created when a person puts paint to canvas, snaps a photo, puts pencil to paper or fingers to keyboard. A digital file is sufficient to satisfy the tangible medium requirement — which means you may have a copyright in every social media post you create.

Remember: You don't need to register your work with the U.S. Copyright Office to obtain your rights. You get your rights the moment you have an original work of authorship, fixed in a tangible medium. That's all it takes to obtain a copyright. (If you want to sue for copyright infringement, however, then you must register your work.)

If you don't have the budget for image licenses, consider Creative Commons. The site has images for which the artist has given a license for anyone to use their work, provided you comply with the terms of the license. There are also specific royalty-free images available.

Another thing to remember is copyright applies to original expression, not to facts or ideas within a work. This is why it is possible to take similar photographs or write about similar topics without the risk of infringement. As long as someone is not claiming the other's work as their own, the fact that they have similar works is likely legally permissible.

Even though there is a wide breadth to create similar content as your competition and other creators, there are substantial potential legal implications regarding copyright and social media. In 1946, the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in *Heim v. Universal Pictures* that a short phrase, while not usually protected by copyright, can be unique or creative enough to warrant protection under the Copyright Act. This ruling continues to be applicable in an internet-based society, where copying a short phrase may be permissible, but it may also be infringement, such as if a user posts a comic's original joke without permission. (Note: This ruling does not apply when an artist uses social media to share their work and others share it using the functions of the platform.)

Likewise, using another artist's image may constitute copyright infringement. Numerous lawsuits have alleged illegal use of another's image, with requests for statutory damages sometimes in the millions. Increased uses and users of the internet have contributed to more allegations of internet-based copyright infringement, and more photographers and photography licensing services are savvy and aggressive about protecting and asserting their rights.

Images for Your Posts

Content creators who are not artists or photographers often ask where they should get images for their website and social media posts. Many mistakenly think they can use any image they find on the internet; and unfortunately, some so-called "experts" encourage this by saying you can use any image as long as you provide an attribution and a link to the source.

This is blatantly false. If you do this, you're likely committing copyright infringement, admitting it, and telling the owner about it.

If you need images for your posts, look to sources like iStock to purchase a license to use a photo. If you don't have the budget for image licenses, consider Creative Commons. The site has images for which the artist has given a license for anyone to use their work, provided you comply with the terms of the license. There are also specific royalty-free images available. For professional posts, I recommend using images that come with the license to modify and commercialize.

Another option for using another's image is to contact the copyright holder and ask permission to use the picture. I've never had anyone refuse.

Quoting Others

There is one section of the Copyright Act that allows people to use another's work: the fair use provision. This provision respects that useful works can be created that incorporate all or part of another's work. The fair use provision specifically allows you and your firm to use another's work for the purpose of comment, criticism and research.

Fair use allows you to quote another source and add your own thoughts on the matter. An effective way to do this with social media is to quote the source, provide a link for those who want to see the quote in its full context, and then add to the conversation with your own analysis. Typically, I do this when I write posts about the legal implications of recent events or new case law or legislation. It's a way to provide legal insight into everyday issues.

PRIVACY CONCERNS? A FEW RULES OF THUMB

Social media allows us to easily reach a larger audience and be part of a broader community than when we were limited to phone calls, emails and faxes. But just like there is no expectation of privacy in plain view of the public (exceptions for places like bathrooms), there's no expectation of privacy in anything you post online — regardless of your privacy settings.

Likewise, the rumor mill used to be limited to geographic bubbles. Now, a single post online can spread worldwide in a matter of minutes. That may be a positive thing if you're sharing good news; but on the flip side, anyone can post negative comments about you as long as they aren't violating your rights (e.g., defamation and harassment).

These risks shouldn't scare you away from participating in social media, but you should be aware of the various ways it can be used. While you're deciding what

platforms you and your firm want to use, also consider what boundaries you want to set regarding the information you will share about yourself and your practice.

When it comes to social media, these are my rules of thumb:

- Don't post anything online that you wouldn't put on the front of a newspaper.
- Assume everything you post will be seen by four people: your best friend, your worst enemy, your boss and your mother. If you don't want one of them to see it, don't post it.

Remember, once a post goes out there, you can never fully take it back. You can't stop others from re-sharing it, or taking screenshots, and there will always be a copy of whatever you posted stored on a server somewhere.

— Ruth Carter

Third-Party Creators

When a law firm considers using social media as a marketing tool, many lawyers ask whether they can hire a third party to write their content or manage their social media accounts. This is permissible, but if you choose to do so, I strongly recommend you have a crystal-clear contract with such third parties, because you are entrusting them with your firm's reputation.

When you review your contract with your third-party creator, make sure that it contains at least the following terms:

- What the creator is being hired to create
- Who owns the copyright to it
- A guarantee that the creator's work is original to them
- An indemnification clause that protects you if you are accused of wrongdoing because of what the creator published in your name.

Additionally, if your firm hires a third party to create your social media accounts on platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and so on, make sure the contract is clear that *you* own them. When the contract with the third party ends, you must retain possession and control over the accounts.

Social media is an effective communication tool, when used properly. Be thoughtful about what you post. I hope the excitement and satisfaction of reaching more people outweighs your trepidation of trying new platforms.

Ruth Carter (@rbcarter) is a lawyer, writer and speaker. She is *Of Counsel with Venjuris*, focusing her practice on intellectual property, social media, First Amendment and flash mob law. Named an ABA Journal 2012 Legal Rebel, Ruth is author of the ABA book *"The Legal Side of Blogging for Lawyers,"* as well as *"Flash Mob Law: The Legal Side of Planning and Participating in Pillow Fights, No Pants Rides, and Other Shenanigans."* In her Attorney at Work column *"Nothing But the Ruth,"* she writes about the lessons she's learning while building her practice. She blogs at UdeniableRuth.com.

Test Your Social Media Ethics IQ

BY MARK HOMER

If you're like most lawyers, you probably would rather clean your desk and reorganize all your files than think about how you should be using social media. Only a few years ago, there was significant reluctance from lawyers on the topic of social media. My response was always this: Social media is not going away, and you need to be prepared to use it while also understanding how it can get you or your clients in trouble.

Fortunately, we are seeing a change among lawyers. A recent ABA Legal Technology Survey showed that 76 percent of lawyers individually maintain a presence on social media for professional reasons. This is in addition to whatever their firm is doing.

According to the survey, the reasons you are likely using social media match the majority of conversations we have with lawyers about potential ethics areas of concern with social media:

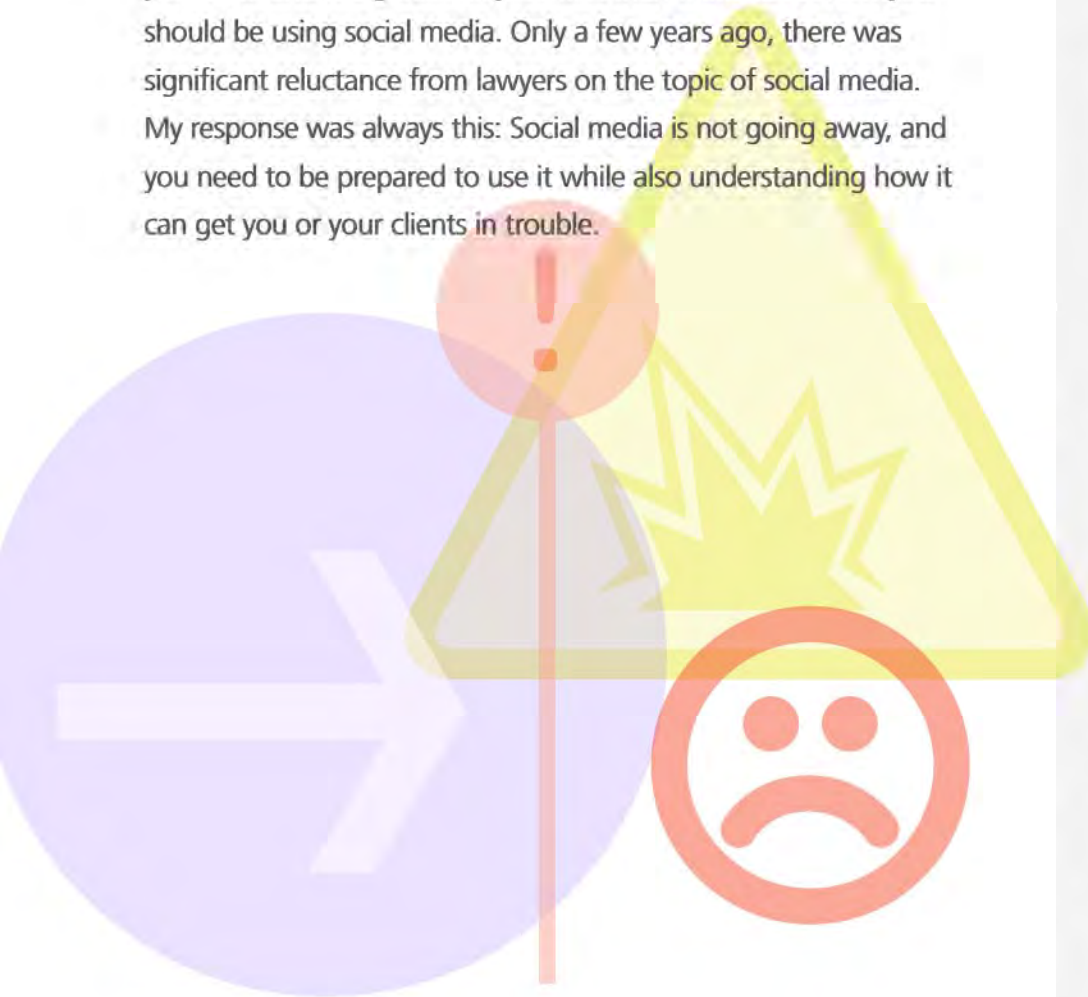
- New client development
- Social media awareness and understanding
- Client investigation

The ethical concerns when it comes to social media are focused in two different areas:

- Using social media for marketing
- Social media competence (how to properly advise your clients)

Before diving deeper into examples of these issues, I want to make you aware of the conversation surrounding a lawyer's responsibility to understand social media networks.

One of the topics of this conversation is the updated ABA Model Rules that, in 2012, added "including the benefits and risks associated with relevant technology" to Model Rule 1.1: Competence [Comment 8], and implementation of this change appears to be happening quickly as 27 states, to date, have adopted it. Not a year later, in 2013, a South Carolina lawyer was suspended because she refused to get an email address.



Using Social Media for Marketing

Your prospective clients use social media on a daily basis, so it makes sense to use social media to provide awareness of your firm. We do not discourage lawyers from using it; in fact, if you use it for what it was intended — to share information and interact around topics that interest you — you will likely have few ethical issues. Also, social media sites tend to rank very high when someone searches for your firm name on the internet, so having a quality Facebook or LinkedIn page can help support the brand you want to portray when referrals check you out online. What potential clients are looking for is that you have a professional presence that is well-rounded. At a minimum, post your blog updates, news or information you find of interest to you and your client base to your accounts.

However, we see many lawyers who use social media to also advertise. If that is what you hope to do, you need to think about the following ethics issues with regards to social media and marketing.

Common Social Media Marketing Ethics Missteps

Here are the common mistakes and how to avoid them (of course, every state is unique, so please check with your local bar association for more guidance):

Solicitation. A hat-tip to the State Bar of California for releasing Formal Opinion [No. 2012-186](#) that clearly outlines several social media posts and how they may or may not violate California ethics. The biggest misstep concerns commercial speech. At the point you ask someone to contact you, visit your website or invite them to become clients for pecuniary gain, you are soliciting business and therefore must have a proper disclaimer. In the California opinion, merely saying “who wants to be next” was enough to move that post from an announcement to solicitation.

The best way to avoid this pitfall is to pause before you post anything and ask yourself if this post contains commercial speech.

It is not always against ethics rules to “solicit” if you are, in fact, following the rules for advertising . . . But if your Facebook page or Twitter profile pages encourage someone to contact you so that you can help them, your post might seem to cross into unwanted solicitation.

Advertising. It is not always against ethics rules to “solicit” if you are, in fact, following the rules for advertising. (Some states have very strict guidelines pertaining to how you can advertise, the kind of disclaimer you must have, images you can use, and how long you must keep a record of your advertisements.) A good rule of thumb is: Posting on social media networks is not inherently advertising unless that post contains commercial speech. But if your Facebook page or Twitter profile pages encourage someone to contact you so that you can help them, your post might seem to cross into unwanted solicitation. While California tried to outline what was and what was not advertising on social media, New York City gave an [interesting opinion on five criteria](#) that determine whether a LinkedIn profile would be considered advertising or not. If you want to use social media to increase your brand awareness in the hopes of acquiring new clients, it would be wise to make sure you are following all the rules for advertising in your state. This may include having a link to a disclaimer, taking screenshots of your social media profiles when you change them to preserve a “copy of the advertising,” or adding “attorney advertising” language if required. To avoid direct solicitation issues, try to avoid commercial speech in your actual social media posts.

Lawyer-client relationship. Another area to watch out for when interacting with others on social media is that what may seem like a few innocent interactions on a Twitter Q&A or LinkedIn group may be taken as advice. We have all seen how much people are willing to share

For some reason, attorneys who would never tell a client to shred a document or delete a spreadsheet to hide evidence are OK telling their client to delete a tweet or Facebook post to prevent them from looking bad in court. ... In one example, an attorney in Virginia was fined over \$500,000 for “a scheme to take down or deactivate [the plaintiff’s] Facebook account so that he could respond that he had no Facebook page on the date the discovery request was signed.”

on social media; under Model Rule 1.18 you may be gaining enough knowledge and interacting just enough to constitute a lawyer-client relationship. The advice to have a disclaimer where possible in social media certainly helps here, too. Obviously it is hard to do in a 140-character Twitter post, but you may want to include a sentence or two where you have room, say, on a LinkedIn group message.

Remember also that social media has no state boundaries, so the advice you may be giving could also cause you to have jurisdictional issues.

Social Media Competence Issues

Many of your clients are using social media on a daily basis. For you to give them proper guidance on how to avoid pitfalls that could cause problems for their case, you should understand the environment in which they communicate both publicly and privately. You should be able, at minimum, to communicate clearly to clients the liabilities of participating in each of these networks, especially during the case proceedings, so you can stave off potential issues. Do not think that the answer is telling your clients to “not” interact with social media. That is akin to telling them not to use their phone or email; it is just not realistic.

Do you know when a tweet is public or private? What information can be seen publicly on your Facebook or LinkedIn profiles, and how can you change those privacy settings? Over the past few years, social media

issues have come up in formal state ethics opinions and judgments. For example, according to the New York Bar Association, a lawyer cannot be sufficiently competent without a working knowledge of the benefits and risks associated with the use of social media.

Spoliation. For some reason, attorneys who would never tell a client to shred a document or delete a spreadsheet to hide evidence are OK telling their client to delete a tweet or Facebook post to prevent them from looking bad in court. Fortunately, the courts are handling this as they should and sanctioning attorneys who are colluding to destroy evidence. In one example, an attorney in Virginia was fined over \$500,000 for “a scheme to take down or deactivate [the plaintiff’s] Facebook account so that he could respond that he had no Facebook page on the date the discovery request was signed.”

Discovery. Getting access to what people post on social media networks can completely sway a case to your favor. How you obtain that information is still up for debate. The social network at question is often Facebook. If the user’s profile is set to private, then to gain access to their posts you must “friend” them. In New York, there is a more liberal policy on whether you can “friend” someone solely for the sake of discovery; Pennsylvania, on the other hand, is not so liberal. Ask your bar association specifically if you, or a third party, can connect with someone on social media for the sake of discovery and what information you are required to disclose.

As we see social media used more and more in e-discovery, you must understand how to properly advise a client about their social media profiles before discovery ever happens. As you know, the knowledge of a particular email, Word document or spreadsheet is often enough to require the document to be provided in discovery. Not surprising to many lawyers, but very surprising to the average Facebook user, is that the private part of a user’s social media account is not really private. In one case in Pennsylvania, the judge ruled for the defendant that some public social media posts seemed to contradict the plaintiff’s serious injury claim and required the plaintiff to provide personal login in-

As Larry Doyle, a member of the California bar's Committee on Professional Responsibility and Conduct, wrote: "Because of the fiduciary nature of the profession, lawyers are never really 'off duty' as far as their ethical obligations to their clients are concerned."

formation so that "private" posts could be reviewed by the defense. In the opinion, the judge wrote that "only the uninitiated or foolish could believe that Facebook is an online lockbox of secrets." Therefore, what clients have revealed in their public social media persona could compel their private information.

Once you have their social media information, you may need to address social media actions by your client, a witness or even an opposing counsel's client in the courtroom. If you are going to submit social media activity for a trial, you should understand the basics of that social media platform. In fact, California issued a formal opinion on handling of discovery of electronically stored information, essentially saying that if you are not competent in a number of e-discovery areas you had better have experienced co-counsel or an expert consultant.

Confidentiality. With the advent of blogging, we started seeing attorneys violate Model Rule 1.6 with more frequency. One example — in which the lawyer thought they had proper consent to talk about a case online when maybe they didn't — is the case of Hunter v. Virginia State Bar. Here, posting about clients by name and the public court proceedings, while ultimately was allowed in Virginia, led to a serious headache for the lawyer.

Social media opens lawyers up to this issue even more. Often the situation occurs when a lawyer reveals too many details about a client even though the lawyer did not use the client's name. A public defender in Illinois was disciplined for sharing blog posts on social media about judges and clients, with the court saying: "Respondent knew or should have known that information contained in her ... blog ... was confi-

dential, or that it had been gained in the professional relationship and the revelation of it would be embarrassing or detrimental to her client." The best practice is to avoid talking about clients on social media. Period. There is no need. You can take full advantage of social media without having to mention anyone, specifically or vaguely.

Keep Learning

As Larry Doyle, a member of the California bar's Committee on Professional Responsibility and Conduct, wrote: "Because of the fiduciary nature of the profession, lawyers are never really 'off duty' as far as their ethical obligations to their clients are concerned."

If you intend to stay competitive over the coming years, social media is something you must learn. Not just because you want to have new clients find you, but to be able to give your clients the best advice, and to better prevail in the courtroom.

Mark Homer (@mark_homer), co-author of "Online Law Practice Strategies," often speaks around the U.S. on marketing and social media ethics for law firms. He is the CEO of GNGF, a leading law firm marketing agency, and co-founder of Trial3D. At GNGF, Mark leads the team to help empower and educate law firms to grow their practice.



Leveraging LinkedIn

You Need to Pimp Your LinkedIn Profile (Yes, You)

BY SUSAN KOSTAL

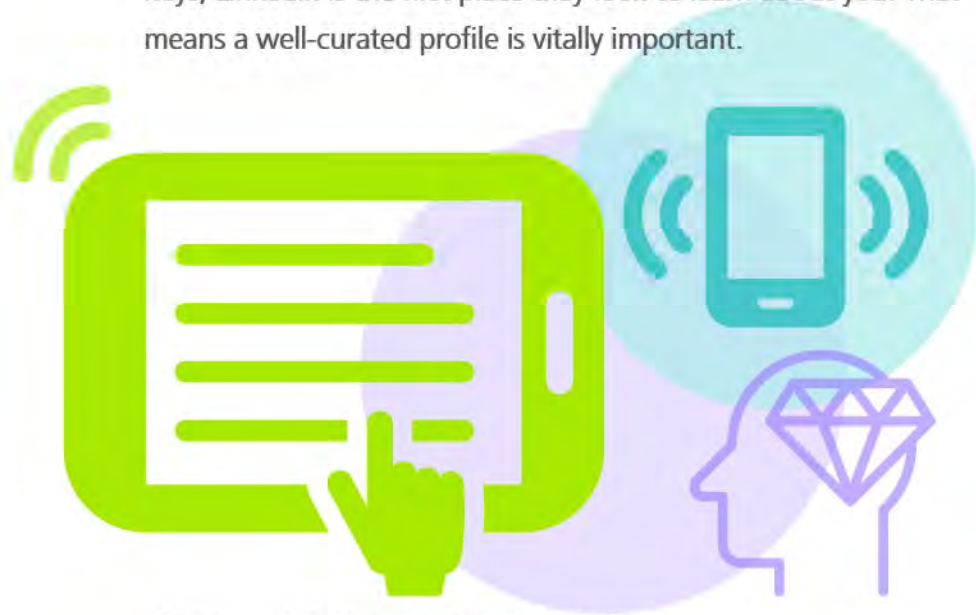
After the inevitable January “fresh start” updates, many people leave their LinkedIn profile alone the rest of the year. Active social media users update their profiles every three months with new pro bono work, awards and cases. If you haven’t refreshed your profile yet this year, hate to break it to you, but you’re behind. General counsel may not post, like or comment on LinkedIn, but they are there. Data confirms that for a growing number of in-house attorneys, LinkedIn is the first place they look to learn about you. That means a well-curated profile is vitally important.

Unlike your bio on your law firm’s website, you have complete control over your profile. This means you can describe your expertise, highlight areas of your choice as you like, and update it as often as you need. Use the following as a guide.

1. Add a current photo. Especially if your photo is four to five years old. Don’t be that person who is unrecognizable at a conference or when you meet a client face-to-face. Make it a professional photo; don’t rely on a selfie.

2. Make the most of your descriptor. Use the summary of your profile to your greatest advantage. Unlike your law firm bio, which is written in the third person, you can use the first person on LinkedIn and talk about your goals, passions and professional aims. Adopt an authentic voice that lets your personality come through. Law firm bios typically don’t allow for an inviting or conversational tone. Here’s your chance to leverage that.

3. List each law firm separately and use their logo. Under each firm list your top engagements. Feel free to add narrative. The case was out with the jury for only 45 minutes. The verdict came in under or over the settlement offer. Your team was chosen after 10 firms were interviewed. The case settled after your cross of the other side’s expert. Think of setting, character, conflict, resolution. What part did you play?



Don't be afraid to ask opposing counsel or co-counsel with whom you have a friendly professional relationship to recommend you. Nothing speaks louder than being called a worthy opponent.

4. Add new articles, presentations, boards and committee memberships. Add speaking engagements, articles, awards, board and committee work as appropriate.

5. Add new skills so you can be endorsed for what you do best. If you haven't yet added "legal research," start with that. And specifically ask trusted peers for endorsements of specific skills.

6. Regularly ask for recommendations from peers and clients. Have at least one for each firm where you've worked, and ideally for each few years of your career. You can always decline to publish it if it's not exactly what you want, and you can hide those that are no longer relevant. And don't be afraid to ask opposing counsel or co-counsel with whom you have a friendly professional relationship to recommend you. Nothing speaks louder than being called a worthy opponent.

7. Publish and share relevant content. It's not enough to like or comment on the content of others. With LinkedIn's design, your current activity — what you post — comes up at the top of your profile, before your experience. Don't leave that section blank. Show that you are engaged in the business world around you.

About Your Tone

The trend on LinkedIn is to move toward a conversational tone, rather than the formal tone of a resume or CV. Use that to your advantage and craft your personal narrative.

Still Unsure of How to Position Yourself?

Look at the profiles of both respected peers and formidable adversaries. Finally, look at colleagues one level up from you, whose jobs you want next. What are they saying about themselves? LinkedIn not only showcases the professional you are today, but the professional who's right for that next position.

***Susan Kostal** (@skostal) is a legal affairs PR, marketing and business development consultant based in San Francisco. She is a contributing editor for *Attorney at Work* and writes the "Content Under Pressure" column. Susan has covered legal affairs as a journalist for nearly three decades. You can view more of her content at www.susankostal.com, including her *Legal Marketing Bits and Bites* newsletter.*

Online Profiles: Presenting the Best Version of Yourself

BY SALLY J. SCHMIDT

Prior to working with a sixth-year associate recently, I reviewed her online profiles. After we had talked for an hour, I noted that her bio was a complete disconnect from her practice. While she originally had been assigned to the firm's estate planning area, she'd spent the past three years on commercial real estate matters, which was also the practice she wanted to develop. When I asked why the bio contained nothing about her recent experience, she said it hadn't been updated since shortly after she joined the firm.

