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The Best Practices for Creating a Law Firm Marketing Strategy

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Your law firm needs a marketing strategy to compete. While it's easy to defer developing a smart marketing strategy because your firm is busy, we promise that it's time well spent. Without it, your firm will be relying on word-of-mouth referrals and stunting its growth. To best grow and sustain itself, your law firm needs to attract new business. Having a concrete marketing strategy is the most effective and efficient way to build a pipeline of new leads.

In this article, we'll cover best practices for building a marketing strategy and offer tips on how to market your law firm. Let's get started!

What is law firm marketing, and why is it important?

Law firm marketing is used to attract (and hopefully convert) potential clients to your firm. It's an important part of developing successful strategies to grow and sustain your legal practice. And it's not only for big law firms! Small firms, boutiques, and solo practitioners alike can all benefit from a marketing strategy. Basically, developing a marketing strategy requires putting thought into your firm's needs and mapping out actionable steps to meet those needs and build your roster of clients.

Your law firm runs because of one thing: a continuous stream of paying clients. But maintaining a profitable level of client activity is a real struggle for many small firms and solo practitioners. Acquiring new, paying clients is not an easy process, especially when your firm is just starting out. A successful law firm marketing strategy can help fix this. By marketing your law firm efficiently, your firm will generate new leads and increase its opportunities to acquire new clients. New clients mean more billable hours, which means more profit. All of this starts with a good law firm marketing strategy.

How do you market a law firm?

Creating and then enacting a good law firm marketing strategy is a multi-step process. The key steps are knowing your law firm, identifying your target audience, considering your competition, defining your goals, and then executing the strategy.

Patience is also key in this process. It's unlikely that your law firm will get it all right on the first try. Your marketing strategy will require adjustment to reflect shifting needs and priorities. The best law firm marketing strategy is flexible, so just know that whatever your firm decides upon now is not set in stone.

Knowing your law firm

Why does your law firm exist? The first and most important step in developing your law firm's marketing strategy is to figure out your firm's core message and positioning.

Your firm's core message is what you want clients to know about your law firm. It should address your current and aspirational clientele and emphasize your firm's strengths. The clearer your idea of your firm's core message, the easier it is to determine its trajectory.

As you consider these things, your firm may find it helpful to outline the types of legal services that it offers. Questions to start with should include these:

- What type of clients does your law firm usually serve?
- How many clients do you serve per year?
- What practice area does your firm specialize in?
- What are your law firm's strengths?
- What are your law firm's weaknesses?

The answers to these questions will help your firm begin to craft its lawyer marketing strategy.

Identifying your target audience

Without identifying the folks who might need your law firm's services, it's hard to know how to tailor your firm's marketing activities. A steady understanding of your firm's target audience is the best way to determine the focus of your law firm's marketing efforts.

Important factors to consider regarding your target audience include geographical location, age, gender, income, and occupation. If businesses are your law firm's main clientele, consider your typical client's size, geographical location, and industry. By knowing your target audience and considering them when making marketing decisions, your law firm will optimize its efforts and reach people most in need of its services and thus most likely to turn into paying clients.

Considering your competition

The legal market is competitive. One way to stay ahead is by analyzing the market and considering your competition. Conduct a market analysis by evaluating your target audience, the size of business opportunity in your area to serve that audience, and possible practice area expansions. Think about the level of competition in your practice area and location when creating your law firm marketing tactics.

For example, your tactics will differ if your firm specializes in executive compensation in a competitive market like New York City or if you're a solo practitioner in a small New England town. The best law firm marketing strategy considers market opportunity and possible market share.

Defining your marketing goals

What do you want your law firm's marketing strategy to achieve? Think in three-, six-, and twelve-month increments. We recommend setting **SMART** goals for each timeframe and re-evaluating them regularly.

The key factors to consider when defining your law firm marketing strategy goals include the number of new clients your firm wants to acquire, the number of clients you expect to retain, the firm's projected and current revenue, the firm's practice area expertise, and the number of team members you plan to hire and retain. To best envision your goals, your law firm should consider questions like these:

- Is **generating new leads** your main focus?
- Does your firm want to expand into new regions or practice areas?
- How much of a concern is your firm's **bottom line**?
- Is your firm in major growth mode?

Once you've determined your law firm's marketing strategy goals, you can decide where to focus your firm's efforts and how to get the most out of the capital that you spend on marketing.

