

From the Great Jakes Blog

## Long distance clients: the new frontier for legal marketing Attorney Bios & Microsites:



By Dion Algeri, Founder  
June 05, 2011

I was recently speaking with my father — a retired computer industry executive — about the state of legal marketing. During our conversation, I declared “Geography matters less and less in today’s business culture — thanks to new technologies.”

“I’ve heard this before,” my father replied with the authoritative tone of a seasoned veteran.

He explained that with the advent of each new communications technology, people declared that geography would become irrelevant. And they have been wrong — over and over again. In the end, the changes ended up being “incremental at best,” he said.

“I know, I know,” I replied. “But this time, it’s different.”



Dion Algeri and his father, Vince.

### What’s different now?

Our culture has changed. One hundred years of the telephone, coupled with 15 years of the internet and 5 years of Facebook, has made a large cumulative impact on the way we relate to one another. We’ve all gotten used to managing long distance, “virtual” relationships — especially the under-40 crowd.

Here are some observations from my own life:

- ▶ My company now conducts the overwhelming majority of its meetings via WebEx — and our clients

don't blink an eye about it. Nobody insists on frequent face-to-face meetings like they did just a year or two ago.

- ▶ I follow a brilliant tech guru named Dave Winer on Twitter. I've never met him, yet I know more about his life than I do about some of my close friends that live around the corner. I actually care about this guy.
- ▶ My company recently built a website for an international organization headquartered less than 50 miles from our offices. The client never had any interest in meeting us in person — during the pitch or the project's execution. All meetings were conducted via WebEx and included participants from both England and France.
- ▶ My company was recently looking to hire an IP attorney. The attorney that had the greatest amount of relevant expertise was located on the opposite coast — in Seattle. We didn't care. Geography was simply not a factor.

The four items listed above is just the tip of the iceberg. I could go on for pages. In short, I live in a world of long distance relationships.

Now, I realize that I might be a bit ahead of the curve. However, I suspect that my experiences are similar to those of most people under 40 years old. And those folks are quickly moving into positions of authority in legal departments and law firms across the country.

So, what does this mean for legal marketing? Lots. The legal business has traditionally been locally focused — and business development has typically been a highly personal process, often conducted over dinner and drinks.

This is all changing. I'll elaborate in my next post.