I spend a lot of time working with lawyers to improve their firm bios and LinkedIn profiles. I know what some of you are thinking: Is it really that important? The answer is yes, and the reason is that buying behavior is changing. Consider these two studies:

- A Corporate Executive Board study of more than 1,400 business-to-business clients and customers found that they completed nearly 60 percent of a typical purchasing decision before even having a conversation with a supplier.
- According to a study published by Hinge Research Institute, more than 80 percent of buyers of professional services review a company's website before engaging.

In other words, prospects are conducting their own research to vet their choices. You may be eliminated from consideration without even knowing you were a contender. This is equally true internally — partners often review associate bios when putting together teams.

Here are some thoughts on how to put your best foot forward.

Introductory Information

1. Draw people in. Whether preparing a firm bio or a LinkedIn profile, start with a summary to give people a quick snapshot of who you are and how you help clients. How many lawyer bios have you read that begin like this?

"Kelly is an associate in the firm's litigation department."

Clients don't care how the firm is organized internally; they want to know with whom you work and how you help them. A better start would be:

"Kelly helps technology companies protect their intellectual property jewels — patents, trademarks and copyrights — through both preventive measures and, when necessary, litigation."

Write in plain English (except if using clients' terminology and acronyms), using short sentences, short paragraphs and active language.

2. Highlight key facts. Many bio templates organize things like education, presentations or prior work experience into separate sections. If you have impressive credentials that might be overlooked in sidebars or tabs, introduce them in the summary for the reader. For example:

"With an MBA in logistics, Dan speaks the language of the transportation industry and has a first-hand understanding of the issues facing his clients."

"In the past 18 months, Carla has presented more than 20 educational programs to businesses about the Affordable Care Act."

3. Focus on the most recent, important or desirable issues. One senior lawyer's bio began with something he did for the first five years of his practice that he: (a) no longer does; and (b) no longer wishes to do. Why make that someone's first impression? Instead, lead with your sweet spot or the area of practice you most wish to develop.

To those who tell me their website bio has never gotten them a call, I say, "Bingo." Spend a little time improving your online profiles and you might be surprised what happens.

Past Experience

1. Include representative matters. Clients want to know with whom you work and how you help them. Perhaps the best way to do that is to include a bulleted list of actual cases, when possible, or scenarios disguised to protect client confidentiality, like:

"Represented a general contractor in a major dispute with a subcontractor."

"Assisted restaurant management in addressing tip credit issues."

2. Turn prior work experience into a benefit. The key to including prior experience is whether it is relevant to clients. I have met with lawyers who have experience doing what their clients do — as HR managers, insurance adjusters or in-house counsel — but it is not reflected in the lawyers' bios. Not only is this experience reassuring to clients, it is a clear differentiator and should be emphasized.

If you joined a midsize firm after working for a large, international law firm, you can add that to your bio. While your firm may not want to include competitors' names, your prior experience no doubt factored into the firm's decision to hire you and clients might be similarly impressed.

If the benefit of your experience is less obvious, you may need to connect the dots for readers. For example, one corporate associate's bio noted he had spent two years in the firm's litigation department. If you are going to include that information, tell the reader why it's important:

"Adam's experience as a litigator helps him anticipate potentially troublesome language or situations that can arise in manufacturers' relationships with distributors."

3. Use discretion with articles and presentations. Clients look at these items to determine your subject-matter expertise. A bio should illustrate a sustained thought-leadership effort in your selected practice(s). However, there are some cases where you may want to think twice about including them, for example, an old article that involves a completely unrelated area or a presentation addressing an issue that no longer exists.

Other Information

1. Include outside activities. Clients review outside activities to gauge your leadership and to determine mutual connections (human and emotional). As a result, I often suggest including more information rather than less. Professional activities are an easy call; however, personal activities (e.g., running marathons) can be appropriate, too. A prospect contacted one lawyer because his profile indicated he plays in a community band — and so does she.

2. Demonstrate language skills. Show, don't tell. If you are fluent in German, use it in a sentence or two on your profile. If your firm bio template doesn't lend itself to this type of information, LinkedIn certainly does.

To those who tell me their website bio has never gotten them a call, I say, "Bingo." Spend a little time improving your online profiles and you might be surprised what happens.

Sally J. Schmidt (@SallySchmidt) is President of Schmidt Marketing, Inc., which offers marketing services to law firms. Sally was a founder and the first President of the Legal Marketing Association, and is the author of "Marketing the Law Firm: Business Development Techniques" and "Business Development for Lawyers." She writes *Attorney at Work's* "Play to Win" column.

BE ONE OF A KIND



BY JAY HARRINGTON

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ONE REALLY GOOD IDEA EVERY DAY
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Lawyers and LinkedIn Skills and Endorsements

BY NANCY MYRLAND

With more than 500 million members in 200 countries, LinkedIn continues to be the dominant social networking site for lawyers. Recent research from Greentarget (see page 17) confirms its use by 73 percent of in-house counsel for professional reasons. The same study also cited LinkedIn as the “only social media platform considered particularly credible” by in-house counsel. Attorney at Work’s reader survey has LinkedIn in the top spot among social media sites used by lawyers, too” (see page 3).

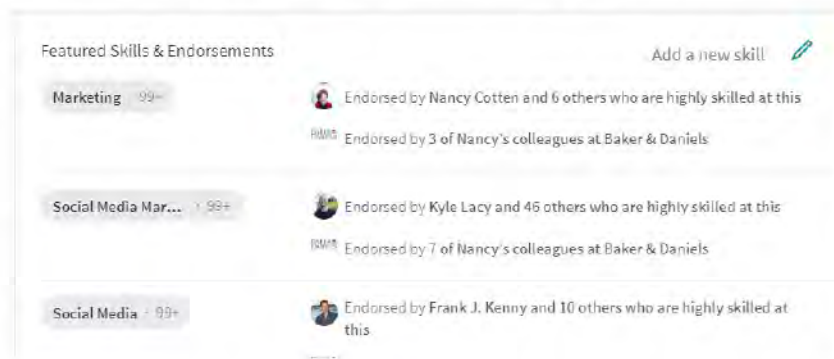
Because of this widespread use by lawyers and businesspeople, LinkedIn’s potential to create and nurture relationships between lawyers and clients is significant. You need to be there, and you need to focus on creating a profile and presence that accurately represents who you are, and that reinforces your credibility and focuses on how you can help others. There are many ways to do this, but one I am often asked about is what LinkedIn calls the “Skills & Endorsements” section.

The Featured Skills and Endorsements Section

Introduced in 2012, the LinkedIn Skills & Endorsements section is an optional part of your profile. Depending on your jurisdiction, you will need to be cautious about how you approach this section. When it was first launched, the word Expertise was used instead of Endorsements, so we had many ethical concerns in the legal profession. Changing it to Endorsements helped, but you still need to remember that, just as with any description you would use to describe yourself and your skills on any platform or in any place, it is a best practice, if not a requirement in some jurisdictions, to avoid the use of words and phrases that don’t represent skills that are verifiable.

Your Top Three

With the redesign of LinkedIn, the top three skills in this section are what others see when they visit your profile in what LinkedIn now calls the “Featured Skills & Endorsements” section. These skills are the only ones others see at first glance. Unlike prior versions of this section, your visitors have to click on “view more” to see the rest of your skills. They will also see a snapshot of others who have endorsed you for these three skills who also have these skills, as well as colleagues.



Note: Knowing profile visitors will only see the top three skills at first glance, make sure the ones you want to feature most are those they will see. You can do this, as well as perform any other edits, by clicking on the edit pencil in the top right corner of the Featured Skills & Endorsements box (see figure above).

Edit Your Skills and Other Skills & Endorsements Settings

Reordering skills. When you click on the pencil to edit the section, you will be able to reorder your skills by clicking on the little icon with four lines to the right of each skill. The three you place at the top will be those your profile viewers will see at first glance when they visit your profile.

Don't be worried if the endorsement numbers for your top three are lower than you'd like. LinkedIn suggests your top skills to others to endorse so that number will change over time. If those skills are that

important for you to readily communicate to others, it is worth the time it takes to build those numbers.

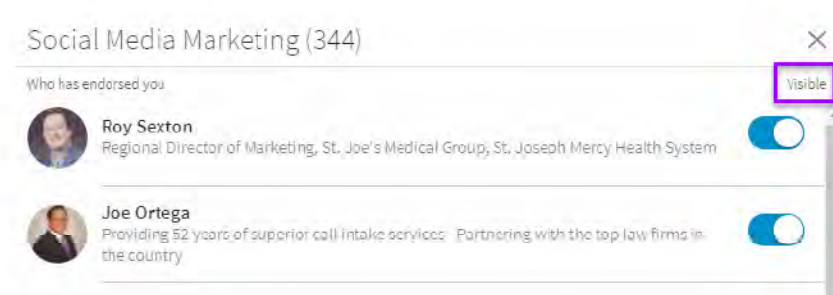
Deleting skills. You can also delete skills in this same box by clicking on the X to the left of the skill. For example, as a result of visiting my profile to create this summary for you, I deleted several that I thought were not words my clients would use when searching for someone with my skills.

Note: You might want to put a reminder in your calendar to visit this section once every six months or so to keep it up to date.



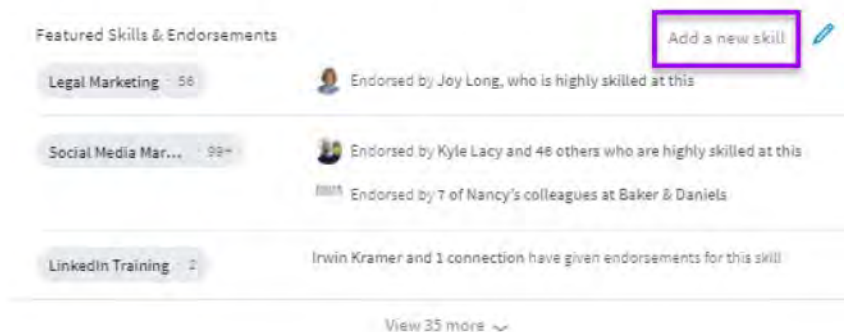
Who Has Endorsed You?

Endorsements for skills not already listed won't show up unless you approve them. If you've forgotten who has endorsed you, simply click on that skill to see a list of all who have endorsed you. If you want to hide or unhide specific endorsements from certain people, simply toggle that person's endorsement off under the word "Visible" on the right. This person's endorsement will no longer be included in the total number of endorsements shown for that skill. You can always toggle it back on if you change your mind.



Adding a New Skill

You can list up to 50 skills. That doesn't mean you *have to* use all of them. To add a new skill, simply click on "Add a new skill" in the upper right corner of the Featured Skills & Endorsements box. You will then have the ability to add those skills not already represented.

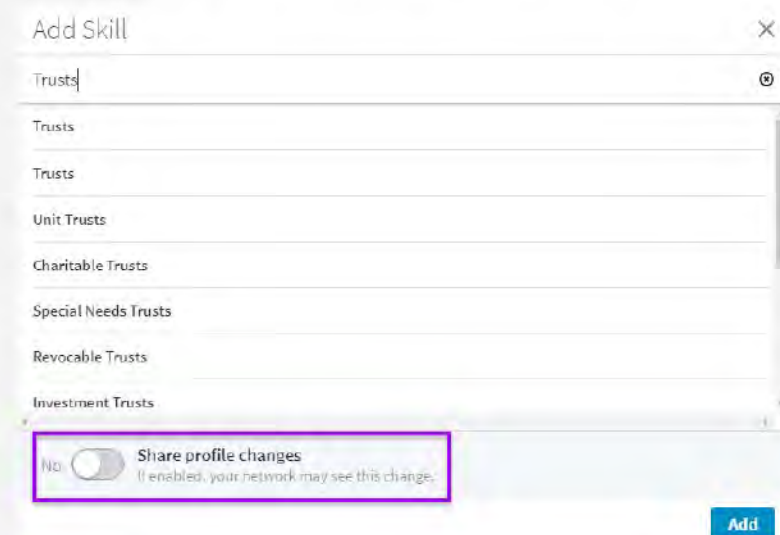


Always think of the skills on your profile as keywords, which means that LinkedIn and other search engines could potentially find and rank you higher should those keywords be searched by others. Spend a few minutes recalling those keywords that are critical to you and your practice. Make sure they are listed here under Skills & Endorsements and in other sections of your profile on LinkedIn, as well as in your newsfeed, groups, when you write posts in LinkedIn Publisher, on your firm's blog, in presentations, interviews, and wherever else they make sense. Be professional in your use of them, avoiding keyword-stuffing.

Note: Remember to think like your clients and potential clients. What words might they use to research a particular skill or topic?

After you click on "Add a new skill" and begin to type in the skill, you will notice suggestions for skills that are somehow related. In the example below, I began typing "Trusts," and was presented with several options. Click to add any of these skills if they accurately identify skills you have and want others to see on your profile.

Note: If you are making changes you want to bring to your followers' attention, toggle on the "share profile changes" setting highlighted below. If you do not want to share them, then toggle it off. I can think



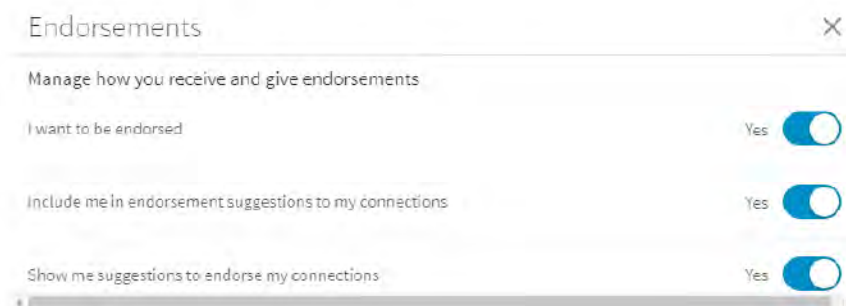
of other sections I would not want to promote in my newsfeed, such as making a dozen minor changes in wording of prior positions. Skills are important, though, so consider leaving this turned so that the change will be mentioned in your newsfeed. They might learn something about you they didn't know before, or perhaps had forgotten.

You Have Even More Choices

You have the ability to choose whether you want to be endorsed, to be included in endorsement suggestions LinkedIn makes to your connections, and whether you want LinkedIn to show you suggestions to endorse your connections. These options are accessible by clicking on "Adjust endorsement settings" at the bottom of your Skills & Endorsements section.

Endorsing Others for Their Skills

Do you need to reciprocate when others endorse you? The short answer is no, but it is completely up to you and your style. If you have a large number of connections, you will find that many very kind people will endorse your skills. This happens easily because we are all presented with suggested skills to endorse while we are maneuvering around LinkedIn. Although these suggestions are not as in-your-face since a recent redesign, it is still easy to endorse others.



What this means, however, is that it could become difficult to keep up with the number of people who endorse you. It takes time to go back and endorse every one of them for the skills you know apply to them. Also, there will be times when you simply do not feel comfortable making an endorsement. You want to be honest and genuine, so don't ever feel obligated to endorse others simply because they endorsed you. On the other hand, if it fits into your personality to reciprocate, and you can keep up without offending those who may monitor this closely, then do so. Remember that your avatar (your profile picture) shows up alongside each skill you endorse, so make them wisely and genuinely.

Some like to proactively endorse others for skills they know they have to get on their radar. LinkedIn alerts all of us when someone endorses us, so this can be a good way to pop up in others' email inboxes or in LinkedIn notifications based on their settings. Always remember that your credibility is at stake when you recommend or endorse others. These statements of support are digital breadcrumbs that lead back to you so they must always represent you in the highest ethical manner.

Bottom Line

As busy as you are, I encourage you to spend thoughtful time in this section on LinkedIn. We know our clients and prospects are using LinkedIn for professional networking and research. It is important to think about this Skills & Endorsements section strategically, making sure that if your jurisdiction allows this section to be listed, you are represented as fully and accurately as possible.

Nancy Myrland (@NancyMyrland) is a marketing and business development plan consultant, and a content, social and digital media speaker, trainer and advisor, helping lawyers and legal marketers grow their practices by integrating all marketing disciplines. In addition to the [Myrland Marketing Minute Blog](#), you can find her on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#).

Using LinkedIn to Reach Your Goals

BY SAYRE HAPPICH

Using LinkedIn is a lot like any other business development activity. If you don't know what your goal is, and plan a strategy for achieving it, you won't accomplish much. David Ackert of Practice Boomers frequently presents on business development strategies. He recently shared his excellent advice on the importance of prioritizing goals and sticking to a strategy when using LinkedIn.

How Can LinkedIn Help You the Most?

Here are four goals to consider — along with Ackert's strategies to help you reach them. Note: Ackert stressed that choosing all four of these goals at once is not a good idea. Prioritize and commit to just one goal to start with before you move on to tackle the next.

Goal 1: Target Potential Clients

If your goal is to identify potential clients and referral sources, Ackert recommends these strategies:

- Type terms into the search field that can help you connect with potential clients who might be looking for an attorney with your expertise. Take note: One of the biggest changes to LinkedIn in 2017 is the “Get to Know” search. There are no longer advanced search features that allow you to search by keyword, first and last name, title and location.
- More often than not, you will probably have a first-tier connection to the person you identified. If you do, pick up the phone and ask that first-tier connection for an introduction to the person you are ultimately looking to reach. Provide the context for why you are asking for the introduction.
- When trying to connect with someone, LinkedIn offers a field for you to include a personal note. Use this field to let the person know why you want to connect and include a call to action. For example, “I am working on a blog you might be interested in subscribing to. Please contact me if you have topic ideas or would like to contribute.” In this age of ever-increasing fake social media profiles and spammy boilerplate solicitations, this step is especially important.



Let the person you are trying to connect with know you are real, you can provide value, and you have a legitimate reason for wanting to connect with them.

- Tired of seeing those LinkedIn alerts (work anniversaries, new jobs and so on)? Instead of ignoring them, when you see an alert about someone who might be a potential client or referral source, call the person to convey congratulations and rekindle your professional connection.
- When sending email to a prospect, use LinkedIn's InMail instead of your email provider. (According to Ackert, InMail is 30 percent more likely to be opened than regular email due to its relative novelty.)
- When you are notified that someone has looked at your profile, take the opportunity to send that person an InMail and ask if you can help them with something — perhaps they need an attorney in your practice area?
- Something new to think about in 2017: If you use any of LinkedIn's advertising products, consider website retargeting, or matched audiences. This targeting capability allows you to market to those LinkedIn members who have also visited your website. [Social Media Examiner has a great article on this subject.](#)

Goal 2: Attract Opportunities

If your goal in using LinkedIn is to attract opportunities to your niche practice area, here are ideas to get you started:

- Join LinkedIn groups that align with your areas of interest. Participation in groups is three times more likely to drive relevant traffic to your profile.
- Once people are on your profile, make sure key points stand out. One of the ways to do that is to include multimedia like [Slide-Share](#) or videos of presentations you have given. This will further brand you as an expert in your practice area.

- Start your own LinkedIn group to attract appropriate connections for dialogue and follow up.

Goal 3: Broadcast Yourself

If your goal is to get your name out to an extended network, focus on these strategies:

- Use your LinkedIn status updates to post relevant blog articles, announcements, press releases, or alerts to your connections.
- Drive attention to your content by posting it to LinkedIn groups that you are a member of and ask questions to accompany the posts to start a dialogue.

Goal 4: Think Client Service

If your goal on LinkedIn is solely to focus on existing clients and people who are already engaging with you — online and offline — follow these strategies:

- This first step might be obvious, but make sure you connect with all of your clients on LinkedIn.
- Match content and connections to their needs. Ask questions such as, “What is keeping you up at night?” If connections need to know about a new law and how it will affect their business, find information for them or refer them to another attorney in your network.
- Are your clients looking to hire a lawyer in areas outside your expertise? One way to find out is to do a job search using the client's company name as a filter. If they are looking, pick up the phone and call your client. Recommend an attorney in your network.

Sayre Happich (@SFbar) is Assistant Director of Communications and Social Media Manager at [The Bar Association of San Francisco \(BASF\)](#). She manages BASF's website, monthly newspaper, bimonthly e-newsletters and public relations efforts. She also heads up the organization's social media efforts.

David Ackert (@DavidAckert) of Practice Boomers is a frequent presenter at conferences, including the Legal Marketing Association.

The background features three large, stylized, light green icons on a dark green background. On the left is a lightbulb. In the upper center is a speech bubble. On the right is a large gear. The text 'Turbocharging Twitter' is centered over the speech bubble and gear.

Turbocharging Twitter

What Top Lawyers Do on Twitter

How You Can Do It, Too

BY SUSAN KOSTAL

One of the easiest ways to figure out Twitter is to follow someone you respect and see how he or she uses it. It's helpful to look at some boldface names as well as regular folks, both in and outside your particular practice area.

It's also highly advisable to follow those in your field, as well as competitors in your market, say, another regional firm. And don't forget to follow the reporters who cover the industry and your practice area. So establish your account and let's get going. Use this plan to get up to speed. All it takes is 10 minutes a day. You can easily move from step 1 to step 7 in three months.

1. **Lurk.** Establish your account and find 20 regular users to follow. By regular I mean those who tweet daily. See what they tweet, who they follow and who follows them.
2. **Retweet.** Begin retweeting thoughtful, interesting content from your followers once a day.
3. **Add news stories.** Tweet (without comment) relevant news stories from your industry and practice area. General legal news, such as rumors of SCOTUS retirements, are fine, too.
4. **Retweet with comments.** Use the "quote tweet" option to add your commentary to a retweet. It could be as simple as "smart piece," or "important read." Eventually, after watching others, move to more

sophisticated comments on what others post.

5. **Focus on followers.** Now that you've built up a body of work, begin to increase your follows, in the hope that these folks will reciprocate and follow you.
6. **Use original content.** Now that you have more than 20 followers, you can begin tweeting your own content and alerts, such as blog posts, client newsletters, notice of new regulations and so on.
7. **Engage in conversations.** Use "quote tweet" or "reply" to speak specifically to what someone else has said on Twitter. This more personal engagement grows relationships and followers.

Success on Twitter is about quality over quantity. You don't need 1,000 followers to have an impact. Several dozen quality follows in your field and among potential clients is all you need.

Susan Kostal (@skostal) is a legal affairs PR, marketing and business development consultant based in San Francisco. She is a contributing editor for Attorney at Work and writes the "Content Under Pressure" column. Susan has covered legal affairs as a journalist for nearly three decades. You can view more of her content at www.susankostal.com, including her [Legal Marketing Bits and Bites](#) newsletter.

TOP LAWYERS ON TWITTER

Here are three very subjective lists to get you started.

[Top Legal Follows](#)

[GCs on Twitter](#)

[Important IP Follows](#)

Anatomy of a Tweet: How to Get the Most Out of Your 140 Characters

BY DEREK BOLEN



Lawyers are routinely told how necessary it is to maintain an active presence on Twitter. With good reason: With more than 328 million monthly active users (70 million of whom reside within the U.S.), it's a safe bet your potential clients are there.

Consumers are increasingly turning to social media channels when evaluating purchasing decisions — even legal services. Plus, clients control more of the purchasing journey than ever before — often, by the time they reach out and contact you, they've already decided to retain your services. Therefore, it's become imperative that you remain top-of-mind by communicating, engaging, building trust and establishing relationships with the people who could someday become your clients.

But on a platform where more than 700 million messages are sent every day and the average lifespan of a tweet hovers around 18 minutes before it disappears into a void of cat pictures and TV show spoilers, how do you make sure you're getting a good return on your social media investment?

Tip 1: Know Your Goals

Before investing time in any social network, it's imperative that you have a clear idea of exactly what you're trying to accomplish (beyond the obvious "attract more clients"). Are you trying to build more awareness of your firm locally? Drive traffic to your website? Engage with industry thought leaders? All of the above? Set up a social media dashboard like Hootsuite or TweetDeck. Monitor search terms, hashtags and topics that your potential clients are following and using, and save them as streams for easy access and quick reference later on.

Tip 2: Get Visual

They say a picture is worth a thousand words — but on Twitter, a picture can be worth far more. With a 140-character* limit, there's only so much you can communicate textually — but an image can give you an

opportunity to circumvent those limitations by communicating ideas visually, or by overlaying text on the image. As a bonus, tweets with images tend to see much higher engagement than those without, gaining up to 150 percent more link clicks, retweets and favorites. Twitter has continued to evolve beyond a microblogging platform to a visual-first platform, rolling out an update that allowed for up to four images to be shared in a single post, and another that stopped counting media links (images, GIFs, polls, video, etc.) against the character limit.