Executing the strategy

When creating or revamping your law firm's marketing strategy, consider early on who at the firm will be the head of marketing and who will make up the larger marketing team. We cannot stress enough the benefits of **outsourcing the legwork to marketing agency experts** who can help you devise and implement your legal marketing strategy (and who won't blow your budget).

Remember to keep your target audience top of mind when devising what marketing channels your firm will pursue. For example, if you practice in trusts and estates, a Twitter campaign might not be the most fruitful use of your firm's marketing funds. However, if your firm practices in tech mergers and acquisitions, a LinkedIn campaign might be the right place to advertise.

What is the difference between a law firm's marketing strategy and a marketing plan?

Though they sound similar, your marketing strategy and marketing plan are distinct. Your law firm's marketing strategy is the connective tissue between your law firm's goals and your firm's ongoing marketing efforts. Your strategy is based on the theoretical, focusing on the why behind your decisions. Why this marketing goal? Why this target audience? Why these legal services?

A law firm's marketing plan defines the specific actions that your law firm is going to take to execute its strategy. Just as you might outline a business plan, your law firm's marketing plan should be well-structured and detailed. Your marketing plan will include specific actions like digital marketing, the creation of a law firm website, content marketing, email marketing, or enhanced search engine optimization.

Having a sound law firm marketing strategy plus an actionable law firm marketing plan is key to keeping your firm top of mind for potential clients. But because marketing is outside the skill set of the typical legal professional, many law firms choose to work with **outside expert marketing**

[strategists](#) who know the ins and outs of law firm marketing.

What are some best practices for a law firm marketing strategy?

Your firm's marketing strategy should be primarily digital. Sure, you can plaster your firm's name on a billboard, but you'll likely get more bang for your buck with online advertising on targeted websites. More now than ever, life is happening digitally. By focusing your efforts on digital marketing like increased search engine optimization (SEO), blogs, newsletters, and ads, you'll ensure that your law firm reaches a wider but curated audience.

Another important component to consider is your marketing budget. What is it? To figure this out, your law firm will need to identify its goals and determine the revenue you need to achieve those goals. It's important to be realistic here and to know that as your firm begins to reap benefits from its marketing strategy in the form of new clients, revenue will increase, and, in turn, your firm's marketing budget can increase too. Once you've created a budget, try to stick to it, re-evaluating it as necessary.

Your legal marketing strategy is an essential part of your firm's growth. As with any important matter, there are some must-haves that your firm should include in its marketing strategy.

Focus on web design

Your law firm's website is the most important marketing investment you'll make, and grabbing the attention of leads and prospective clients is its primary goal. The design of your legal website should be functional, interesting, and accessible. You only get one opportunity to make a first impression. We recommend asking yourself the following question during the design process: will this web design help potential clients find and then choose my law firm? Your design decision-making should revolve around that question.

Your [Law Firm Website Design Inspiration 101 - Centerbase](#) must be simple, clear, and uncluttered. A website visitor should know what it is that your law firm does. We recommend that the most important content appear "above the fold," meaning that a visitor can see it without having to scroll. Use high-quality photographs, an aesthetically appealing color scheme, a [well-thought-out font](#), and enough white space to entice visitors to linger on your page. Consider how certain content, like lawyer bios and video marketing, will appear when laying out your [website](#). The best legal website permits content to be interacted with on all devices — cell phones, tablets, and computers — and on all browser types. A positive user experience is critical.

We also recommend that your website include call to action (CTA) buttons. Your CTAs should encourage visitors to take action, whether that's reading more of your website or giving your firm a call for a free consultation. Prominently place your contact information, including your phone number and email, in several places on your website. This is the best way to get web visitors to convert into potential clients and build your legal directories.

Emphasize search engine optimization

You want your marketing strategy to help your law firm generate new leads, engage possible clients, and boost your firm's SEO. SEO improves your law firm's website by increasing its visibility in search engine results.

Here's how it works. Google search engine results rank the responses to a user's inquiry based on the content of web pages. Thus, the more relevant your content is to the search terms entered by the online searcher, the more likely that your content and thus your firm's website will appear at the top of a results page. We recommend conducting keyword research to figure out what words your target audience is searching for.

SEO is also measured by the quality of your law firm's web page. That means metrics such as web design, readability, the quantity of website traffic, and backlinks matter. Improving these important SEO metrics will increase your overall law firm SEO, leading to increased searchability and visibility (and hopefully new clients in the process).