Tip 3: Call Me, Maybe?

A call to action, in marketing speak, is a strong phrase that compels your audience to take a desired action (for example, “visit my website” or “click here for more information”). Using strong calls to action can amplify your message to the Twittersphere at large (example: “Please RT”), increase engagement (example: “Reply with your thoughts!”), or boost website traffic (“Read my latest blog post!”). Because Twitter is, above all, an engagement platform, it’s recommended that you avoid overtly “salesy” calls to action (“Buy my lawyering!”) — instead, focus on actions that drive discussion and communication.

Tip 4: Hashtags

Hashtags, the #now #ubiquitous #method of labeling tweets with a particular conversation or topic, are a great way of gaining exposure to an entire new audience or targeting your messaging in real-time to an audience discussing a trending topic. (Great examples include defense lawyers who were tweeting their phone numbers using the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag, offering their services to protesters arrested, or lawyers who rallied around #MuslimBan when the Executive Order affecting immigration was implemented). Hashtags also offer a great opportunity to take part in Twitter conversations or chats around a variety of topics (check out #AppellateTwitter for a community of self-professed law nerds or #LegalTech, a lively discussion on emerging legal technology solutions).

When crafting tweets, #less is #more when it comes to hashtag use — while tweets including one or two hashtags can provide up to two times the engagement of tweets without, throwing in a third (or more) hashtag can actually reduce engagement. Stick to one hashtag per tweet to be safe.

Tip 5: Be Yourself, Everyone Else Is Already Taken

The ultimate goal of social media is the “social” part — building legitimate, lasting relationships with people who could benefit you enormously either personally or professionally. The best way to do so is by being sincere, honest, and showing your true personality. Public perception is that lawyers are a stodgy, humorless bunch — we know this isn’t the case. Don’t be afraid to let your true self shine through.

Tip 6: Be Ethical

Familiarize yourself with your state bar’s social media ethics opinion or guidelines before tweeting — it’s easier than you may think to run afoul of the professional rules of advertising governing lawyers, particularly when discussing previous cases, courtroom wins, or actively soliciting business via social media channels. Some examples:

BAD MESSAGING

“Case finally over. Unanimous verdict! Celebrating tonight.”

“Won a million dollar verdict. Tell your friends and check out my website.”

“Won another personal injury case. Call me for a free consultation.”

“Another great victory in court today! My client is delighted. Who wants to be next?”

GOOD MESSAGING

“Just published an article on wage and hour breaks. Let me know if you’d like a copy.”

Tweets with images tend to see much higher engagement than those without, gaining up to 150 percent more link clicks, retweets and favorites.

Tip 7: Test, Analyze, Optimize

Did you know every Twitter user has access to an analytics platform showing exactly how well your messages are driving engagement? Twitter Analytics gives you a wealth of actionable data and shows you exactly what's working on every tweet you send, including how many retweets, replies and favorites you get, as well as number of impressions (the exact number of times your tweet appears in user timelines), link clicks (if you're directing to a blog post or your website), demographic data on your followers and more.

Experiment with your tweets — tweet the same thing at different times of day, change up your copy, calls to action, images and more — to figure out exactly what resonates with your followers and has the biggest impact for your social media following and business development efforts.

By following these simple tips, you'll be an accomplished Twitter user in no time — success that will translate to your offline business development and law firm health as well. At the very least, you will have built meaningful relationships with a number of other human beings and will be able to add the elusive “Twitter-savvy lawyer” designation to your resume.

Derek Bolen is the Social Media and Community Manager at Clio (@GoClio). You can find him contributing to a number of online blogs, chatting about social media and marketing, or tweeting pictures of food or his child at @hurrrdurrr.

**In September 2017, Twitter announced it was testing a 240-character limit.*



GETTING CLIENTS

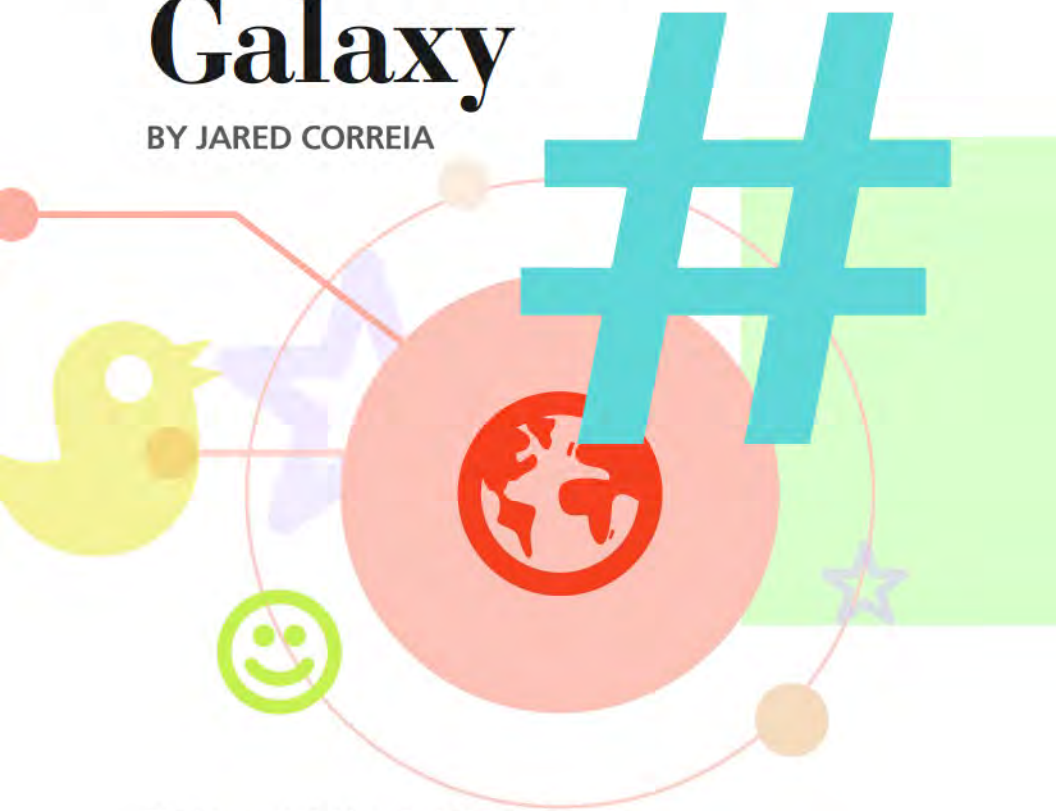
For Lawyers Starting Out or Starting Over

Merrilyn Astin Tarlton's practical book is the answer to every lawyer's perennial wish: "Tell me what to do to get clients!"



Bag 'Em and Tag 'Em: The Hashtagger's Guide to the Galaxy

BY JARED CORREIA



A hashtag is a string of characters preceded by a pound sign (#), all connected without any spaces — for example, #ilovegeorgedoonay (I do). The collection of characters should have some meaning. Hashtags are valuable on social media because they aggregate posts. A hashtag becomes a clickable link to a chronological (and continually updating) stream.

The hashtag is valuable to you because it gets your post into another stream — in addition to those of your followers and friends. It's useful to push your posts to additional streams because it means your content will, theoretically, pass before more eyes, thus increasing your reach.

This is all a numbers game. The more people you reach, the more likely it is that you'll reach someone who will ultimately use or refer your services. So, yeah, it's pretty straightforward, what a hashtag *is*. Where most social media users get tripped up is in *using* hashtags. It's very easy to apply a hashtag to a post without really thinking about it.

Say you post something about iPads, and you stick in #iPad. I mean, why not, right? Well, here's why not: When you're using a hashtag, you've got to be thinking about what you're trying to get out of it. Is your ultimate goal to be listed in the hashtag stream for #iPad? That stream probably includes billions of tweets at this point, over 75 percent of which, I would conservatively estimate, are inane or spam. The chances of your post being discovered in that stream are infinitely less than it being discovered in your own stream, such that hashtagging becomes an almost useless exercise. Why not hashtag for a subsidiary theme instead?

So, how else can you separate your hashtagged tweet from the crowd of hashtagged tweets?

- Determine how you will use the hashtag.
- Apply some straightforward tips for hashtag creation.
- Access resources to keep abreast of hashtag trends.

Three Optimal Ways to Use Hashtags

1. In real-time conversation. Hashtags allow Twitter users to create chat panels on the service. When you access the hashtag stream, you're looking at a subject matter discussion, which you can follow and respond to in real time. This is already a popular method for using hashtags, and there are a number of Twitter "chats" built around this concept. If you use a free program, like [TweetChat](#), you can leverage the stream, and your responses, even more efficiently. Most chat streams remain active even when chats are not scheduled, so participants can post at off-times and still gain some advantage. Now, if you tweet your latest blog post with the hashtag for a chat you normally participate in, the chances of that post being retweeted or read are higher than if you post into a hashtag stream with which you have no substantial interaction.

2. In a search. Twitter does have a [search page](#), but it's unfiltered. If you search within hashtag streams, you're going to find persons who have self-selected for certain topics, conveying some level of conscious acknowledgment of expertise or skill, or at least some interest. In this environment, you're more likely to find people who know what they're talking about, posting things that are helpful. You must be willing to wade through some of the detritus, but there is less of that than you would find within a general Twitter search. So, hashtags can help you narrow your search, but they can also help you expand your brand.

3. For conference participation. This is probably the single most effective use of the hashtag. If you can piggyback on a popular conference hashtag, especially one that is germane to what you do, then that is a great way to move your content toward parties known to be interested. Check out #ILTA and #ABATECHSHOW for two popular legal conference hashtags, to see where you might envision your posts fitting in.

Hashtags are far more often used for generic labeling of specific things within Twitter ("Check out my #iPad!"). In the majority of cases, the above-outlined, useful methods are not even a consideration — which is one clear reason why applying such practices will set you apart.

The Existentialist's Hashtag

You can use existing hashtags to enter existing streams; but if you do, you've got to select the right ones. If a hashtag is too popular (like #iPad), you're liable to get lost in the stream; if it's not popular enough (like #PalmPilot), nobody else will see what you've posted. Like Goldilocks, your best option is to try various porridges, chairs and beds, so you find the fit that's "just right." An example of an overstuffed hashtag stream would be the #FF, or #FollowFriday culture, standing for the Twitter convention whereby users on Friday list their favorite other users, ostensibly to promote them, but really to get them to return the favor. No one is getting any real use out of these raw streams; it's just too much to process, and the categorization is too generic. However, as a method for highlighting other users, it's a great way to show appreciation for your favorite follows, by increasing their reach among your followers, and those others' followers with whom the post will be shared. In case you're wondering, this is what a Follow Friday post might look like:

#FF @JoanHFeldman — Because running the @attnyatwork empire is no joke!

There are other daily conventions on social media that you can take part in. Of course, you can create your own hashtags. Just make sure that you do so with the expectation of adding another significant work-up to what is likely already a full marketing schedule. The effort can be worth it, though, because a personalized hashtag can act as a gathering space for those interested in what you have to say — it's another community of interest for your work. Here are some things to consider when creating a hashtag:

- **Everyone loves acronyms.** How long would it take you to yell "You only live once!" — YOLO, people. Or, should I say #yolo.
- **Make it memorable.** Aim to integrate your hashtag into natural language, as it's less jarring to read than internet jargon. Compare: "#Lawyers watch out for revised #IOLTA rules" to "New IOLTA Rules: #IOLTA #attys #trust #rules #client #service."

- **Do it deliberately.** Make sure you read the whole string, with an eye to alternate word combinations, before you release a hashtag. Find out whether the hashtag (or a similar variant) already exists. Try different iterations. Get feedback from people you trust.

Hashtag Promotions

Here is a simple list of do's and don'ts for promoting hashtags.

- **Decide whether you want to hashtag or just plain old tag.** For example, @ABATECHSHOW or #ABATECHSHOW. Part of the answer to the question of what you choose is whether you'd like to link to the user profile or to engender further discussion — which could perhaps stem from your own contribution to the stream.
- **Be wary of overtagging your posts.** When you include a large number of hashtags (say, three or more), you're reducing character availability (and probable retweets) and necessarily limiting the amount of natural language in your posts.
- **Be consistent.** Include the hashtag on every post related to the discussion topic, not just some. If you're going to host chats surrounding a hashtag, keep up a schedule. Don't spend the months leading up to a conference using the conference hashtag, and then stop using it when you're at the conference, when interest is at its peak. Promote the hashtag in other media, too, to drive discussion on Twitter.

This is the old saw respecting social media: There is not one network, there is only the combination of networks. (Or, was that Buddha?)

New Content, New Conversations

In addition to creating conversations surrounding your hashtag, you're also looking to source user-generated content: You want people to write things related to your hashtag, and to post those items with your hashtag included. Ultimately, if you can get people to write content specifically with your hashtag in mind, you're golden. Then, the cycle

will spin again: New conversations will spring up in relation to those posts. With the enduring popularity of content marketing, Twitter users should be watching out for these opportunities. In the end, Twitter is a social media service for front-runners, regardless of whether those front-runners fired the starting gun or joined the pack later on, after disembarking the subway or something. If you can capitalize on trendy hashtags, or create, grow and promote your own, you're far more likely to get the effective reach you're looking for.

Of course, not everyone is going to be playing nice when it comes to moving the conversation linked to a popular hashtag. Internet trolls have no interest in doing anything other than raining negativity on your parade. This is not to say contrary views are not valuable; but trolls aren't interested in discussing the merits of anything — their sole interest is in flattening discussion and driving users away from conversations. Fortunately, Gyi Tsakalakis has published a succinct method for dealing with trolls. The more popular your hashtag becomes, though, the more likely you are to attract trolls to it.

#ButWaitTheresMore

If you were able to get through all of this and yet would still like to know more about hashtags, there are a number of resources, including:

- Twubs (a hashtag directory and promotional service)
- Hashtags.org (Wikipedia for popular hashtags and trends)
- TagDef (a dictionary for hashtags)
- TagBoard (a dashboard for tracking hashtags)
- Hashtagify.me (for advanced hashtag searching)

Jared Correia (@JaredCorreia) is CEO of Red Cave Law Firm Consulting, which offers subscription-based law firm business management consulting and technology services for solo and small law firms. Red Cave also works with legal institutions and legal-facing corporations to develop programming and content. A former practicing attorney, Jared is a popular presenter and regular contributor to legal publications (including his "Managing" column for Attorney at Work). He is the author of the ABA book "Twitter in One Hour for Lawyers."

Five Ways to Use Twitter Lists

BY ANDREA CANNAVINA

Twitter lists are an easy way to group what flows through Twitter so that you can better organize the flood of information. I've found that Twitter lists are useful for all kinds of things — whether they're private so that you can keep tabs on a hobby or very public so that you can leverage them for networking and business development.

Personally, I use lists to:

1. Follow conferences and events, such as @ABATECHSHOW.
2. Keep up with groups and associations like @VBA and @ILTAnet.
3. Monitor just the tweets of a core group of people of the likes of @taxgirl and @chrisbrogan.
4. Stay abreast of the happenings regarding a certain keyword such as #legalIT and the popular #legalchat (Tuesdays at 2 p.m. ET).
5. View the tweets of users without technically actually *following* them. You can add users to lists without following them from your account. There are certain people I refuse to follow, but in some instances I will see their tweets — generally when an event comes around and they start their spam-markety crap (which is why I don't actually follow them in the first place). Still, this can be a very useful way to see what someone is tweeting that is less noticed than an actual follow.

Setting up Twitter lists is easy — the [directions are right here](#). However, there are a few things you will need to decide:

- **Who are you grouping together and why?** Creating, maintaining and administering anything online requires focus and time. Much like Google Alerts, once set up, a Twitter list almost runs itself. However, time is still required to add or remove people from your lists, and if you are compiling a public list and wish to promote it, that will eat up more of your time.
- **Private or public?** Private lists are a way to keep a list from being known to the general public. (Keep in mind nothing is private from the company Twitter itself.) I have a “private” list of under 200 people who I consider “Some Good Peeps.” If I only have two minutes I can very quickly be brought up to speed by reviewing this one list.
- **What will you name your list?** Pick a good name, especially if it will be a public list. What do the users you wish to add to the list have in common? Almost always there will be an organization, keyword or hashtag associated with a list. If you can use that as the actual list name, all the better for brand recognition, SEO and such. If you are making up the list name, just like websites, be careful not to mix up letter combinations that spell out inappropriate things when mashed together into one word!

Ultimately, Twitter lists are a way to organize tweets into categories and chunks, which helps people like me (compulsively organized) be more so — and people like you (just overworked and with no time) be more efficient in your use of Twitter. Win-win!

Andrea Cannavina (@LegalTypist) is CEO of LegalTypist, Inc., a digital dictation/transcription/secretarial outsourcing service that provides all the tools and education attorneys, law firm administrators and other legal professionals need to get and keep their workflow and email organized.

Twitter Made Me a Better Lawyer

BY DENNIS GARCIA

As an active Twitter user for the past few years, I am convinced that this social media platform has helped transform me into a better lawyer. Here are some thoughts as to how embracing Twitter can enable all lawyers to achieve more.

Learn More

My Twitter feed is my primary source of news and information. I follow more than 1,000 people and organizations, including leading lawyers, law firms, judges, legal marketing professionals, bar associations, law schools, legal technology organizations, legal industry news outlets and others. Twitter enables me to fully embrace a “growth mindset” by providing immediate access to important information about the ever-changing legal landscape, putting me in a better position to provide more impactful legal advice to my Microsoft business clients. Even if you are “stealth” on Twitter, there is a tremendous amount of information to absorb about the legal profession, your organization, your clients and your potential clients that can make you much better informed.

Communicate Concisely and Effectively

The beauty of Twitter is that it requires you to be “short and sweet” in your communications, as a tweet cannot be more than 140 characters in length. Twitter requires getting your point across quickly and succinctly. Actively using Twitter has helped me become a more effective communicator overall by conditioning me to be more crisp, clear and concise in my electronic and verbal communications with clients and colleagues.

Be an Ambassador

As the role of general counsel and chief legal officers evolves to be more public facing, Twitter provides lawyers with an excellent platform to serve as ambassadors for their organizations. To that end, I tweet, retweet and like positive information pertaining to Microsoft, such as



TIPS FOR USING TWITTER

Be thoughtful and careful in what you tweet. Your Twitter account reflects your brand. Assume that whatever you tweet has the potential to be on the front page of The New York Times. Be sure to comply with your organization's social media policy and applicable local legal ethics requirements.

Use images. Add a professional headshot and background photo to your Twitter profile. Also consider adding images, GIFs and videos in your tweets.

Ignore trolls. Avoid negativity and getting into a "war of words" with other Twitter users.

Use proper grammar. The world is watching you, so be mindful of your grammar and spelling.

Aim for active usage for impact. Remember, as with all technologies, you need to actually use Twitter for maximum impact.

— Dennis Garcia

public case studies of customers using Microsoft solutions, how the Microsoft Cloud inspires trust, and the company's focus on advancing diversity and inclusion in the legal profession. Twitter enables me to serve as a company evangelist by amplifying such messaging to the public at large and the targeted audience of my followers.

Build Your Brand and Get Noticed

By tweeting and retweeting information that is core to your responsibilities as a lawyer, you can showcase your expertise to a wide audience. As an in-house technology lawyer, I tweet, retweet and like information pertaining to areas in which I practice, such as complex contract negotiations, cybersecurity, compliance, intellectual property and data privacy. I also tweet links to articles I write. In fact, I now contribute to Bloomberg Law's Big Law Business regularly because one of their editors noticed me on Twitter. I also share external presentations, panels and roundtables in which I participate. Over time, I have steadily gained followers, been asked to speak at events, and been approached for interviews or to contribute articles and blog posts.

Expand Your Network

There are many people I've built professional relationships with (some whom I have met in person and many whom I have not yet had the opportunity to meet) directly as a result of Twitter, by following them, retweeting their tweets or liking their tweets. They all have one thing in common: They understand the power of Twitter for building connections with professionals across the globe.

***Dennis Garcia** (@DennisCGarcia) is an Assistant General Counsel for Microsoft Corporation based in Chicago. He practices at the intersection of technology and the law and provides a wide range of legal support to Microsoft's Sales, Marketing and Operations teams across the US. Previously, Dennis worked as an in-house counsel for Accenture and IBM. He is a Fellow of Information Privacy, a Certified Information Privacy Professional/United States and a Certified Information Privacy Technologist with the International Association of Privacy Professionals. He serves on the Board of Directors of Illinois Legal Aid Online and the Association of Corporate Counsel - Chicago Chapter. Dennis is also a member of the Illinois State Bar Association's Standing Committee on the Future of Legal Services.*

Getting My Wings: How I Used Twitter to Promote Social Change

BY OLGA V. MACK

Many lawyers go to law school eager to change the world. But at some point between their second year and their first job, many face a self-imposed binary choice — making a good, well-compensated living or having an impact by working for the social good. Law students are often pigeonholed into categories, forced to choose whether they are Big Law-bound or focused on public interest. As lawyers, we should be the first to see that this binary choice is false. It is absolutely possible to do both.

In fact, as well educated, intelligent and hardworking members of society, we have a responsibility to reach for both goals.

However, lawyers, like many others, often suffer under another fallacy. We think that we don't have enough time, money, connections, influence or clout to "move the needle" and be impactful. First, that is simply not often true. By doing anything right, we are influencers. More worrisome, this feeling of inadequacy combined with the profession's tendency for risk aversion leaves some lawyers paralyzed, jaded or spiraling into addiction and depression.

But it doesn't have to be this way. Making a positive social impact, even while juggling a high-stress legal career, can be done. You don't need that much time, money or influence.

All You Need Is Twitter

It may seem contrived that the social media platform frequented by teens, celebrities and pundits can be a tool for positive social change. But my own journey shows firsthand the power of Twitter as a social advocacy tool for anyone — including lawyers.

A little over a year ago I founded the Women Serve on Boards movement. I began asking publicly why more women weren't on corporate boards. When others asked why women should be included, I was in disbelief, and determined to convince others that it was time for

a change. This pursuit became a passion, and I dedicated nearly all my extra energy to it.

Just when I thought my efforts might be futile, I adopted a new strategy: Twitter. Somewhere between creating online petitions, writing, speaking, making radio appearances and complaining to colleagues, I discovered the power of this platform. Of course, I had heard of it before — after all, I am a Silicon Valley general counsel. Twitter's headquarters are 10 blocks from my office, and many friends work there — but my Twitter account was embarrassingly bare. I hadn't even bothered to upload a photo, opting instead for the default avatar: an unhatched egg.

As I explored the platform, I realized that it could be the means I needed to get my mission noticed. In my fight against the dearth of women in corporate leadership and on boards, I became more open-minded about the means to my end. After all, traditional tools, practices, rhetoric and systems haven't solved gender inequality issues for centuries. It terrified me that even my daughters may not see parity in their lifetimes. So if making my impact required me to adopt a new strategy, I was willing to take the leap.

With some help and a time investment of just a few hours, I created a new Twitter account: @boardswomen. I used the account to send custom graphics to Fortune 500 companies, urging them to discover women for their boards of directors. I also used Twitter to disseminate open letters to the CEOs and chairs of these boards.

Finally, I continued writing articles encouraging others to advocate for women on boards and join boards themselves, promoting the articles on my new Twitter account.

Along the way, I discovered Hootsuite, a social media management app that helped me streamline sharing and posting about my campaigns. Using Hootsuite, for less than \$200 a year, I scaled from two campaigns to 21.

Soon, I saw our first victory. In December 2016, Discovery Communications added Susan Swain to its board. Then a few more victories came. Most recently, one of the companies I targeted, Land O'Lakes, added Joyce Cacho to its advisory board. Some companies reached out

to me off the record for advice and resources on how to improve their board diversity. Others explained to me what they are doing to solve the problem and how they are trying to improve the parity timeline.

By embracing Twitter, I found myself in the middle of interesting discussions, actively and productively helping companies solve gender inequality problems. I was truly making an impact. I found myself meeting new people, attending events that I didn't know existed and overall leading a more interesting and full life. Somewhere along the way, I was even given the hashtag #ladybadass — by far the best title I have ever had. And I still had plenty of time to be a very hands-on general counsel at a venture-backed startup.

My Twitter journey, from unhatched egg to full-fledged social justice movement, shows that any lawyer can make a positive influence, using minimal resources, while sticking to their day job. All it took was breaking out of my shell and embracing the power of social media. Admittedly, this took some courage. As lawyers we are trained to be risk averse and stay in our lanes. But taking the leap to Twitter paid off, not just for me, but for the Women Serve on Boards movement I am proud to have founded.

As a profession, lawyers are akin to unhatched eggs. Symbolically, we are still very unaware of our own power. We are reluctant to embrace 21st century tools and explore the bounds of technology. Of course, some caution is merited as lawyers jump into the Twittersphere. Social media isn't always the most appropriate tool, and a lawyer must exercise judgment if she or he chooses to use it. But to deny its existence, its power and its reach is like sticking to candles because electricity is "too scary." When we as a profession embrace technology, including social media, we can crack the proverbial Twitter egg, spread our wings, become leaders, take positions and achieve justice for everyone.

Olga V. Mack (@olgavmack) is a startup lawyer who enjoys advising her clients to success and growth. Currently General Counsel at ClearSlide, she previously worked at Zoosk, Visa Inc., Pacific Art League of Palo Alto, and Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati. She is a weekly contributor to *Above the Law* and the *Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC) Docket*.



Fanning Out: Facebook, Instagram and Video

Paid and Organic Facebook Strategy for Your Law Firm

BY TIM BARAN AND MIKE MICELI

You've dutifully created a Facebook page for your firm. You consistently share useful links to your weekly blog posts and occasionally curate links to articles of interest for your target audience. You're rewarded with three "likes" and zero comments on your collection of posts for the entire month. Your Facebook page followers also grow by a whopping two and now you're up to 59 people. You click on "Insights" to dig deeper into analytics to discover, unsurprisingly, that your reach is anemic.

Discouraged? Don't give up. A quarter of the world's population is active on Facebook so you'd be well-served to invest some time in figuring out how to make Facebook work for you and your law practice.

The 2017 edition of HubSpot's popular "State of Inbound" survey reports that 74 percent of respondents are using Facebook for professional purposes. This compares favorably with their use of LinkedIn, which comes in at 78 percent. (Attorney at Work's reader survey shows Facebook gaining users among lawyers as well.)

The bottom line is, you need to be on the platform to reach its almost 2 billion active users. But you need to think beyond simply sharing links. Think organic and paid.

Organic Social Media for 'Social Proof'

Jayne Navarre wrote a provocative piece recently titled "[Law Firm Social Media Is a Waste of Time, and Here's Why](#)." She referenced the Greentarget 2017 "State of Digital & Content Marketing Survey" (see page 17) to make the point, backed by data, that organic social media doesn't move the needle.

However, if you think of your return on investment as "social proof" rather than number of leads generated or other numbers-driven metrics, then it's worth the investment. What do I mean by social proof? Say you learn of a service provider through an article or blog post or presentation, or by searching online for a solution to your problem or answer to a vexing question. Your next step is to find them on social media to get a sense of what they're like. That could be a video

on YouTube, an active Twitter account, a LinkedIn Company page or a Facebook page.

That's the social proof or trust factor that positively influences your decision to engage further with the intention of hiring them.

So, for your Facebook page, this doesn't mean that you only post an occasional link to one of your blog posts. You should craft posts that encourage engagement, likes and shares. How, you ask?

BuzzSumo analyzed more than 800 million posts from 2016 and found these insights:

- Questions, images, and videos were more engaging than all other post types.
- Videos were most likely to be shared.
- The best day of the week for engagement was Sunday.
- Post engagement was higher whenever there was a lower volume of public posts in the news feed.
- Short posts of less than 50 characters were more engaging than long posts.
- Images posted directly to Facebook and not through Instagram were more engaging than images posted to Facebook via Instagram.

Video to Increase Organic Reach

If you want to have an engaged Facebook page, you must embrace video. Facebook prioritizes content that's engaging and the numbers don't lie: videos engage Facebook users. Some argue that right now, video is the only way to build a Facebook following. Statistics support this.

- This year, video content will represent 74 percent of all internet traffic.
- 76.5 percent of marketers and small business owners who have used video marketing say it had a direct impact on their business.

- Four times as many consumers would prefer to watch a video about a product than to read about it.
- Facebook users watch 8 billion videos per day.
- Organic Facebook engagement is highest on posts with videos (13.9 percent)

Tip: Record 20-second to one-minute video clips of activities, tips and resources. When recording webinars, break them up into bite-sized chunks for repurposing.

Facebook Live

Facebook Live is a whole other beast and not for the faint of heart. But if you're willing to give it a shot, the potential rewards are substantial: Facebook users spend three times more time watching live videos than traditional videos.

Facebook Live is exactly what you think it is — a live-broadcasting medium. You'll need to prepare for it like you would any other broadcast. Advertise in advance, and when you're ready to go live, click on the "live" icon in your feed, enter a compelling description of the presentation you're about to give *and* "action!"

A huge advantage Facebook Live has over traditional broadcast mediums is the ability for viewers to interact with you. You can try using the platform to experiment with a short webinar, asking or soliciting questions and having a conversation with your viewers, narrating an event, interviewing a colleague or guest, or any number of activities.

There's no do-over with Facebook Live but if you're willing, it has tremendous potential for connecting with and engaging your audience.

Tip: Some folks swear by improv classes for improving their performance on video.

Paid Social Media: Boosting Posts and Facebook Advertising

Now that you've got your organic effort down, it's time to really leverage the massive reach and fine targeting abilities of Facebook to build traffic to your site and generate leads.

You'll need to shell out a few bucks. Why? Because it's difficult to amplify your content organically. Average organic (non-paid) reach of a post on Facebook used to be around 50 percent in the early days. Now it's 2 percent and dropping. Two popular options are “boosting” posts and placing ads targeted to custom audiences.

Placing a Facebook ad involves crafting engaging copy, choosing an arresting image and placing an effective call-to-action.

Tip: Before placing an ad, get familiar with the platform by boosting an existing post to appear in the feeds of the audience you're targeting.

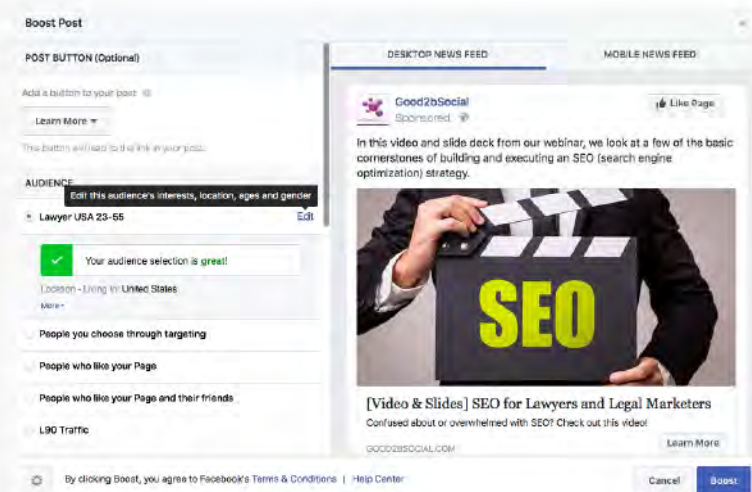
Boost a Post

Start small with, say, a \$50 boost of a particularly resonant post, preferably one that links to an action on your website. This can be an invitation to register for a webinar, download an e-book or white paper, sign up for a newsletter — anything that involves capturing an email address that becomes a lead you can nurture. Facebook has made this super easy to do.

After you publish a link to your Facebook page, simply click the “Boost Post” button and follow the prompts to customize your audience, spend and duration. There are three ways to choose your target audience for a boosted post:

- People who like your page
- People who like your page and their friends
- People you choose through targeting by location, age, gender, interests and behavior. You can get pretty granular here.

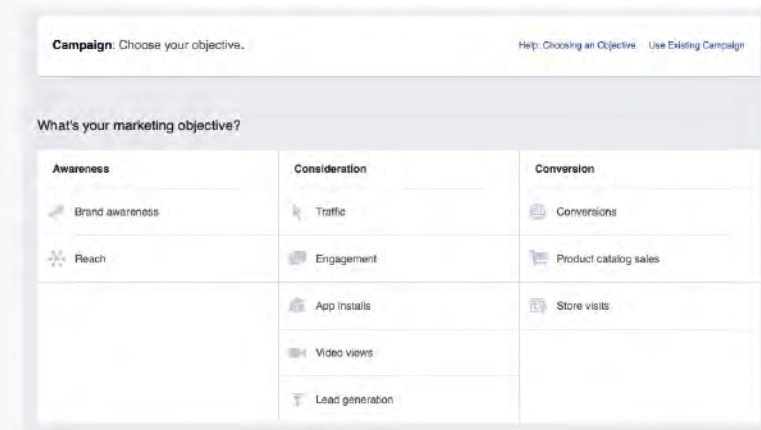
In addition to your target audience clicking through to a form on your website and submitting their email addresses (to become a lead), boosting a post gets you on the radar of a much wider audience than organic



posts. And some of whom may follow or like your page, even if they don't take the primary action you intended.

Place An Ad

Facebook advertising lets you reach the right people with the right message at the right time to drive a desired action. Go to www.facebook.com/business and click on “Create an ad,” and choose your objective:



Who doesn't want more leads? Go ahead and choose "Lead generation" and you'll be presented with the following choices:

Audience

Define who you want to see your ads. [Learn more](#)

Create New

Use a Saved Audience ▼

Custom Audiences

Target Ads to People Who Know Your Business
You can create a Custom Audience to show ads to your contacts, website visitors or app users. [Create a Custom Audience](#).

Locations

Everyone in this location ▼

United States

United States

Include ▼

Type to add more locations

Browse

Add Bulk Locations...

Age

18 ▼

65+ ▼

Gender

All

Men

Women

Languages

Enter a language...

Detailed Targeting

INCLUDE people who match at least ONE of the following

Add demographics, interests or behaviors

Suggestions

Browse

Exclude People

Connections

Add a connection type ▼

Your ad can be targeted to your firm's current or former clients, visitors to your website, and users who have interacted with your Facebook page. That audience can be layered with more general targets based on geography, gender, profession and so on. Additionally, you can upload an email list to Facebook of, say, leads that you've been nurturing over the years and serve your ads to that list, providing another touch point with them.

Create a Custom Audience

How do you want to create this audience?

Reach people who have a relationship with your business, whether they are existing customers or people who have interacted with your business on Facebook or other platforms.



Customer File

Use a customer file to match your customers with people on Facebook and create an audience from the matches. The data will be hashed prior to upload.



Website Traffic

Create a list of people who visited your website or took specific actions.



App Activity

Create a list of people who launched your app or game, or took specific actions.



Engagement on Facebook

Create a list of people who engaged with your content on Facebook.

Next, set your budget and the duration of the ad.

Appetite Whetted?

Check out the e-learning center at [Facebook Blueprint](#) to learn how to use Facebook marketing tools to grow your business. Facebook is a valuable platform to expand your brand reach, drive traffic to your website, capture leads and gain trust by providing value. But you'll need a strategy that includes an organic and paid effort.

Tim Baran (@tim_baran) is Chief Marketing Officer for Good2bSocial. He writes and speaks about how to use digital marketing strategies and technology to manage and grow small firms and legal startups. Tim is the author of several publications including "The Lawyer's Guide to Evernote," and was named to the 2016 Fastcase 50 honoring the law's innovators, techies, visionaries and leaders.

Mike Miceli is chief marketing officer at Voltaire, Inc., a company that combines a wealth of public data with artificial intelligence, improving the jury research and selection process for trial teams.

Using Facebook to Drive Traffic to Your Website

BY MIKE RAMSEY

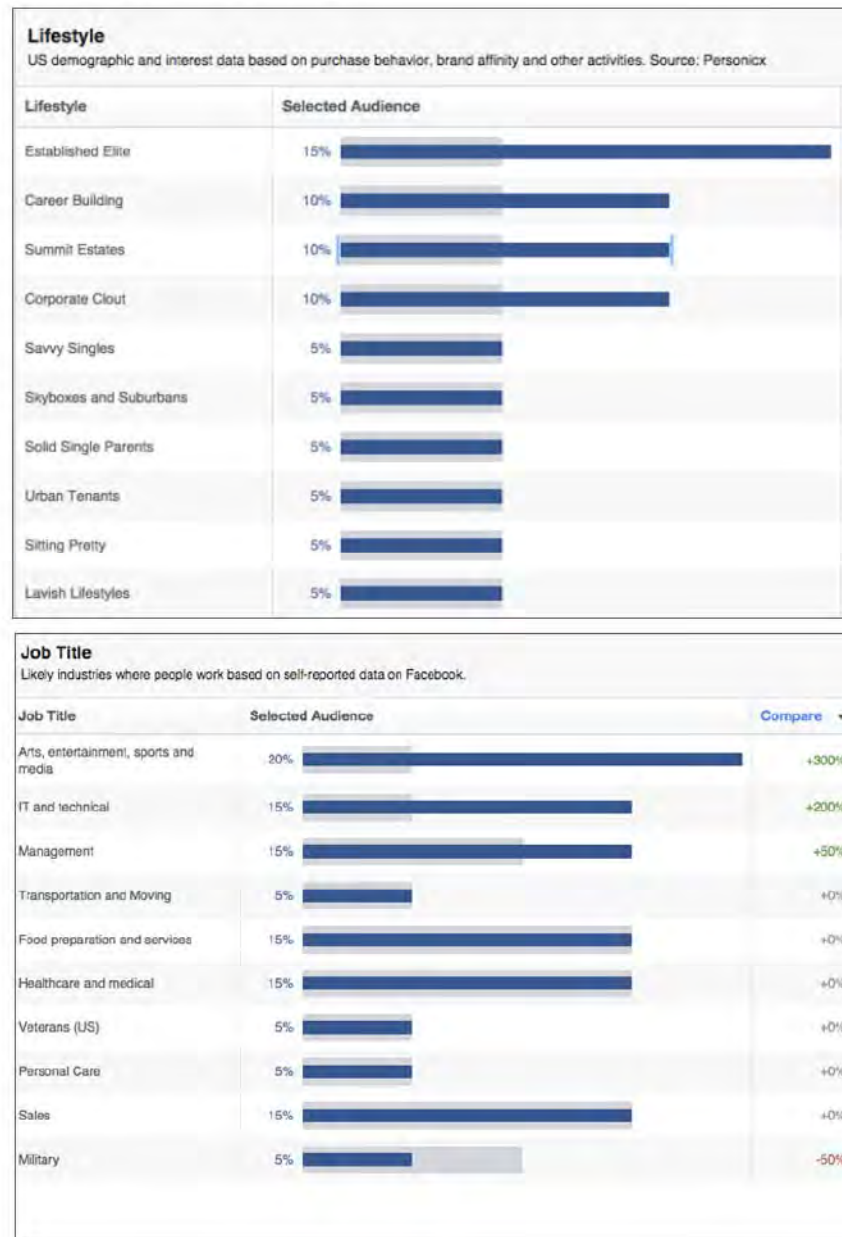
For lawyers, using Facebook for marketing is a tough nut to crack. Facebook has been making it harder to reach your fans organically on its platform over the past few years. So what can you do to make the most of the platform? Here are six tips.

1. Stop trying to drive people to your firm's Facebook brand page.

Many law firms still publish blog posts or ads asking people to like them or follow them on Facebook. The problem is, you don't own your Facebook page. Do you know who does? *Facebook*. So, your ads and posts are sending people away from the website *you* own, and have complete control over, to a site you don't own, trying to get them to like a page they will probably never visit again. Facebook initially made this appealing because you could actually reach most of the people who like your page. But now that's not as easy. Don't send traffic away from your website unless you have a good reason. Facebook is not that reason.

2. Research the demographics you want to target on Facebook. Before doing much content creation and marketing, you need to understand the client persona you want to target. Facebook has a great tool for looking at data called Audience Insights. Let's say I am a family lawyer and want to focus on prenups. I can set up a search in Audience Insights for men, over the age of 21, who are currently engaged, who live in Los Angeles, and who make over \$75,000 a year. Between 4,000 to 4,500 people meet that description. Beyond that, as shown in the following figures, Insights can supply a variety of stats that can help you understand the people in this group, whether they might be interested in what you have to offer, and how best to reach them.

Facebook Audience Insights



3. Create worthwhile content on your website and blog. Once you've made sure you are targeting the right audience — and that there are enough people to focus on — you need a message and content that will appeal to them. This is the hardest step. You can start by looking to the internet for inspiration.

Once you settle on an idea for something you think you can do smarter or bigger, get to work. Maybe you settle on an article or even a video on “10 Reasons Every Man Needs a Prenup in Los Angeles.” Write your content, and pack it with relevant information and images.

Google why you need a prenup

Web News Videos Shopping Images More Search tools

About 585,000 results (0.39 seconds)

Why Engaged Couples Should Sign A Prenup | Bankrate.com
www.bankrate.com/.../engaged-couples-sign-prenup-1.aspx Bankrate Inc - Love may be blind, but divorcing couples can have 20-20 vision. ... “You can basically do anything you want in a prenup, except you can't limit child support, and ...

Prenuptial agreements: The basics (Page 1 of 3)
www.bankrate.com/bnm/prenup.asp Bankrate Inc - If you're about to get married, a prenuptial agreement can protect your assets. ... Everything you need to know about prenuptial agreements. By Bankrate.com ...

Why Every Man Needs A Prenup - AskMen
www.askmen.com/dating/courtsmith.../133_dating_advice.html AskMen - Do you need a prenup? Here's how to ask for it without hurting your relationship.

Why I Decided To Get A Prenup -- And So Should You
www.forbes.com/.../why-i-decided-to-get-a-prenup-and-so-should... Forbes - Nov 22, 2013 - Before I could answer, she continued, “You have to get a prenup.” ... I also currently have an inheritance that I can dip into should I need it, and ...

8 Reasons Why You Should Get A Prenuptial Agreement ...
www.prenuptialagreements.org/why-get-prenup/ - You may have children from a previous marriage, support obligations, and own a home or other significant assets. A prenuptial agreement can ensure that when ...

4. Use ads to promote content on your website. Next, go to Facebook Advertising to create a Facebook ad. In step one, you'll choose the objective for your campaign. Be sure to choose an option that will send people to your website. Next, build an ad that will show up in the news feeds of your target group.

5. Try to get people to share your content. Once your ad is running and people from your demographic start coming to your website, you want them to share your content on their own Facebook news feeds. While Facebook might block updates coming from *your* page, they would love to share content you created via users who are sharing it from *their* personal account, with their own group. It is extremely important to make social sharing icons easily visible on your website or blog posts. We have had experiences where we have purchased around 150 visitors to a piece of content but had thousands of visitors from the organic sharing that took place once people started coming to the website.

6. Try to capture emails. One thing you do own is your email list. So, instead of a Facebook "like," put your energy into getting an email address that you can add to your newsletter list and include in your email marketing campaigns. Email marketing services like [MailChimp](#) make it extremely easy to add an email capture form to your website.

For Facebook to be valuable for your marketing, you need to stop focusing on daily updates on a page that you don't own. Instead, start creating shareable content on your website and convince people to do the social sharing for you.

Mike Ramsey (@MikeRamsey) is President of Nifty Ventures and founder of [Nifty Marketing](#), a local search marketing company in Burley, Idaho. Mike is passionate about helping good businesses grow and launched [NiftyLaw](#) as a place to learn how to handle online marketing. He is the author of "[Winning at Local Search: A Nifty Guide to Online Marketing for Lawyers](#)."

The **Ultimate** Law Firm Associate's Marketing Checklist

BY ROSS FISHMAN, JD

A must-read for all associates

"We're buying 500 copies for our associates!"

Aleisha Gravit, CMO, Akin Gump

CLICK TO ORDER NOW!

The **Ultimate** Law Firm Associate's Marketing Checklist

The Renowned Step-By-Step, Year-By-Year Process For Lawyers Who Want To Develop Clients.

ROSS FISHMAN, JD

Testimonials from the speech bubbles:

- An important, common-sense approach
- This book should be in the hands of every associate!
- wow
- Essential reading for every associate
- fantastic
- This book holds all the secrets
- I strongly recommend this
- A practical approach
- immensely helpful
- Marketing nirvana
- An incredibly useful resource
- Essential reading
- so helpful
- A highly practical framework
- thoughtful, practical advice

Why Your Law Firm Needs an Instagram Account

BY JUSTINE DALEY AND JABEZ LEBRET

Before you say hogwash to learning about another social media platform you “have” to be on or your firm will go extinct, think about this: Millennials are now the largest generation in the workplace, are buying houses and having kids, are in management positions at companies, and have significant influence over their parent’s research for personal family matters. Do you want to be where your potential clients and future hires are? Instagram is quickly becoming that place.

The millennial category includes those age 18 to 37 years old. According to Pew Research Center’s Social Media Update 2016, 59 percent of adults between the ages of 18 and 29 (millennials) are on Instagram. This growing social media platform, purchased by Facebook in 2012, describes itself as a “fun and quirky way to share your life” through photos and videos.

Take one guess why millennials are running from Facebook and moving onto platforms like Instagram? If you answered “because their parents are now on Facebook,” go ahead and give yourself a prize. This means if you want to increase brand awareness, grow your community and communicate with this audience in a visual way, Instagram is the way to do it.

Nine Tips to Get Started Using Instagram

Here are law firm Instagram best practices to follow when starting out.

1. No stock photos — none, not a one. Instagram is a powerful tool for communicating visually with followers and for reaching potential clients through targeted advertising. However, doing so requires engaging imagery. This is why many law firms struggle when integrating Instagram into their marketing strategy. Since so many firms still rely on stock images on their websites, the transition to authentic images is challenging. Stock images won’t fit the bill on Instagram and may even hurt your brand. This does not mean you need a \$2,400 Nikon camera — today, all you need is a smartphone. The key is to use unique photog-

raphy that communicates who you are to your community of potential clients and potential hires.

2. Get personal. People hire people. That's an important concept to remember, especially with Instagram. Being authentic and getting personal communicates more to your audience, ultimately increasing your brand engagement. Post about what you are doing, including things like what restaurants and events you go to as a firm. Post birthday photos and work anniversaries. If your firm's lawyers have personal Instagram accounts, ask to cross-post from them when items are firm related.

3. Use your current content. Do you have pictures of hats, T-shirts or other swag with your logo on it? Do you have photos of your law firm sponsoring a team or event? You likely already have Instagram fodder.

4. Interact with your current network. By exporting contact information and importing it into Instagram, or connecting your Instagram account with your phone's contact list, you can follow and engage with all contacts that you already have. This helps keep that steady stream of referral business coming through the door.

5. Use hashtags. The best way to start communicating with your audience is by using hashtags. Look up hashtags that are related to your practice area and your firm. Don't overdo it, though. Using too many hashtags can appear spammy. Pick the three or four most relevant ones per post. This is also a great way to gain followers.

6. Check into locations. A nice feature on Instagram is that when you tag locations and click on them, you can see other public posts in those areas. When you tag your location it opens up your profile to a wider audience. This is a way to increase visibility for yourself and also the firm. Many businesses will even "regram" (repost your content) when you tag them, leading to free exposure for your firm.

7. Engage to gain followers. People are more likely to follow and engage with you if you engage with them — it's simple reciprocity. A

good trick to try is to find a popular local hashtag. Then look at who else posts using that hashtag and engage with their images. If you "like" 10 or so a day, you'll start to see your followers increase.

8. Monitor results. Use a link shortener in your description of your account that allows you to track performance from Instagram visitors. This is especially important if you are using Instagram to promote a particular campaign or blog.

9. Find influencers. An influencer is someone who has a large number of followers and engagers. You might already be connected with influencers; perhaps one of your employees is an Instagram influencer. It is a good practice to engage with influencers who perhaps will reference your page. For example, if one of your lawyers or staff is an influencer, ask them to post a photo with one of your firm's branded coffee mugs and tag you in the photo.