Local SEO is another important aspect of your legal website's overall SEO. Your law firm can optimize its geographic reach through local SEO, helping to establish your firm as the go-to in your community. To begin maximizing your local SEO, think about topics that will appeal to clients in your target geography. For example, you might write an article explaining contributory negligence in North Carolina or a blog post about tortious interference with contracts in New York.

Consider digital advertising

If an organic search leading to your firm's website isn't generating the results your marketing team had hoped for, paid search marketing campaigns are another marketing tool to consider. We'll cover the basics of the three main types of digital ads: pay per click, pay per lead, and Google's Local Services ads.

- **Pay per click:** With pay-per-click (PPC) advertising, your firm only pays for the number of "clicks" it receives from online users. For example, your firm's ad is featured on a given platform (a website, social media, a search engine), an online user clicks on the ad, and then your law firm pays for that click. It seems like a simple process, but optimization requires strategic thinking and regular re-evaluation. As with SEO, research is important here. Your law firm will need to conduct research on keywords, organize those keywords into logical groupings, and then link to the correct landing page of your website to hook the lead as quickly as possible. PPC is a great tool to get your law firm out there, but to best optimize your results, [we recommend working with marketing experts](#).
- **Pay per lead.** With pay-per-lead (PPL) advertising, the amount that your firm will pay for an advertisement depends on the number of leads acquired. Typically, your law firm will be able to define what constitutes a lead and thus only pay when those requirements are met. An example of a PPL arrangement is one where a firm pays by the number of leads who provide their contact information. A PPL arrangement is a great option for small law firms or solo practitioners who want their law practice to grow but don't yet have the capacity for dozens of new clients.
- **Google's Local Services ads.** With Google Local Services ads, your law firm can connect with people who search on Google for services that your firm offers. It works like this: your firm's advertisement will show up for customers in your geographic area who search for legal services related to your firm. Similar to standard PPL, your law firm will only pay if the lead calls or messages directly through the advertisement. These Google ads are relatively new and require multistep verification and an otherwise fairly rigorous process. [As with other advertisement strategies, Local Services ads should be optimized to showcase your law firm's expertise.](#) Relatedly, we also recommend Facebook ads as a route to grow your firm's online visibility.

In connection with each paid advertisement method, you'll also want to set up landing pages where clients who click on your ad can get more specific information about your firm. To be most effective, the content on your landing page should be both persuasive and centered around getting your visitor to take that next step of getting in touch with your firm.

- **Content strategy.** Your law firm's content strategy is an important component of its marketing strategy. Any content created should be high quality, showcasing your firm's excellent work, practice areas, and attorneys on staff. [If your law firm is after a long-lasting online presence, integrating content marketing into its overall marketing strategy is key.](#) To begin, consider what questions your target audience might have. Does your firm mostly service parents in custody disputes? Folks suffering from injuries in connection with personal injury claims? Businesses trying to best protect their trademarks? Once your firm has considered these topics, it should create regular content addressing them, such as blog posts, social media posts, white papers, webinars, and even a podcast or two.

Social media marketing is an effective and low-cost marketing tactic for your law firm, and it should be included in your overall strategy. Get started with Facebook, Google Business Profiles or Google My Business, Yelp, and LinkedIn. Your law firm's online presence should be friendly, and you should post regularly. Your overall strategy should be to create ties with the community as well as to establish your firm as an authority in your practice areas. While there are many marketing services, we recommend the services of an [A+ marketing team to get your firm started on its social media campaign.](#)

An email marketing strategy is another cost-effective tool to consider and one that allows for regular contact and follow-up with clients. We recommend beginning by building an emailing list, which your firm can achieve by offering free resources (think newsletters or relevant white papers). Your firm will be able to collect email addresses from prospective clients this way while also staying in contact with current clients (or even past clients). Another avenue is to build lead magnets that online visitors can download directly from your firm's website. Lead magnets are a free service or resource that you give away to collect potential clients' contact information (emails, phone numbers, etc.). Once your firm has acquired a robust emailing list, you can begin effective email marketing. We recommend showcasing your firm's expertise through positive reviews, testimonials, case studies, and other helpful resources that show how your firm can make life easier for clients. Positive client reviews are one of your best marketing tools.

Begin your marketing journey today

By implementing the digital marketing strategy and tools highlighted above, your law firm will be well on its way to creating or strengthening its online presence. Online marketing strategies include a well-designed and aesthetically pleasing website, using SEO techniques to optimize searchability, content marketing, social media, paid search campaigns, and email marketing. The goal is to get your firm out there and to start bringing clients in. With a good marketing strategy, these goals are achievable.

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