Stick to the Basics — Be Human, Have a Good Time

It's not easy keeping up with all of today's online marketing options. The good news is as you start implementing more networks in your marketing mix, you'll begin to see how they all work together. There are many more ways to use Instagram, including paid advertising. For now, though, it seems that most firms need to get started with the basics.

The most important thing to remember is that your posts should be an extension of your law firm's brand. Be authentic and open to showing that you are, in fact, human and not afraid to have a good time.

Justine Daley (@justinedaley) is associate marketing director for the Garage Group. She's written for PRSSA and American Marketing Association-Cincinnati, where she is VP for Marketing Communications.

Jabez LeBret (@JabezLeBret) is author of "Online Law Practice Strategies." He is CEO of Trial 3D, printing for trial exhibits, and co-founder of GNGE, working specifically with law firms across the U.S. He is a contributor for Forbes CMO Network, a former journalist for NBC Chicago, and an advisor to SUBWAY. He has led the all-day Mastery Session at the world's largest social and search conference, Pubcon, for four years.

Seven Steps for Promoting Law Firm Videos

BY STEFANIE KNAPP AND ADAM STOCK

Videos have proved to be an effective online marketing tool for attorneys. Not only is a video 50 times more likely to be picked up by a Google search than text, video provides an emotional element of persuasion that other media options don't. Social media sites, which have become a more important component of online promotion in recent years, also understand the effectiveness of video, and display and promote video in unique ways.

From convincing attorneys to provide pro bono assistance to educating employers on the importance of updating HR policies, video provides an emotional connection that makes it an efficient marketing tool. At Allen Matkins we have produced more than 300 videos over the past six years. We continually try new tactics, test and analyze the results to ensure our videos are reaching the right audience. If you've decided to try your hand at video marketing, here are seven steps to start promoting your video content.

1. Host Your Videos on YouTube

It is easiest to host videos on YouTube. Not only because of YouTube's wide reach and integration with Google — YouTube is the No. 2 search engine on the web — but because you can link YouTube-hosted videos to other sites. This will save you from uploading the video to multiple sites. Yes, you may see some ads or competitor video recommendations after yours runs, but if you want your video to be discoverable, it needs to be on YouTube. If your target audience can't view videos due to company firewalls, you should look to Vimeo, Brightcove or Wistia.

2. Ensure Your Video Is Discoverable

Google looks at a number of factors when ranking videos in search results. Once you've uploaded your video, ensure your audience can find it.

- Make the video public.
- Select the correct tags, based on your keywords.

- Include a clear, short title.
- Write a detailed video description.
- Upload a transcript of the video. YouTube automatically generates a written transcript that can be used to display closed captions, but it doesn't include punctuation or capitalization. YouTube provides tools that allow you to clean up the transcript, but it may be more cost-effective to use a service to generate clean transcripts and upload them yourself. We use [Rev](#).
- Create your own thumbnail. YouTube will automatically generate a thumbnail by taking a screenshot from your video. However, you can upload your own image (we size them at 1920 x 1080 pixels), which is much more likely to be clicked on than automatically generated ones.

Are you more likely to click on this:



Or this?



3. Connect Your Video to Your Existing Marketing Strategy

Now that your video is up on your hosting site and optimized for search, you should start linking the video to your other assets:

- Embed your videos on your website.
- Create playlists on YouTube with related videos.
- Send an email marketing your video. You'll likely need to include an image in the email with a link to the video (either on your website or directly to YouTube), rather than embed the video into the email. Many people don't have email that supports embedded video. It's important that the image has a clear call to action, such as a play button. Here's an example:



4. Post Your Videos on Facebook

While we advocate hosting your video in one place and linking to it from every other location, there is one exception: Facebook. Facebook video views are on track to surpass 64 billion views per day. Facebook videos are autoplayed for each user (as users scroll, the videos automatically start playing without pressing a play button). However, 85 percent of video on Facebook is played without sound. That means the

transcripts are even more important. When you upload your video to Facebook, you should also upload your transcript so that Facebook plays your closed captions on the video.



Alternatively, you could create a different cut of your video that has text overlays built into the video instead of the closed captions.



5. Use Other Social Media Channels

Twitter also has a native video player. However, it is very limited compared with Facebook. Twitter videos can only be two minutes and two seconds long and no larger than 512 MB, whereas Facebook videos can be up to two hours long and 4GB. We've had some success in uploading short promo videos on Twitter.



However, in our testing over the past few years, we've had more engagement when posting a captivating image on Twitter that links to a video.



LinkedIn currently does not have a native video application that allows you to upload and post to your network. To share on your feed or your company page, you must copy and paste your link from YouTube to your post on LinkedIn. When you do this, LinkedIn displays a preview image of your video (your customized thumbnail that you uploaded earlier) within your post. Don't forget to add a link to the video on your profile page as well.



6. Use Email to Promote Your Videos

Email is universal and gives you the ability to target your videos effectively. Just remember to use an effective thumbnail with a call to action, and summarize your video in the text of the message.

7. Measure Results

Using the six techniques discussed, you can maximize your investment in video and drive viewership. Online media, however, is continually changing. Remember to measure your results and adapt. We continually try new tactics, test and analyze results to ensure our videos are reaching the right audience.

Adam L. Stock (@adamlstock) is the *Chief Marketing and Client Services Officer at Allen Matkins*. He oversees the firm's branding, external communications, and client service and innovation efforts.

Stefanie Knapp (@StefanieKnapp) is the online marketing manager for *Allen Matkins*. She manages the firm's online communications initiatives, including the firm's website, videos, and email marketing and social media campaigns.

Pros and Cons of Facebook Live

BY MICHAEL MOGILL

Harnessed correctly, Facebook Live offers a valuable platform to connect with your audience, giving an extra touch that can help convert prospects into clients. It doesn't fit every audience, and it doesn't fit every law firm. As with any marketing strategy, live video's effectiveness will hinge on how you use it and who you're trying to reach. Here's what you need to know.

Facebook Live allows you to live stream video from mobile devices that run the Facebook Mobile app. It's easy to set up and easy to broadcast. Live streams can last up to 90 minutes, after which they'll reside on your law firm's Facebook page as valuable content for those interested in your services. If you want them to be single-serving live events, you can remove them from your Facebook page once the live stream concludes.

The Benefits of Facebook Live Video

Facebook Live's benefits lie in its ease of social distribution. It's easy to catch your target audience where they already hang out online: Facebook. According to [Livestream](#), 80 percent of audiences would rather watch live video from a brand than read a blog post. So, Facebook Live video lets you reach viewers via their preferred avenue.

Followers who regularly engage with your law firm's Facebook page will receive a notification when you go live with your broadcast. Followers can also subscribe to your firm's live videos by following your page's live events. To boost visibility, Facebook has given preferential treatment to live video since rollout, ranking it higher in the news feed when videos are live. This means you can have higher engagement via Facebook Live broadcasts than with traditional social posts. Facebook Live is also easy to use for viewers. All it takes is a tap on someone's mobile device and they can immediately engage, comment and ask questions within the live feed.

The platform is best leveraged as a tool to interact with your target audience in real-time. "Ask a Lawyer" sessions can be a great way to engage viewers, establish expertise, and reinforce thought leadership while giving advice on topics related to your practice area.

For practice areas subject to influence by news events, Facebook Live provides a quick avenue for discussion. Immigration law, veterans law and similar practice areas can benefit from this strategy.



FACEBOOK LIVE VIDEO TIPS FOR LAWYERS

- Practice “going live” before you do your first one. To do this, adjust your privacy settings to “Only Me” before you tap the “Go Live” button.
- Engage viewers before the broadcast by asking them which topics they would like covered. This helps involve potential clients before your broadcast even starts.
- Always broadcast from Wi-Fi. Don’t leave it up to chance with your phone’s data signal.
- Treat Facebook Live as an avenue for discussion rather than a presentation medium. Have content ready, but be prepared to intentionally engage your audience, interact with them, and ask questions.
- Include a call to action at the end of your broadcast. Whether

that’s an invitation to reach out with questions, details on how to contact your office, instructions to subscribe to your live notifications or information on your next broadcast, always do a call to action.

Just remember to speak *with* potential clients, not to them. Facebook Live, like legal FAQ videos, can be an outstanding platform to provide value and establish trust with potential clients, providing insight into why viewers should look into a firm like yours to handle their case.

And be sure to share broadcast details from all of your firm’s social media platforms — not just Facebook — in the days leading up to your live session. Include a link to your Facebook page, and include the time of broadcast to encourage higher attendance.

Ease of use is another pro for the platform. While live broadcasting used to require technical skill and thousands of dollars of equipment, it’s now available on a smartphone.

After live streams conclude, you can use Facebook’s video analytics to dissect and analyze your content to learn about your viewers’ interests. You’ll receive performance metrics analyzing peak viewing times, drop-off times and more, to help discover which topics your audience cares about and which ones don’t interest them. Plus, you can boost the

videos to new audiences once the recordings are finished. This allows you to reach new eyes and ears with your content.

Pro Tip: Generate new leads by turning live stream viewers into a retargeting audience so that you can serve new content to them. Gauge viewer interests by the content they engage with and serve similar content to nudge them toward contacting and hiring your firm.

Drawbacks to Facebook Live

Facebook Live’s biggest drawback is in the audience reach. You can’t boost a video post live to new audiences; you have to wait until the recording is finished, reducing engagement with that form of content by one-third. Unless it’s shared by your viewers and followers, your Facebook Live audience is only that: your current viewers and followers. For many firms, social media followings comprise a small number of individuals, so this is something to consider about creating a Facebook Live strategy.

Also to consider: Viewers spend 300 percent longer watching live video when it is live than when it is served to them as prerecorded content, so the “magic” wears off quickly once the broadcast concludes. Correspondingly, Facebook’s algorithm places greater emphasis on live video, ranking it higher during broadcast than when it is completed.

In addition, Facebook Live video can only be used via the mobile app, and production quality can be a hindrance. So, if you’re looking to create long-term, premium branded content, Facebook Live is not the best platform to achieve your goals.

Facebook Live may not be the best fit for all law firms, but for many, it can be an effective way to engage and connect with potential clients. And you can get ahead of the competition by using an emerging technology they’ve only begun to recognize.

Michael Mogill (@mmogill) is the President of *Crisp Video Group*, a national legal video marketing company that produces high-quality legal videos for attorneys. His company is consistently recognized for creating engaging videos that help increase case values and revenue. He has been featured in *Forbes*, *Avvo*, *The Huffington Post* and *The Wall Street Journal*, and in ABA and PILMMA publications.

Tips from the Experts

Best Advice for Making the Most of Social Media

BE YOURSELF Develop a unique voice by speaking clearly about one or two things you are really passionate about — this will get you the quality followers you want. Use hashtags to reach beyond those who are already following you.

Dan Pinnington (@DanPinnington), LawPRO

TWEET USEFUL CONTENT That's it. No tricks or gimmicks: Provide information that people need and you'll never want for new subscribers. Don't start a tweet with an @Name unless you want only that person or her followers to see it; otherwise, place a period or something else in front of the @ sign.

Jordan Furlong (@Law21), Law21

REPURPOSE the hell out of everything you do. I always tell people, I never do something once, I do it at least five times. An article becomes a blog post becomes a presentation becomes a video becomes an e-book.

Jared Correia (@JaredCorreia), Red Cave Consulting

HAVE CONTENT WORTH SHARING and be out there with it first. Follow your clients *and* their competitors.

Sally J. Schmidt (@SallySchmidt), Schmidt Marketing

PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS. Don't hesitate to support your social media efforts with paid promotions. You are already investing your most valuable resource — time — so why are you hesitant to invest money? Start small and experiment with using \$100 to promote key content on social media platforms and see how much further your message will travel. Promoted content is a legitimate business tactic.

Melita Jampol (@melitaz) Director of Communications, Fenwick & West (@FenwickWest)

SET ASIDE CERTAIN TIMES EACH DAY to interact online and avoid using social media outside of those times. Be genuine and share interesting information.

David Ackert (@DavidAckert), Practice Boomers

USE TWITTER TO FIND EMERGING TRENDS in your practice area. Write about those trends. Use hashtags so people can find your posts. Also ...

LIVE TWEETING from a conference is a great way to get new quality followers. Find out the conference hashtag and speakers' Twitter handles, so you can tweet using those.

Sayre Happich (@SFBar), The Bar Association of San Francisco

TALK LESS, LISTEN MORE. Don't just use social media to promote your own thought leadership and achievements. Follow your clients and other important people in your network. Listen to what they are tweeting, sharing and talking about. What is top of mind for them? What do they care about? Then consider how you can engage in those conversations, whether it be congratulating a client for a recent win or tailoring your own thought leadership efforts to topics trending with your clients. Also use this insight to pitch more thoughtfully and develop your practice strategically.

Emily Brooks (@BooksEmily), Communications Coordinator,
Fenwick & West (@FenwickWest)

INTEGRATE CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES. Lawyer Russell Alexander connects his philanthropic activities to his social media communities. His firm's "Giving Fund" is showcased before the fund's annual grant recipient is selected (in gathering applications) and after, via photos of the group chosen and "thank-yous" posted on Facebook, all reaching the smaller communities he services.

Steve Matthews (@StemLegal), Stem Legal Marketing

SEPARATE PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL into different accounts. Professional contacts don't need to know where you eat or see pictures of your family. Engage with those you like or whom you'd like to target. But be sure you have something worth saying.

Ron Friedmann (@RonFriedmann), Strategic Legal Technology

AVOID ETHICS ISSUES by treating social media as you would any non-client interaction, such as a cocktail party — do not establish an attorney-client relationship and do not dispense legal advice.

Paul Bonner (@venablellp), Venable LLC

EXERCISE VOLUME CONTROL. It drives me mad when I see lawyers going through the motions because they believe they *must* write. Content doesn't have to be a volume exercise. A few good pieces a month will satisfy both Google and your peers.

Steve Matthews (@StemLegal), Stem Legal Marketing

About Attorney at Work

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LAW PRACTICE TIPS

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Note: Some of the articles included in this guide have been updated from Attorney at Work's publication, "Connected: A Lawyer's Guide to Social Media Marketing."

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The Lawyer's Web Marketing

RIP-OFF

Prevention Guide



Introduction: Everything Ties Back to Strategy

When you sign on with an internet marketing service provider (IMSP), make sure to talk in depth about your specific business growth goals by practice area and matter type, your firm's genuine differentiators, and who your exact target clients and referral sources are. Then you need to decide which specific tactics make sense for each business goal. Your IMSP should always be able to give you a clear answer to the question, "Why are we/you doing this particular thing?"

There are 10 main areas of internet marketing:

1. Content Creation		6. Paid Advertising	
2. Search Engine Optimization (SEO)		7. Client Reviews	
3. Local/Mobile SEO		8. Directories	
4. Technical SEO		9. eNewsletters	
5. Social Media		10. Press Releases	

Whether you do any or all of these areas of internet marketing depends on your strategy. In the next section we review what should be reported in each area. The third section is a list of metrics. The list of metrics appropriate for your firm will vary depending on your goals and strategy but this list is a solid starting point.

What Should Be in Your Monthly Reports?

The overall format for a useful marketing report is simple:

1. Customized metrics covering your web-wide online presence for the most recent period
2. Data comparing the most recent period with the previous period
3. A list of actions taken during the previous period
4. Data and narrative evaluating the impact of those actions from previous to most recent period
5. Specific goal recommendations and action plan for the next reporting period

Baseline Report

Before starting on regular monthly activities, your IMSP should give you a baseline report. This gives you comparison data to see if what they're doing is working and how well. A high-quality baseline report should include "health diagnostics" from Google Webmaster Tools, as well other data such as backlink referral domain data and core traffic data.

Historical Data

Statements like, "The website had 894 visitors in the last month," mean nothing unless you know how many visitors your website had in the months before you started working with your IMSP. Reports need to compare current data to the previous reporting period, as well as year-over-year period comparison.

Specific Goals

Vague goals such as "increase website visitors" are not helpful. Goals need to be specific for each reporting period such as:

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- Increase "target persona" and "geo-relevant" visitors from 1000 a month to 1250 a month
- Reduce bounce rate by 5%
- Increase newsletter sign ups by 15% in the next month
- Increase number of contact forms submitted from 20 each month to 30
- Improve "conversion rate" of videos watched by 10%
- Get 3 high quality backlinks with strong "domain authority"
- Get 2 reviews from satisfied clients on Avvo.com, Google+, or Yelp

Analytics

In addition to data about however many of the 10 areas of internet marketing you're employing, reports need to clearly answer the question, "How did people find our website and what did people do when they got there?" This information comes from an "analytics" program. Some IMSPs use their own or other 3rd party analytics tools but Google Analytics is by far the most widely used – and most customizable – analytics program (and it's free). These are the three broad areas on which Google Analytics provides data:

Audience – How many qualified visitors come to our website? Who visits our website?

Acquisitions – Where did website visitors come from?

Behavior - What do people do on our website? What are our "conversion ratios"? (i.e., what % of the time do visitors do what we want them to do such as click a Contact form?). How many times did new visitors call our "dynamic insertion" phone number from the site (which ties into your phone system to track web-generated calls).

List of Metrics: Analytics

In these boxes contain the metrics your IMSP should report to you monthly or quarterly. This list is a baseline. Exactly which metrics are pertinent to your firm depends on your specific strategy for each area of internet marketing.

Audience

1. How many target persona visitors came to our website in the last month?
2. How many pages did the average website visitor look at?
3. What is the average amount of time visitors spend on the website?
4. How long did visitors spend on the pages and posts?
5. What is the bounce rate?
6. How many are new visitors and how many are returning visitors?
7. How frequently did people visit the site and when was the last time they were there?
8. What cities did visitors come from? How many came from each city?
9. What type of device did visitors use to access our website? (desktop, mobile phone, tablet)

For each of the questions listed above:

1. What is the % change from the last report?
2. How do you explain the changes in data for each question above?

Acquisition

1. What % of site visitors came from the following sources:
 - a. Organic search
 - b. Directly entering the URL
 - c. Referral (i.e., from another site, online ad, or citation)
 - d. Each specific social media site
 - e. A link from our E-newsletter

2. Which pages of the site have the highest bounce rate?
3. Are there any pages that take a long time to load?
4. Of the keywords Google will show us, are there any that are particularly interesting?
5. How many people shared our web pages or blog posts on a social media site?
6. How many people who came from a social network filled out a contact form or signed up for the newsletter?

Behavior

1. What pages do people start on and where do they navigate through the site?
2. Do people who come to the site via social media behave differently from people who come to the site via organic search or paid ads?
3. How many people signed up for our newsletter?
4. How many people filled out a Contact form?
5. From what pages did they fill out the contact form?
6. How many phone calls were placed?
7. How many first-time callers?
8. What page were they on when they called?
9. How many "conversions" occurred where, for example, users clicked an offer to download a white paper?
10. How many visitors are using the search box on the website? What search terms are they entering? What pages do they visit?
11. What did the people who clicked to our site from our E-newsletter do on the site?
12. Which social media buttons did people click on our site?
13. Where are people sharing our pages/posts?

Specific Internet Marketing Tactics

Following is a brief description of the 10 major areas of internet marketing and the metrics used to measure them. Keep in mind that there is some overlap in these ten areas. For example, content creation is an important component of search engine optimization. Additionally, videos can be considered part of content creation and also an aspect of social media.

1. Content Creation



Content creation is most commonly thought of as new writing added to a website (usually as new page about a practice area, or a topical blog post). Adding high quality pages and posts to your website on a consistent basis is the single important way to improve website rankings. But content creation also refers to videos, free or paid "information products" such as "How To" guides, e-books, "white papers," and presentation slides. Finally, content creation also includes the development of "conversations" via social media, such as publishing posts and comments, and answering questions on LinkedIn, AVVO, Twitter, and Facebook Business pages.

Adding content just to add content is wasted effort. What you write about or discuss on video and how you say it depends on what you want your website to rank for and on how people search for terms and information germane to the types of work you seek to bring in. Content creation, therefore, must always go hand-in-hand with your site SEO and social media strategy.

Metrics: Content Creation

1. What content was created in the last reporting period?
2. Why this content?
3. Where was it deployed?
4. What "short-tail" and "long-tail" phrase are you trying to get it to rank for?
5. How many people read or downloaded the new content in the last reporting period?

2. Search Engine Optimization



Website Visibility

Search engine optimization is the art and science of improving overall website rankings in the search engines so that you show up on page 1 of the Search Engine Results Page (SERP). But before you can look at your rankings, you need to know what your website should rank for.

Determining what your website should rank for might seem like an obvious early step but we have seen many instances where internet marketing companies put little effort into figuring out what search terms people use who are looking for what you do. The question you must ask your IMSP is "What specific terms are we targeting and why?" Many IMSPs will simply take a generic set of high-level terms related to one or more practice areas without drilling down into greater detail.

Metrics: General SEO

1. Key phrases (aka search terms) being targeted
2. Competition data (aka how many websites are trying to rank) for each key phrase
3. Current rankings for all key phrases
4. Previous rankings for all key phrases
5. Position change for each key phrase
6. Strategy for improving rankings in next reporting period

Backlinks

Once the pages on your site have been optimized with the research-based target words/phrases used appropriately in both the visible content seen by the reader and the "code-level" content seen only by search engines, getting backlinks is an important tactic for improving rankings. A "backlink" is when another website links to your website. This is not your website linking to another site; it's another site linking to your website. In general, all other things being equal, the site with more high-quality backlinks wins the rankings war.

Metrics: Backlinks

1. Total number of high-quality backlinks with domain and page authority scores
2. Change since last report
3. URLs of new links
4. Strategy for getting new links

A high-quality backlink is a link from another site which Google judges to have what it calls high domain or page "authority." Your IMSP should be using a backlink analysis tool such as Moz or AHREFS.

Google can tell the difference between a high-quality link and a low-quality link. High-quality links can't easily be bought and come from a wide range of reputable websites, blogs, and publications such as your major area newspaper's website, your or a law journal website. Some high-quality backlinks can be purchased (such as a BBB.org listing), but low quality links can also be bought by the thousands from the proliferating world of general-public and legal directories, or by leaving comments on blogs. Your IMSP must tell you what links they got, why these links, and data to prove they're high-quality.

3. Local SEO



"Rankings across the Web" refers to how your website ranks regardless of the location of the searcher. "Local Rankings," on the other hand, refers to what shows up on a searcher's mobile device depending on where they are physically located.

Most law firms want clients from specific geographic areas so local SEO can be more important to them than SEO in general. While general SEO practices impact local rankings, there are additional tactics that need to be employed to improve local rankings.

Metrics: Local Rankings

Have you:

1. Verified that all data is correct in all existing citations?
2. Evaluated the local competition to determine what needs to be done to outrank them?
3. Checked all reviews and flagged less than positive reviews for action?

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The main tactic is to get more citations for your business. Citations are listings in the various online business directories such as Google Maps, Yelp, Super Pages and many other smaller or regional directories. Citations are similar to backlinks except a citation may not include a link to your website. Citations include "NAP information" – your firm's business name, address, and phone number.

It is critical that your firm's NAP information is consistent in all existing citations. Search engines tend to rank websites lower if they see conflicting NAP information across citations. Before doing ongoing local SEO, your IMSP should do an audit on all existing citations and clean up any conflicting information.

Ongoing Local SEO Reporting:

1. List of citations
2. New citations since last report
3. Content and website of reviews
4. Change since last report

4. Technical SEO



As its name suggests, this deals with increasingly (and frequently updated) technical specifications and protocols promulgated by Google that impact overall site visibility and rankings; these include hosting and page-load speeds, meta-data compliance, site map construction, and esoteric – yet important -- search algorithm criteria such as "schema" and "semantic markups." Your IMSP should be able to tell you how, specifically, they're incorporating Technical SEO techniques.

Metrics: Technical SEO

1. What actions were taken in the current reporting period in response to Google's latest Technical SEO-related protocols?

5. Social Media



Social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn have exploded in importance as an internet marketing tactic in the last few years. However, doing social media because everybody else is doing it is a waste of time and money. It is especially important to tie social media back to strategy. This will profoundly impact the type of content you share via social media.

While Twitter will require additional (free) software, all the metrics cited below for Facebook and LinkedIn can be found within Facebook and LinkedIn. There are also dozens of third party web based software programs such as HootSuite and TweetDeck that will automate social media posting and reporting. You should have a detailed conversation with your IMSP before launching a social media campaign where you clearly define goals.

In addition to "The Big Three" (Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn), YouTube is fast becoming an important social media platform for attorneys. Since Google owns YouTube, it gives significant weight in its algorithm to videos providing useful content in response to search terms entered by the user. Videos also generally provide a higher level of viewer engagement; that is, they can be more effective in building rapport and conveying credibility than printed content. Far more

Metrics: Social Media

Facebook Business Page

1. Page & Post Data
2. Total number of Page Likes
3. Change from last report
4. Total number of fans who Unliked the page
5. Total number of page impressions for the month
6. Total number of unique users who saw content associated with the page.
7. Number of times links shared were clicked
8. Average number of People Talking About Post for the month

Demographics

1. % Gender of those who like the page as of the last day of the month
2. % by Age of those who like the page as of the last day of the month
3. % Gender of those engaged with the page as of the last day of the month
4. % by Age of those who engaged with the page as of the last day of the month

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important than fancy production values is, again, the *quality* of content provided. Ads for your firm (where you're talking about your people and your values) are far less effective than providing useful, timely information on the subject the viewer searched for.

Two other fast-growing social media platforms include Google+ and Slideshare. Google+ is overcoming its rocky first few years and is gaining new users at an extremely fast pace. Slideshare lets you upload PowerPoint presentations (as well as slide presentations created in other programs) which, when properly labeled with keyword/key phrase descriptors, will show up in search engine searches, and thus help your overall "web presence."

Twitter

1. Number of Followers
2. Change from last report
3. Total number of Tweets sent
4. Number of @ replies
5. Number of Retweets
6. Number of clicks on links
7. Estimated reach and exposure of last 50 tweets within the last 7 days of the reporting period

LinkedIn Company Page

1. Number of Followers
2. Number and content of Updates liked and shared
3. Number of clicks on Updates
4. Number and content of comments on Updates
5. Number of impressions from Updates

AVVO

The following analytics data requires AVVO Pro at \$50 per month.

1. Number of profile viewers
2. Number of viewers to each element of your profile (Answers, Legal guides, etc)
3. Number of click-throughs to your site from the profile

YouTube

1. Views per video
2. Average length per view per video
3. New subscriptions to your channel
4. Shares/Likes per video
5. Click-throughs to your site or social media channels
6. Referrals (clicks) from other videos on your channel or other YouTube videos

6. Paid Advertising



Pay-per-click (PPC) is a way to pay for placement on a website or search engine results page (SERP). Every time a viewer clicks on your ad, you are charged for that click, irrespective of what the viewer does after clicking the ad. There are many varieties of PPC but law firms typically use Google AdWords and Bing/Yahoo paid advertising. PPC can be a good internet marketing tactic especially for competitive practice areas such as personal injury where organic rankings acquired through SEO would take years and/or cost hundreds of thousands of dollars.

PPC campaigns need to be watched closely because they can get very expensive if they are not run efficiently. Google's Search Network (aka, AdWords) is by far the most popular form of PPC and with some advanced configuration, your AdWords campaign can be tracked in Google Analytics thus giving you important data about what search terms potential clients use, how they find your website, and what they do once they get there.

Bing, the next most important search engine, also sells ads. Because it's a smaller network compared to Google's, their ads are less expensive but can still reach a meaningful number of targeted viewers.

Metrics: Paid Advertising

For each ad group:

1. # of impressions
2. # of clicks
3. Cost per click
4. Cost per conversion
5. What are you doing to improve ROI?

The Lawyer's Web Marketing Rip-Off Prevention Guide

Display advertising allows you to place an ad on a website through an online ad network such as Google Display Network; (this is different from Google's Search Network, which presents your ad in a SERP). Ads can be placed on countless websites either in the left or right page margin or within the body of the page text itself.

Boosted/Promoted posts refer to posts or ads on social media sites such as Facebook which you pay to make visible to a wider group of target profile users. Essentially, since Facebook and other social media platforms mine every bit of information a user includes in his or her profile or uploads or reads on a daily basis, you could paid to have your family law-related post appear in the "newsfeed" of users in specific zip codes who have written or read anything with the words "divorce mediation" in the last two months.

7. Client Reviews



Positive reviews from past clients are an increasingly important aspect of internet marketing referred to as "social proof"; especially for businesses that rely on reputation such as law firms that primarily target individual consumers and small businesses (as opposed to large corporate clients). While negative reviews probably won't hurt your website's rankings, they will have a negative impact on potential clients. It is important that your IMSP stay on top of reviews on the general review sites such as Google, Yelp, Super Pages AND lawyer specific websites such as AVVO and Super Lawyers. Increasingly, IMSPs are offering "reputation management" packages as a subset of their social media services.

If you have few or no reviews, your IMSP should talk with you about how to get positive online reviews from existing clients.

Reviews on Google are especially important because they tend to rank businesses higher that have more reviews. NOTE: ABA Model Rule 7, as well as most state RPCs, do allow "testimonials" but make sure to consult your state's specific requirements with respect to online testimonials/reviews.

Metrics: Client Reviews

1. Number of new reviews
2. Text of reviews
3. Are there any negative reviews we need to worry about?
4. Which review sites are we going to target to get more reviews on in the next reporting period?
5. What do we need to do to help get those reviews?

8. Directories



There are two main types of directories: general business directories (Yelp, SuperPages, etc), and lawyer directories such as Lawyers.com, Findlaw, Avvo, Justia, and HG.org. Both typically offer free listings and paid listings (which provide enhanced functionality). Some directories (such as Avvo) are also considered social media platforms because, unlike online Yellow Pages, you can "join" them by creating user accounts which allows you to upload content, search content, etc.

Metrics: Directories

Many directories, particularly the ones that also serve as a social media platform (such as Yelp and AVVO) include build-in metrics reporting. If provided by the directory, your IMSP should give you information on:

1. How many views/visitors in the reporting period?
2. How did they get to your listing/profile?
3. What did they click on?

9. eNewsletters



eNewsletters, or "electronic newsletters," have become less popular since the rise of blogging but they can still be an important internet marketing tool. One of the main benefits of an eNewsletter over a blog is that you have control over when people see it because an eNewsletter winds up in their email inbox instead of waiting for readers to find your blog.

All popular eNewsletter providers such as AWeber, IContact and MailChimp include metrics beyond just number of subscribers. They can also tell you things like how many people opened the eNewsletter and what

links readers clicked on. Once recipients get to your website, Google Analytics can tell you things like whether newsletter recipients were more likely to fill out a contact form and what content they read.

Metrics: eNewsletters

1. How many people subscribed to the newsletter? How has that changed since the last report?
2. Who unsubscribed from the newsletter?
3. How many people opened the newsletters sent in the last reporting period?
4. How many people clicked on links in our newsletter and which links?
5. How many newsletters bounced (aka didn't get delivered)?

10. Press Releases



Though there is general consensus among internet marketers that online press releases do not significantly elevate online website visibility, when executed effectively, they can lead to valuable secondary visibility; i.e., professional written and deployed press releases can get you in front of mainstream journalists and bloggers who might contact you for comment and refer to you (and, if online, include a link) in their story.

Metrics: Press Releases

1. Number of online and indexed "pick-ups"?
2. How many "impressions" did the ad receive?
3. Google News stats?
4. How many "reads" did it get?
5. How many click-throughs?
6. How many shares/forwards?

SEO Glossary for Lawyers

<http://www.attorneyrankings.org/glossary>

A Word about Internet Marketing and Legal Ethics

It's a given that changes in web-based technology will consistently outpace the ability of the ABA and State Bars to set and promulgate Rules and Opinions regarding social media advertising. As with all advertising, off-line or online, law firms should check with their State Bar's Ethics sources. You can also find useful information, of course, by researching the topic on the web. Here's a Slideshare presentation on Social Media for Lawyers by Attorney Jennifer Ellis, a national thought leader in the field: <http://www.slideshare.net/jnferellis/social-media-marketing-and-ethics-for-lawyers-in-2014>. You can also get her excellent ALI-CLE program "Legal Ethics and Social Media: Advertising, Communications, and Other Traps" (program TSXJ01).

Here's an excellent article from the ABA:

10 Tips for Avoiding Ethical Lapses When Using Social Media

http://www.americanbar.org/publications/blt/2014/01/03_harvey.html.

Effective and Ethical Internet Marketing



Bill Jawitz
SuccessTrackESQ

Mark Dubois
Geraghty & Bonanno, LLC

1

Handouts

- The Lawyer's Web Marketing Rip-Off Prevention Guide
- Social Media and Ethics for Lawyers
- Business Development Self-Assessment
- Business Development Outline
- Niche Analysis Tool
- Guide to Social Media Marketing
- Local SEO eBook

2

Potential and Pitfalls

- **Increase visibility, inquiries, reputation – and revenue**
- **Waste money, limit/damage credibility; violate ethics rules**

3

Internet Marketing Defined

Coordinated activities that take place on the web, by email, or via mobile device designed to:



4

Why It's So Challenging

1. Fast-Changing
2. Time-Consuming & Technical
3. Expensive
4. Subject to Sales Hype
5. Ethically Complex



5

Ethics

- ABA Ethics 20/20
- Solicitation, endorsements, establishment of attorney/client relationship, privacy, friending
- Truthfulness and Disclaimers
- Rules & Comments

6

Four Top-Level Terms

1. SEO: Search Engine Optimization:

Techniques that create “organic” visibility for your website

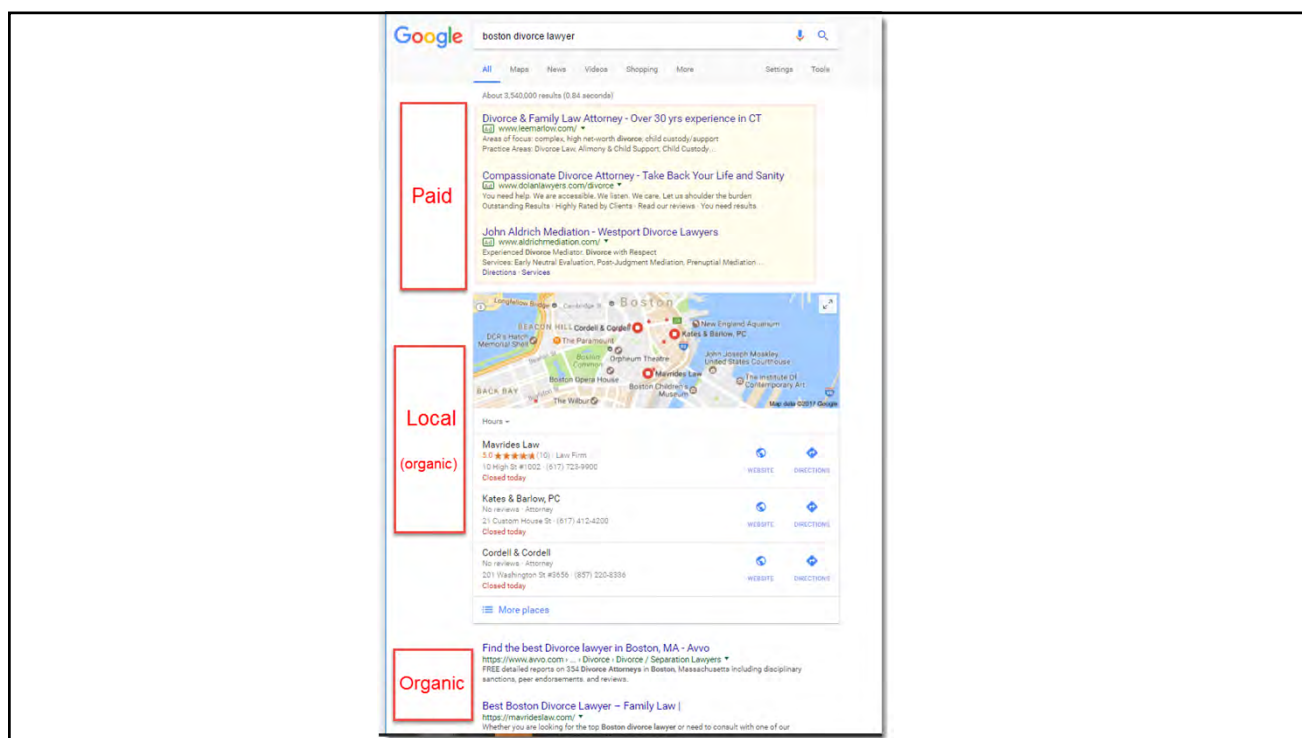
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Four Top-Level Terms

2. SEM: Search Engine Marketing:

Paid advertising (e.g., pay-per-click, banner/context ads) to appear in search results or on targeted websites and social media sites

8



9

Four Top-Level Terms

3. Social Media

A web-based platform that allows for the sharing of user-generated content



10

Four Top-Level Terms

4. SMM: Social Media Marketing:
Organic activities that increase
your social media visibility

Paid activities that get you in
front of specific audiences
(ads or promoted/boosted posts – LinkedIn, etc)

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SEO Glossary for Lawyers



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chris Dreier is the CEO & Founder of Rankings.io, a law firm search engine optimization agency that offers high-quality SEO services for lawyers. Chris contributes to the Rankings.io blog and also to many internet marketing & legal marketing publications including but not limited to Moz, Altnet, Legal Ink Magazine, Attorney at Work, and more.


GUIDE CHAPTERS

- CH 0 - INTRODUCTION
- CH 1 - SEO RANKING FACTORS
- CH 2 - ADVERTISING ETHICS
- CH 3 - KEYWORD RESEARCH
- CH 4 - CONTENT MARKETING
- CH 5 - ON-SITE SEO
- CH 6 - LOCAL SEO
- CH 7 - LINK BUILDING

SEO for Lawyers – An In-Depth Search Engine Optimization Guide for Law Firms

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INTRODUCTION

SEO FOR LAWYERS GUIDE

by rankings.io

Introduction

I've been in the SEO industry for over fourteen years and the legal SEO vertical for seven. In that time, I've seen the digital landscape change dramatically. The days where a few e-size articles could rank a site, much less the old school link-building strategies (compared to today's complex architecture), are long gone. While there certainly are ebbs and flows to SEO strategy (which is to be expected, in such a dynamic field), there are specific elements that have remained time-tested and reliable.

My company only does **SEO for lawyers**, which lends us a unique perspective on generating leads in the legal vertical. We know, from our bird's eye view, what affects search visibility for this very competitive vertical. We have an additional edge in that nearly 1% of our clientele is in personal injury, which is even more aggressive.

Unlike many other fields, the legal vertical is flooded with digital marketing agencies, so there's a greater need for expertise. This creates a unique situation, where both customer and agency are under pressure: pressure for an agency to deliver and stand out from the pack (many of whom are fly-by-night) and pressure for a firm to do their due diligence and find the right agency on the first try.

In my day-to-day, I see two types of agencies: what Dave McClellan calls "artisan bread" agencies and "Bunny Bread factories." Artisan bread agencies hand-craft (for quality) each campaign based on that specific client's unique needs and situation. The Bunny Bread agencies attempt to apply a "one-size-fits-all" approach to every client, regardless of situation. This is not to say that the Bunny Bread SEOs can't deliver some results; just that, over the long-term, their potential to make a sustained impact is limited.

Search for
"SEO for
Lawyers
rankings.io"

www.rankings.io

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Ethics: The Guiding Rule

7.1 Communication Concerning a Lawyer's Services

A lawyer shall not make a false or misleading communication about the lawyer or the lawyer's services. A communication is false or misleading if it contains a material misrepresentation of fact or law, or omits a fact necessary to make the statement considered as a whole not materially misleading.

13

Ethics Check

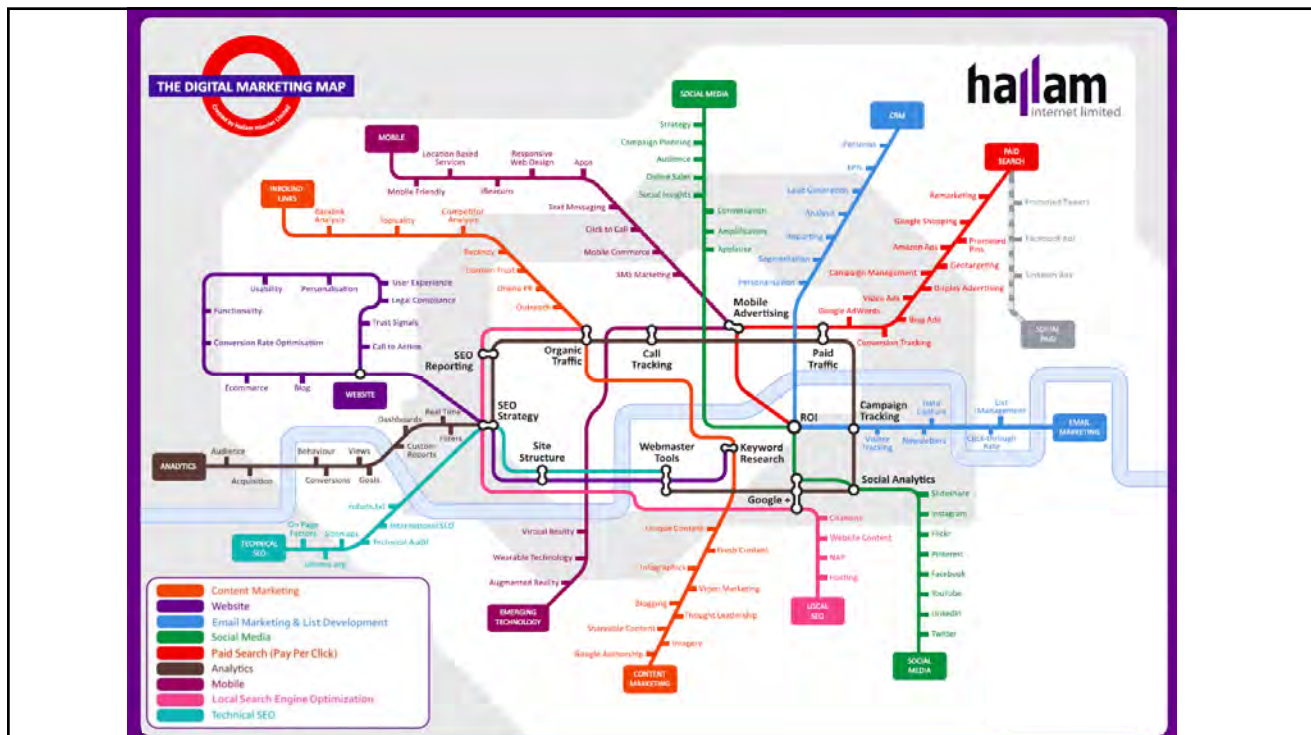
- No superlatives in site text OR in snippet code
- LinkedIn endorsements
- Pay-to-play directories
- Top-10-type credentials (NACDL vs NACDA)
- Adwords "squatting"

14

Online Presence



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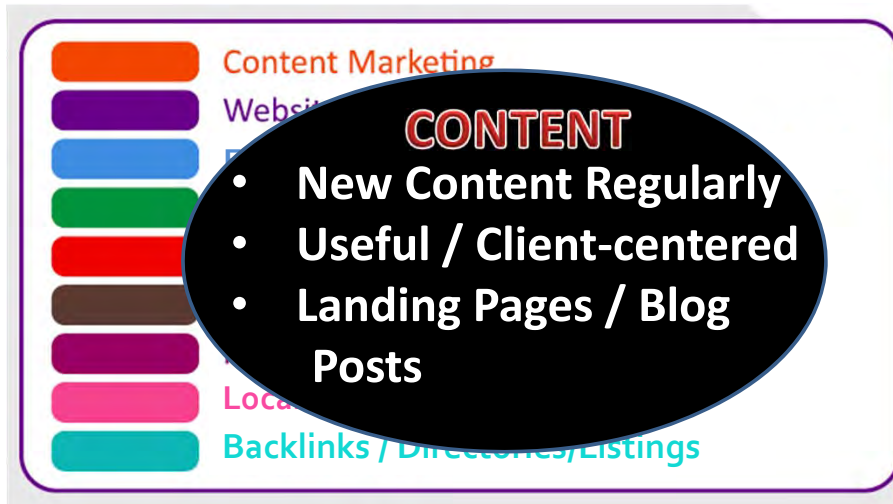
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Key Elements Overview








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Key Elements Overview



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Call us Toll Free **888-878-9350**
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VETERANS DISABILITY INFO

Our Firm | Types of Cases | Results | Testimonials | Free Educational Resources | FAQ | Blog | Contact Us

Home > Types of Cases

Types of Cases

- Accrued Benefits
- Anxiety
- Cancer
- Death Benefits or DIC
- Defense Contractor Whistleblowers
- Depression
- Diabetes
- Exposure to Agent Orange and Other Herbicides
- Eye Disorders
- Gastrointestinal Problems
- General Medical Conditions
- Gulf War Veterans with Chronic Disabilities
- Heart Disabilities

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

If you are here because you have been denied veterans' benefits for PTSD, you are not alone. In 2012, the VA claimed its own claims error rate was 14%. However, the VA's own inspector general found a claims error rate of 38%. That means by even the VA's own estimates they make mistakes in almost 4 out of 10 benefits claims cases! Additionally, appeals represent a third of the VA's pending disability claims which means 1 in 3 cases the VA is processing are veterans appealing a denial.

The following information is provided to help you improve your chances of getting your VA benefits claim approved. If you would like to talk to me, Eric Gang, an experienced VA disability attorney at no charge to you, call my office at (888) 878-9350 today.

How Do I Get Veterans' Benefits for PTSD?

To get veterans' benefits for PTSD, you need to establish a service connection between your PTSD disability and your time in service. PTSD is unique among veteran disability types because of the importance placed on stressors in diagnosing PTSD. So, in order to get VA disability benefits for PTSD you will need to get a service connection by establishing a stressor or stressors that qualify you for a diagnosis of PTSD.

There are essentially 3 different approaches to proving stressors.

1. The first type of stressor involves a situation where a combat veteran describes a stressor that is consistent with his or her combat exposure.
2. The second type of stressor involves a situation where the veteran describes a stressor that is not associated with his verified combat exposure.

Contact Eric Now

First Name

Last Name

Email

Phone






Tell me about your case

Send Now






Selections From Our Video Library

- Secondary Mental Claims
- Service Connection for the Cause of Death

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VETERANS DISABILITY INFO

Our Firm | Types of Cases | Results | Testimonials | Free Educational Resources | FAQ | Blog | Contact Us


Home

Types of Cases

- Accrued Benefits
- Anxiety
- Cancer
- Death Benefits or DIC
- Defense Contractor Whistleblowers
- Depression
- Diabetes
- Exposure to Agent Orange and Other Herbicides
- Eye Disorders
- Gastrointestinal Problems
- General Medical Conditions
- Gulf War Veterans with Chronic Disabilities

Veterans Disability Info Blog

All Posts • 92 Posts




Victory for a Veteran with PTSD Based Upon In-Service Bed Wetting

January 3rd 2017

We recently won service connection for PTSD for a veteran who presented with a very complex case. The victory in this case illustrates why expert advocacy is needed in complex cases. This case involved a young veteran who joined the military at age 17 in order to escape a very abusive...

[More](#)



Veteran Wins 100% Compensation for a Delusional Disorder Based on the Movie Apocalypse Now

November 25th 2016 - Eric Gang

Contact Eric Now

First Name

Last Name

Email

Phone

Tell me about your case

Send Now

Selections From Our Video Library

- Secondary Mental Claims

20

Content is King

- Useful information
- If video, no general TV-type ads
- Timely
- Consistent and focused over time
- Contains “short-tail” and “long-tail” keywords and phrases (e.g., Subject/target)

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Know What to Be Found For (Target Phrases to Rank For)

- Keyword/Key-Phrase research
- Competition research
- Google and Social Analytics
- Google AdWords

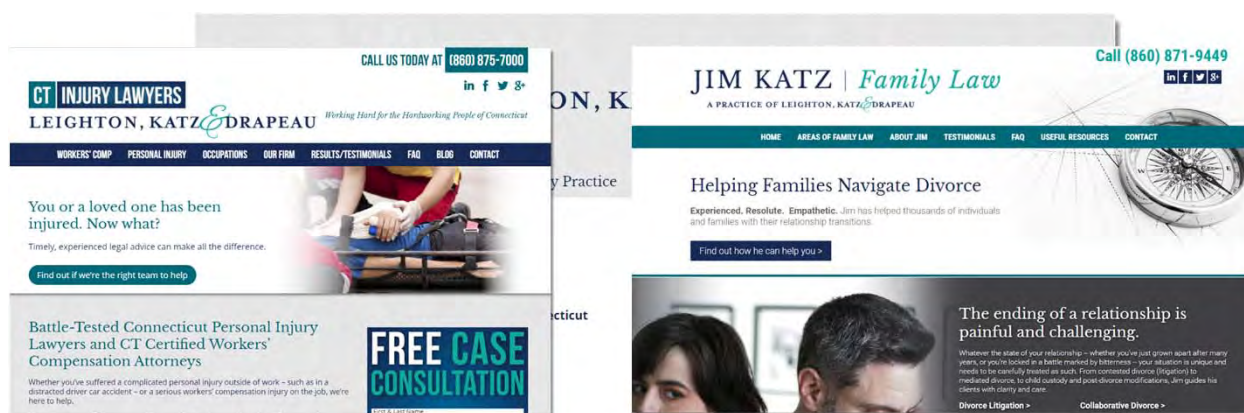
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Specificity Matters

- Google's Imperative: delivering specific, relevant, useful information
- Extremely complex algorithm
- Clients want FOCUS
- General practice firm is harder to market on the internet

23

Dual Sites for Targeting



24

Effective Messages


- Client-centricity vs. lawyer centricity
- Why you're passionate about your work
- Convey understanding of triggering events
- Demonstrate relevance
- Focus on what clients experience

25






Key Elements Overview



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VETERANS DISABILITY INFO


[Our Firm](#)
[Types of Cases](#)
[Results](#)
[Testimonials](#)
[Free Educational Resources](#)
[FAQ](#)
[Blog](#)
[Contact Us](#)


You fought for your country.
You fought the good fight.

And now - to get disability benefits -
you must fight the VA.

That's outrageous!
You deserve better!

▶▶ **WATCH THIS VIDEO to see how I can help**





Download the **FREE** 2014-15 Veterans Guide to Disability Benefits

◀◀ **Get It Now**

Contact Eric Now

First & Last Name*

Email*

Phone

Tell me about your case*

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CASES WE FIGHT FOR

[Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder \(PTSD\)](#)
[Total Disability Individual Unemployability](#)
[Exposure to Agent Orange & Other Herbicides](#)
[Questions About an Appeal](#)

[Traumatic Brain Injury \(TBI\)](#)
[Psychiatric Disability](#)
[Death Benefits or DIC](#)
[See all the kinds of cases we fight for](#)

[Visit Our FREE Resource Library](#) **Go**
[Lawyer2Lawyer Referrals](#) **Start**

Sadly, many veterans think it's impossible to win the disability benefits they deserve. They're wrong. But, as you already know, it takes a lot of work because the VA denies as many cases as they can get away with.

NOW THE GOOD NEWS: HERE ARE EXAMPLES OF DISABLED VETERANS I HAVE HELPED.

Veteran Martin Fleishman from Forest Hills, New York shared his experience:

Eric, in less than one year, you have accomplished more than I have in 55 years of trying - 9 of those years with legal representation. May God bless you and your loved ones.

Veteran Bob Ritchie from Tustin, California had been fighting the VA too. After he hired me to help him, he said:

In just one year, Eric accomplished what I've been trying to do for 18 years. I have already referred some of my service buddies to Eric and will continue to send more.

[Read more testimonials](#)

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NEW CASES JUST WON

WON \$443,029 earlier effective date for grant of TDIU

WON \$311,000 for multiple chemical sensitivity syndrome

WON \$305,000 for depression and TDIU

[See More of Our Results](#)

Call Us Toll Free **888-878-9350**

NOW I'D LIKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO HELP YOU.

After all, you selflessly – and loyally – gave your best years to your country. Proudly defending her honor. Answering her call at her time of need. Yet, when you came back – with injuries from your service – the VA denied your disability benefits. Not just once. But over and over again.

I'm here to tell you this STOPS – Right Here – Right Now!

My name is Eric Gang. I am a Veterans Disability Lawyer. I've dedicated my entire law practice to helping veterans like you. As you read the articles you'll find on this website, you'll discover [mistakes to avoid](#) – [secrets for winning benefits](#) – [why the VA rejects private medical opinions](#) – [answers to common questions](#) – and much more.

When you're ready to take the next step, just call me and tell me about your case. My **toll-free number is (888) 878-9350**. I'll ask a few questions, and together you and I can decide whether I can help you.



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FEATURED VIDEOS

Visit Our YouTube Channel For Our Complete Video Library



REASONS WHY VA DENIES PTSD CLAIMS
Reasons Why VA Denies PTSD Claims



MILITARY SEXUAL ASSAULT
Military Sexual Assault



HOW TO CHOOSE A LAWYER
How to Choose a Lawyer

BLOG

Recent Blog Posts

[VA Finalizes Rules to Deal with the Contaminated Water at Camp Lejeune](#)
[Entitlement to Service Connection for PTSD Granted After 42 Years](#)
[Whistleblower Wins \\$857K Cash For Exposing Hayner Hoyt SDVOSB Fraud](#)
[Whistleblower Rewards for Veterans Who Report Defense Contractor Fraud](#)

New

Obtaining Service Connection for Heart Disabilities Secondary to Psychiatric Conditions

Apr 17, 2017

We recently won service connection for a veteran's myocardial infarction secondary to a service connected psychiatric disability. This veteran's

psychiatric disability was different than the typical PTSD scenario that we often face in this office. This veteran had a psychiatric...

[More](#)



boston.com

The Dallas
Morning News



AMERICAN
PUBLIC MEDIA

THE SACRAMENTO
BEE

THE BUFFALO NEWS

Gang & Associates, LLC

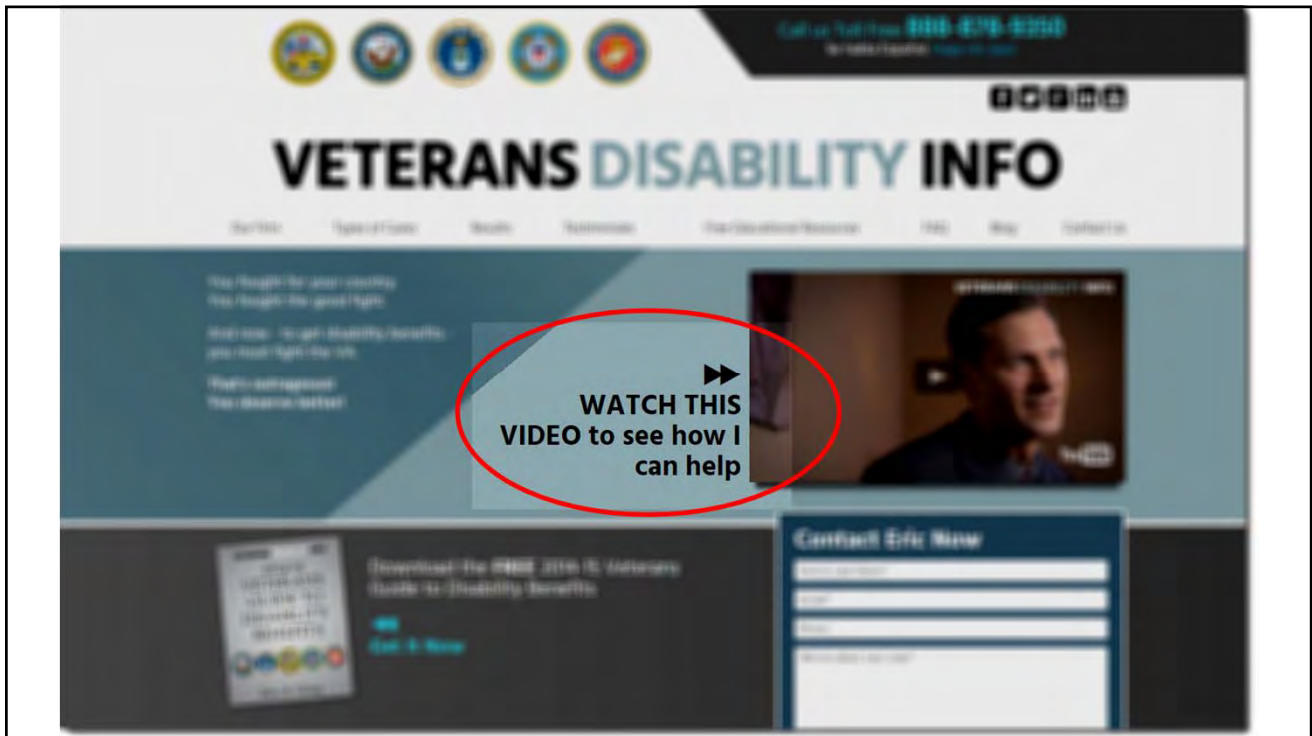
New Jersey Office
1001 Route 517, Suite 1
Hackettstown, New Jersey 07840

New York Office
576 Fifth Avenue, Suite 903
New York, NY 10036

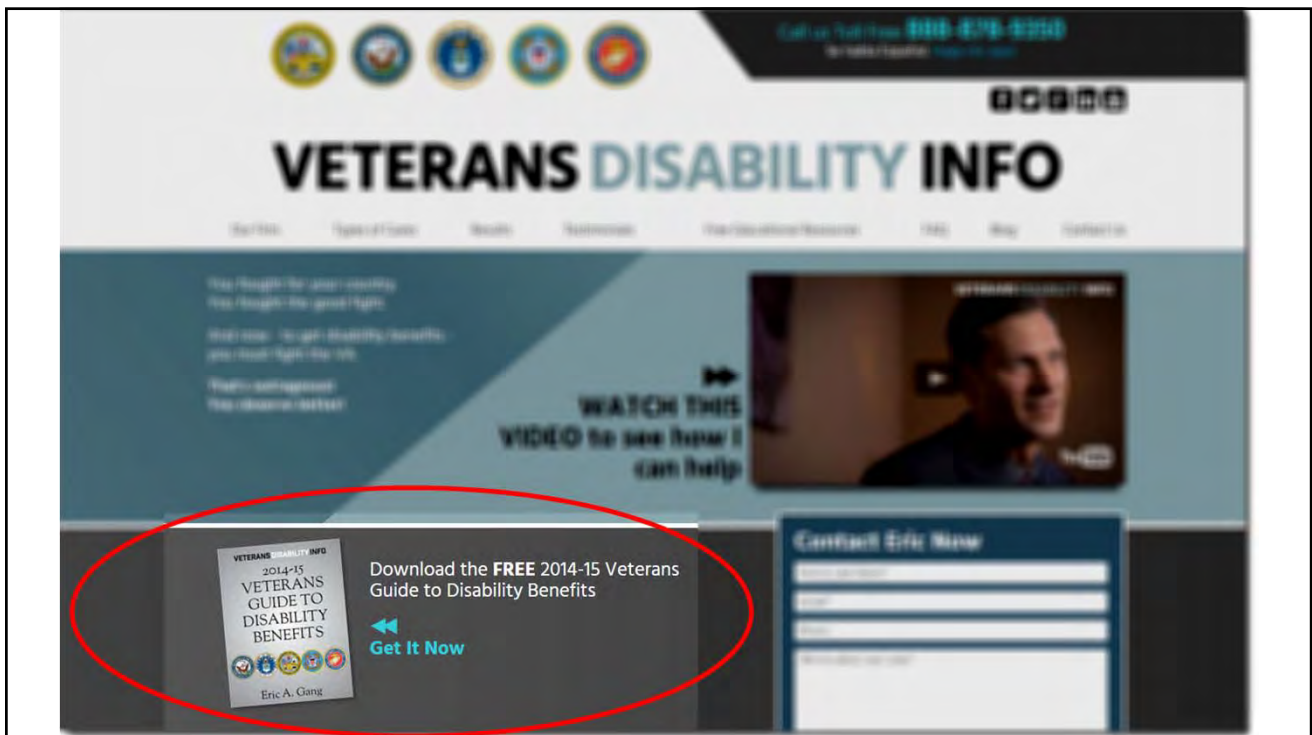
Affiliations

National Organization of Veterans' Advocates
Providing Training For Those Who Represent America's Veterans and Their Dependents Since 1993.

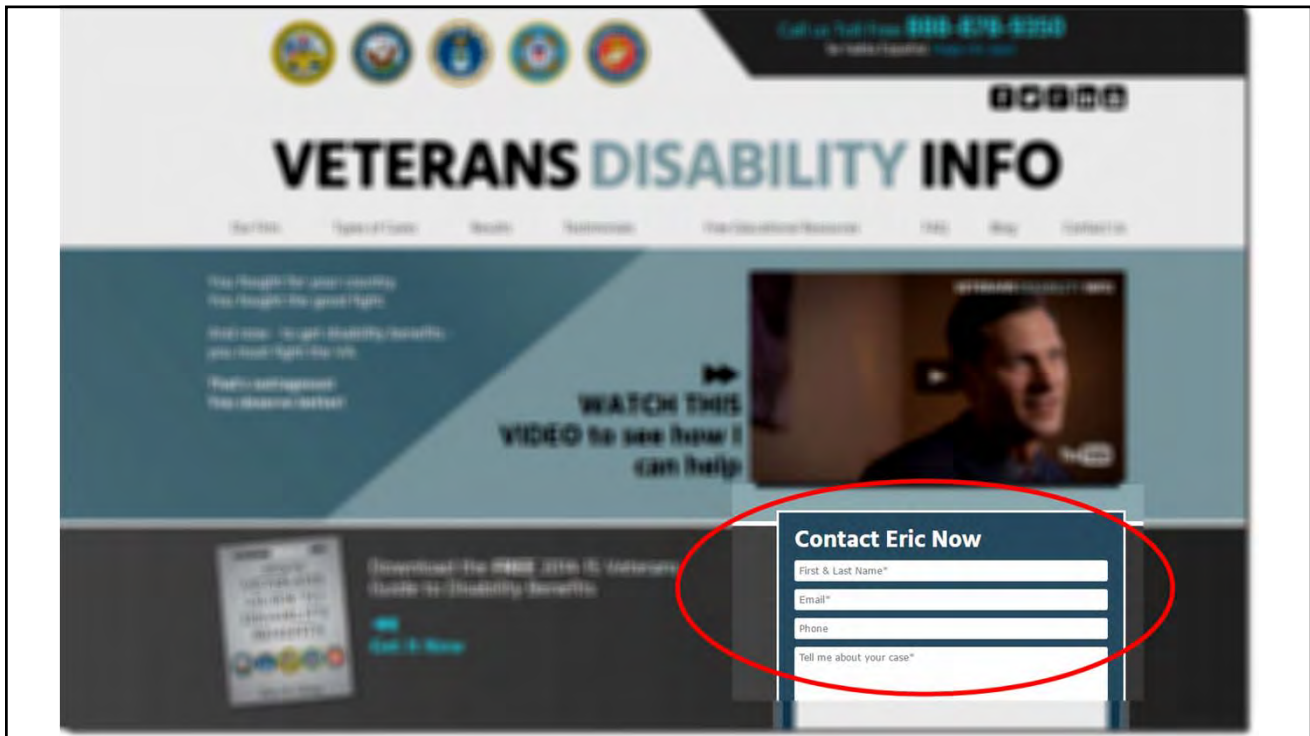
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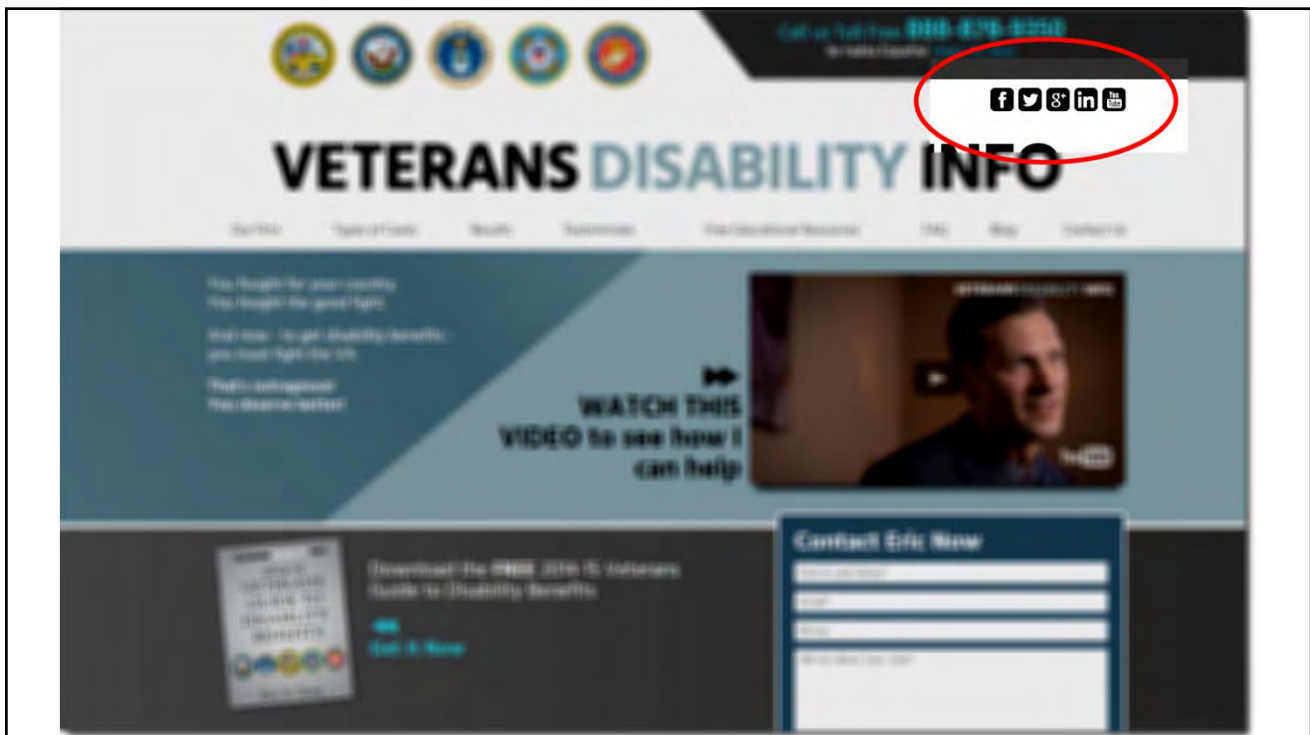
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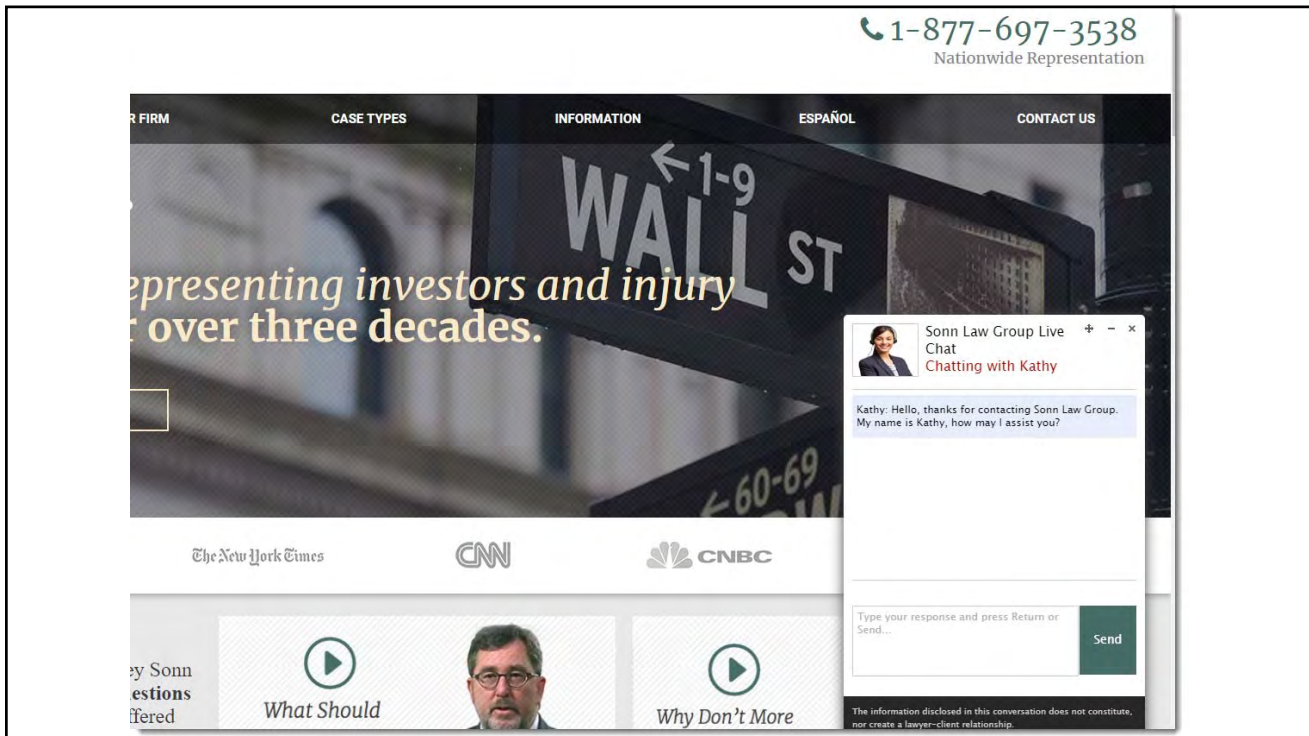
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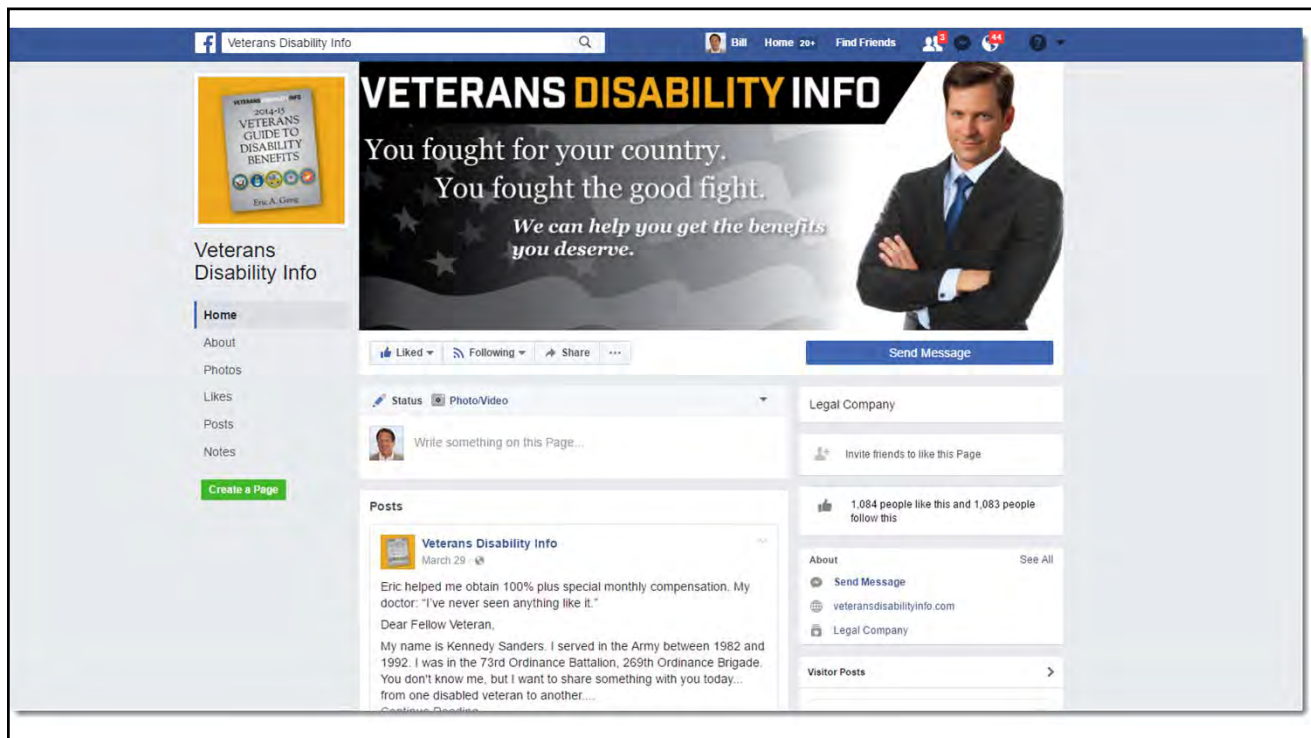


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Key Elements Overview



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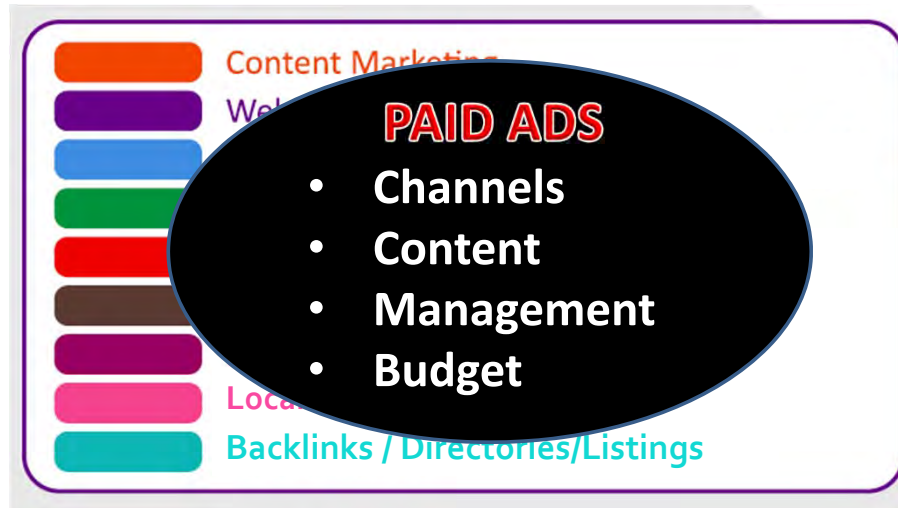


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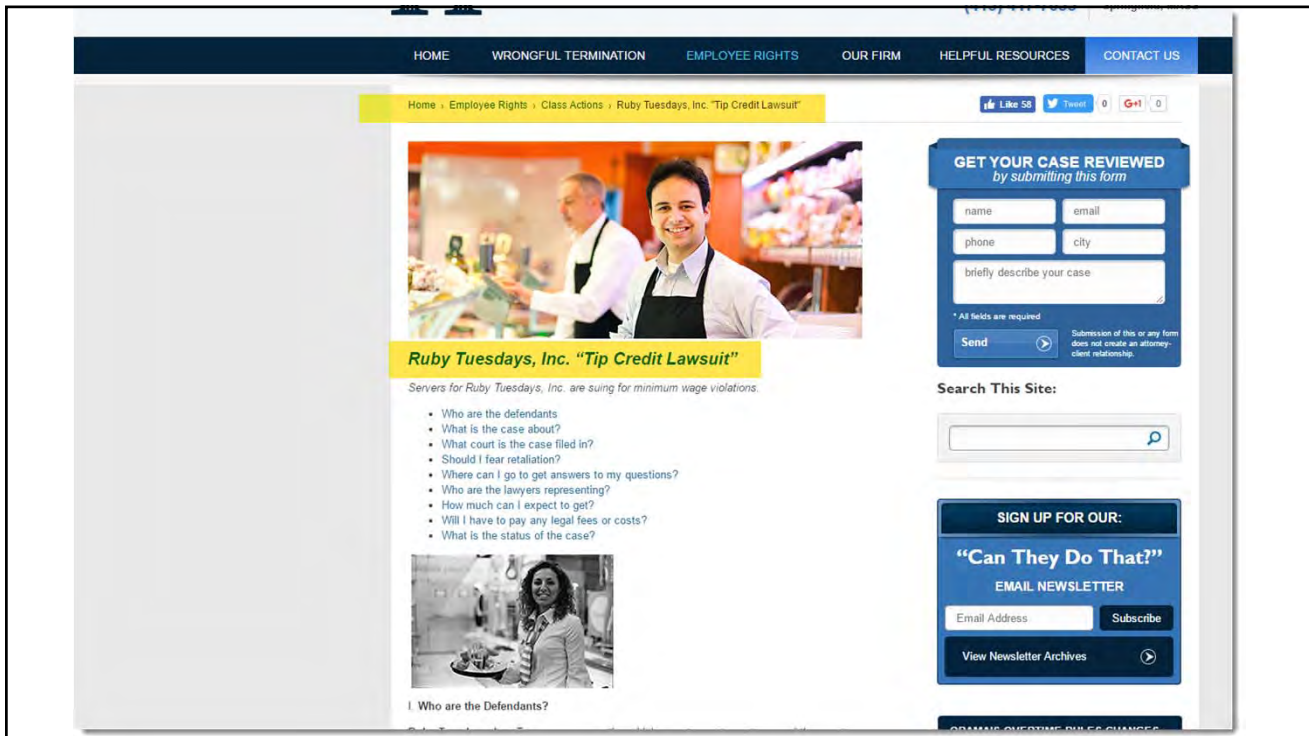
Key Elements Overview



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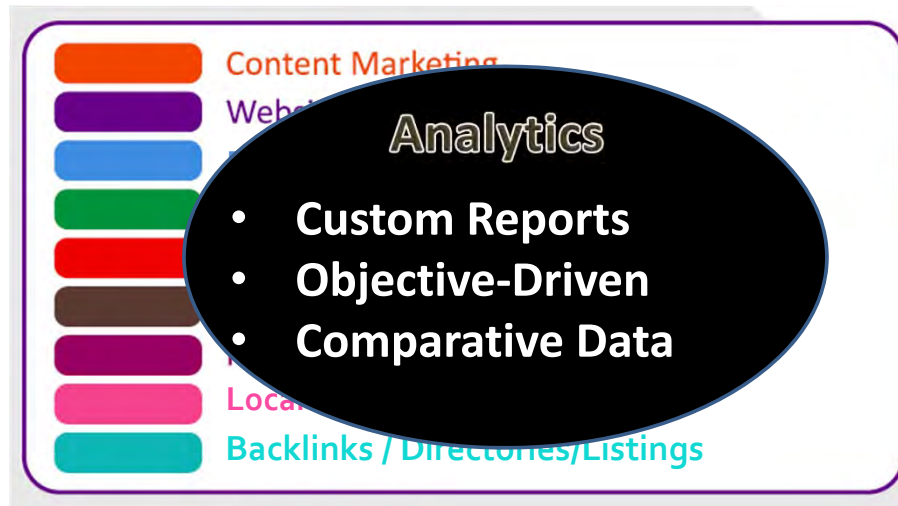


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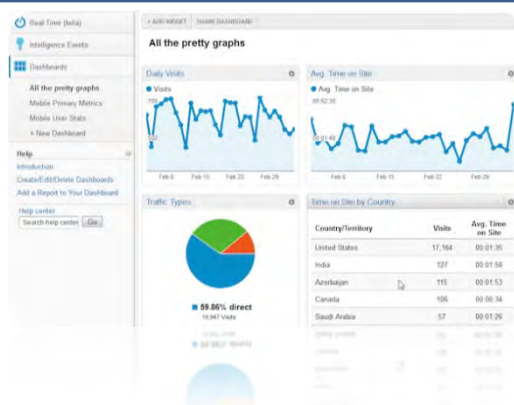
Key Elements Overview



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How To Get Meaningful Reports

1. Strategy
2. Goals
3. Baseline data
4. Actions (# of items such as backlinks, posts, citations)



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How To Get Meaningful Reports

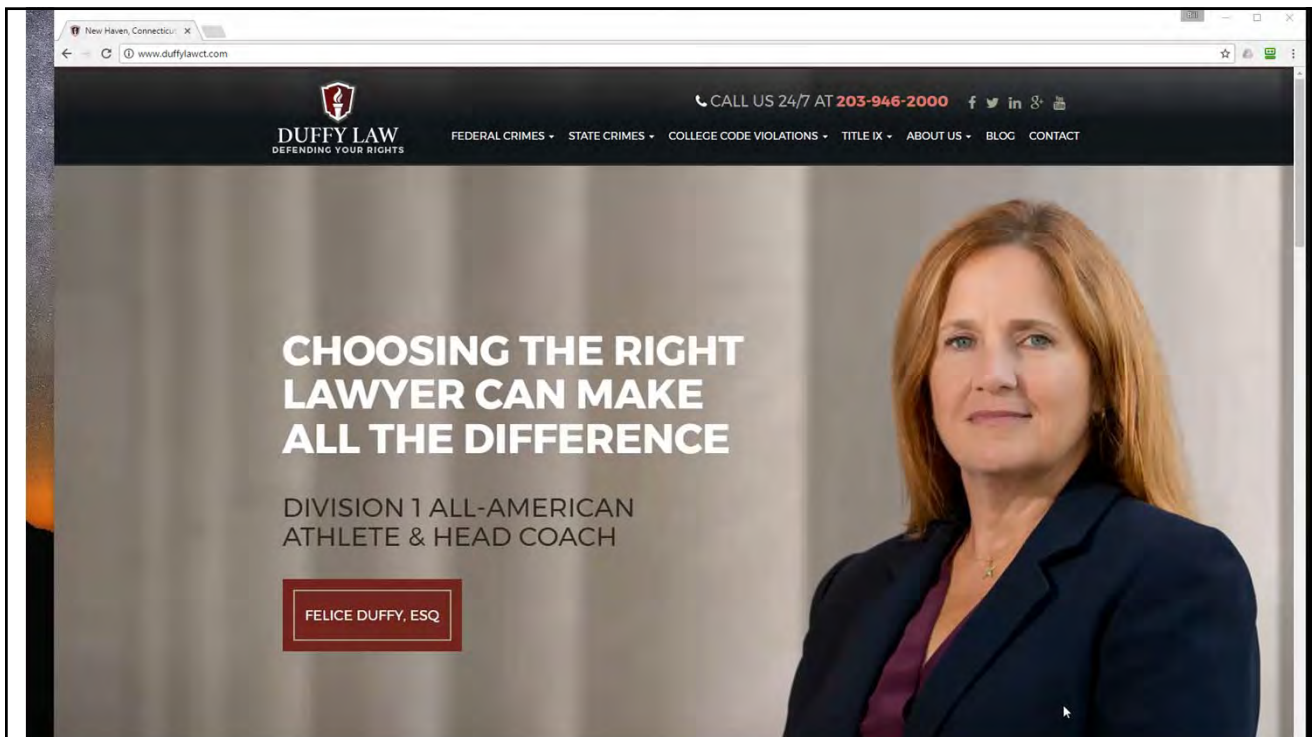
5. Period-to-period SERP data
6. Explanation
7. Recommendations
8. Repeat 2-7 (include #1 2-3x/yr)

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Key Elements Overview



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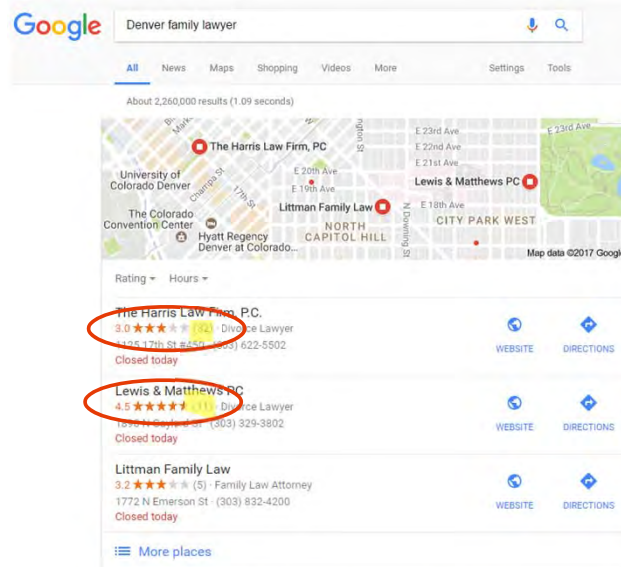


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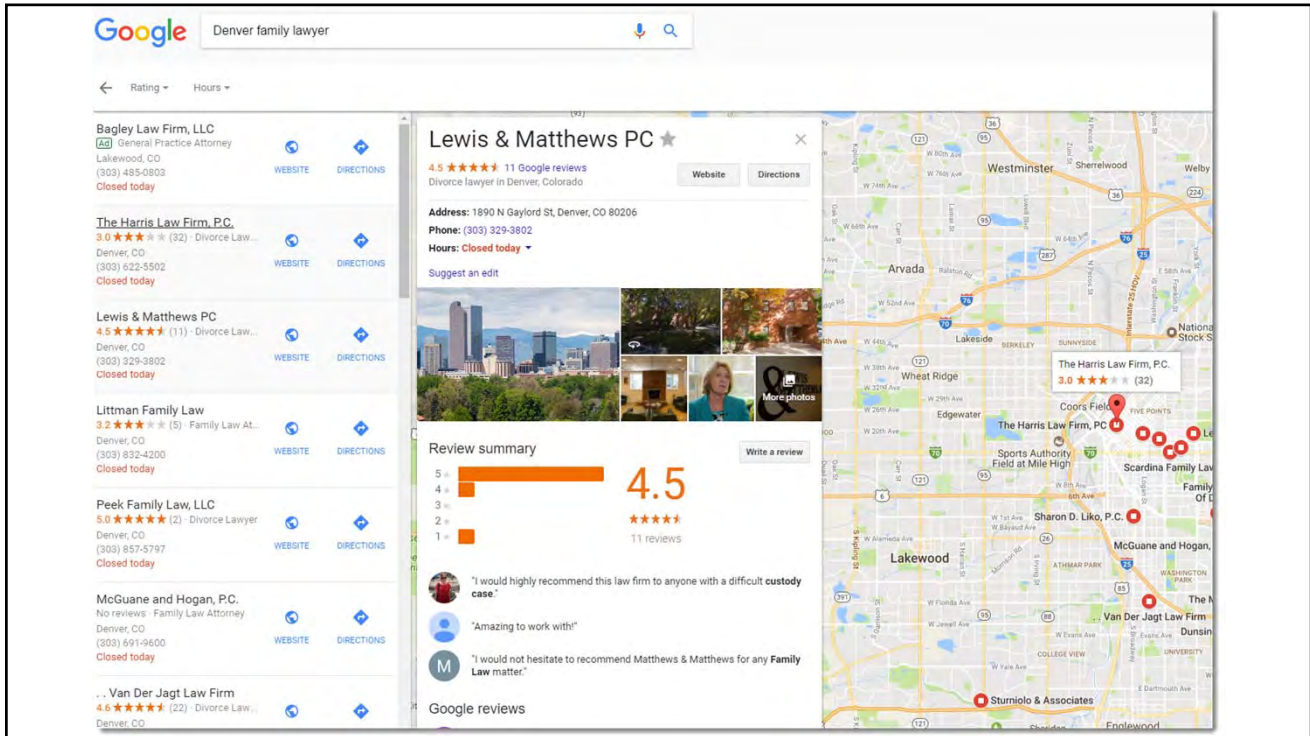
Key Elements Overview



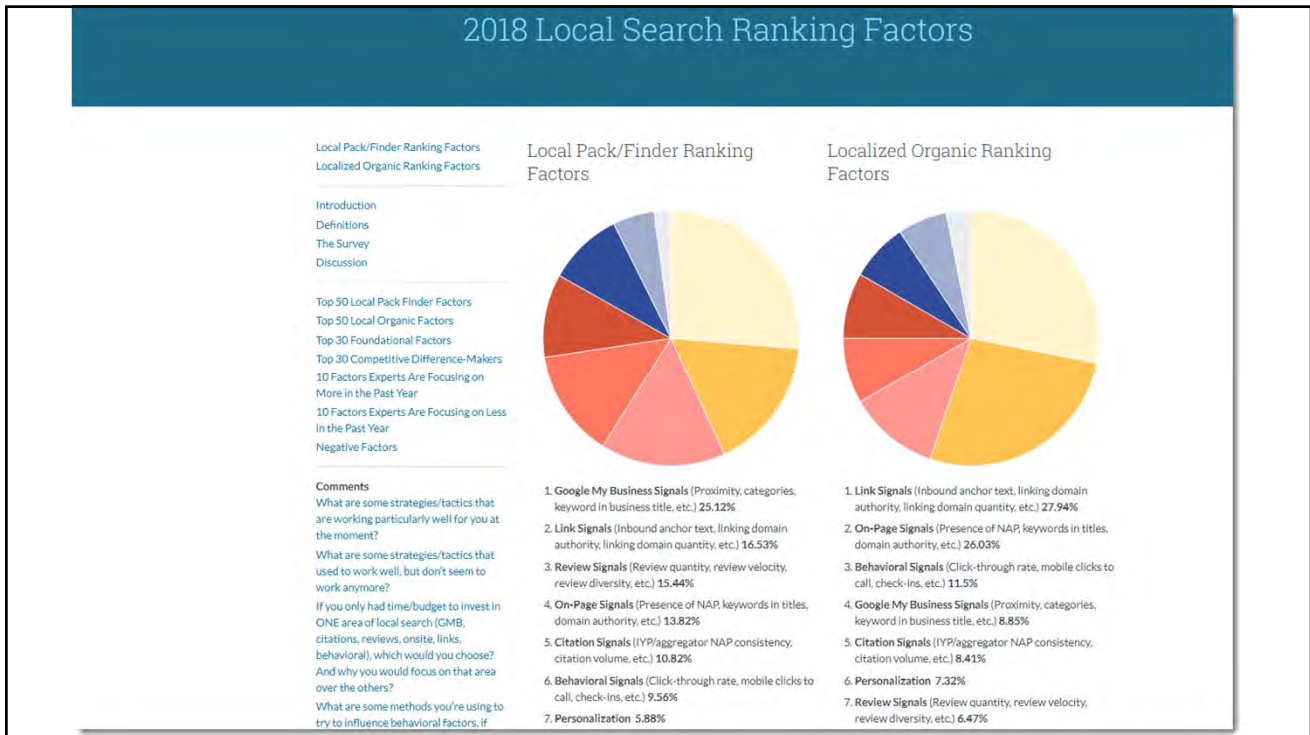
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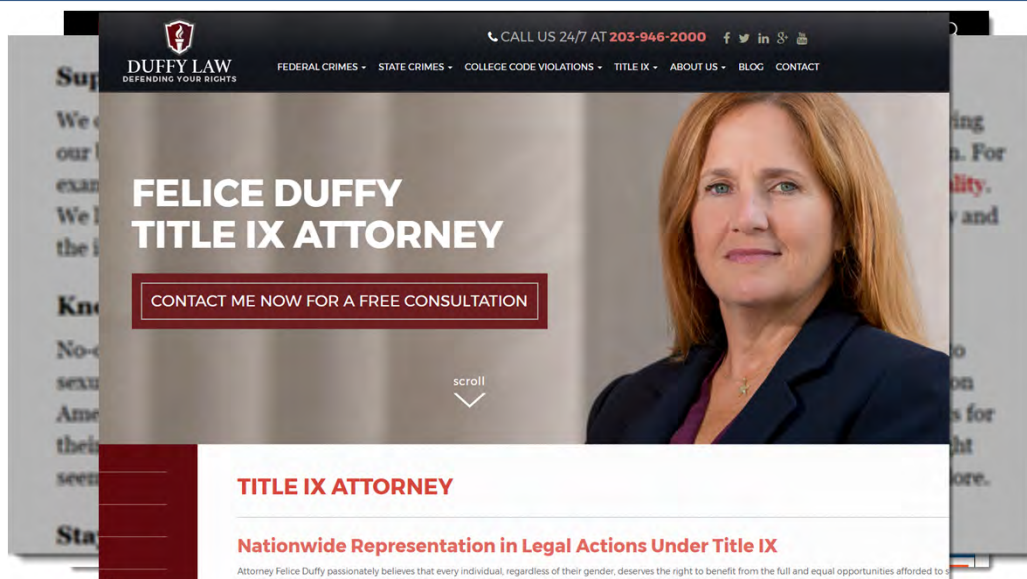
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Key Elements Overview



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Backlinks: Guest Post



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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY MARYLAND Office of Financial Aid

Home » Undergraduate Financial Aid » Undergraduate Financial Aid Programs » Scholarships » 1000+ Scholarship Opportunities

Other Scholarship Opportunities

Below we have provided information on outside scholarship programs that may be of interest to Loyola students. The University does not endorse nor have any role in the awarding or administration of these private scholarship programs, therefore we disclaim any responsibility or liability for the information provided.

Title: Driving Safety Scholarship
 Sponsor: Tate Law Offices, PC
 Amount: \$500 - \$1,500
 Eligibility: Undergraduate students
 How to apply: <http://www.tatelawoffices.com/scholarship/>
 Deadline: July 31, 2017

Title: Duffy Law Scholarship
 Sponsor: Duffy Law, LLC
 Eligibility: Full-time undergraduate student
 Amount: \$1,000
 How to apply: <http://www.duffylawct.com/duffy-law-llc-1000-scholarship>
 Deadline: July 15, 2017

Title: Kerala Tourism Scholarship
 Sponsor: Kerala Tourism, India

Tuition Charges

Types of Aid

- Scholarships
- Grants
- Loans
- Student Employment
- Monthly Payment Plan

The Application Process

Policies

- Net Price Calculator

Parent Portal

Online Resources

FAQs

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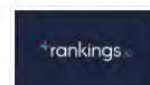
Lawyer Directories

TOP 100 Law Firm Directories (2017) – Interactive Chart

Lawyer Directories	AHREFS Domain Rating	Price	Domain URL
Cornell	76	Free	Lawyers.law.cornell.edu
FindLaw	73	Quote	Findlaw.com
Avvo	73	free	Avvo.com
Martindale	70	Quote	Martindale.com
Justia	70	free. requires fax with bar number	Justia.com
Nolo	68	Quote	Nolo.com



SEO for Lawyers: How to Get Clients with Search Engine Optimization
Mar 28, 2017



AMP (Accelerated Mobile Pages) for Lawyers
Mar 27, 2017

**Search for
"Top100 law
firm directories"**

www.rankings.io

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Ethics Check

- Disclaimers (relationship / advice)
- Reviews
- Testimonials
- Dealing with negative reviews
- Separating personal social media from your practice

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Ethics Check

Tweeting: is it advertising?

California Bar Opinion 2012-176

1. "Case finally over. Unanimous verdict! Celebrating tonight."
2. "Another great victory in court today! My client is delighted. Who wants to be next?"
3. "Won another personal injury case. Call me for a free consultation."
4. "Just published an article on wage and hour breaks. Let me know if you would like a copy."

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ROI: Internal Tracking

Source of all inquiries and opened matters

- Analytics data (emails or calls)
- ASK on phone or by email (How did you hear about us? What terms did you search?)
- Record at first contact
- Inquiries to sign-ups

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Typical IM Budgets

- All marketing: 3-5% of gross revenue
- \$5-80K for site/social media startup
- \$1-10K/mo support/reporting
- Paid search:
 - Ad spend \$50 to 10K+/mo
 - Campaign management \$400 – 4K

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Understand Your Contract

Ownership/Control

- Domain name
- Hosting/SM accounts
- Site code
- Text and Images (e.g., West, User, Custom)
- Third-party apps/tools



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Understand Your Contract

What are you paying for?

- Hosting
- One-time design/build
- Updates
- SEO / Social Media



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Understand Your Contract

Clarify Vague Language & Get Numbers

- “Ongoing” SEO updates “as needed”
- How many of each activity described

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Buyer Beware

- SEO Promises
- Directories & Lead Generation
(you’ve been nominated, we’re doing a story on you)
- Speak with firms like yours for references
- Track results independently via Google Analytics



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Who Should Do/Manage the Work?

- Strategy and set-up by experts
- VA's and marketing firms
- In-house staff



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Practice Growth Resource Pack

- 127 pages
- Text "**Resources**" to **444999**
- Reply with your email address
- Download page link will come to your in-box



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Questions?

Requests for specific info?

Internet marketing audit?

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