



AttorneySync's Guide To Hiring An SEO Consultant



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Law Firm Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Partnering With a Law Firm SEO Pro vs. Doing It Yourself

As is the case in several other industries, there is a question as to whether law firms should perform SEO in-house vs. or whether it is a job best outsourced to law firm SEO professionals. The truth is, there are advantages to both scenarios, and it's best to consider the pros and cons of each before making a final decision.

The Professional Law Firm SEO Camp

Specific Industry Experience – SEO consultants with specific experience in handling campaigns for law firms under their belts can tell you exactly what to expect from the optimization campaign. They can also interpret and understand core metrics and results that may indicate whether certain strategies should be implemented, increased, decreased, or avoided.

Fixing Technical Site Problems – Law firm search professionals are able to quickly identify and fix technical site issues that can cause failure of indexing, poor placements or penalties from the search engines. These problems can be very technical and complicated for someone without practice and experience in this area. If you have a technical site-search issue, having a professional's help can be a life-saver.

Efficient and Effective Link Building – Qualified law firm SEO professionals can identify relevant legal communities and the most popular and relevant sites, saving time when link building. SEOs with experience in the legal field also have experience with link acquisition, as well as the ability to recognize the requirements of certain sites for link requests.

Content Development – A good law firm SEO is adept at developing content and identifying the content most likely to get links from the legal-web community. They are also experienced in ways of packaging and promoting the content.

Saving Time – Performing SEO for your law firm is an exceptionally time-consuming process. Professional law firms SEOs have developed efficient and effective systems of optimization which they can use to provide better service in a shorter amount of time.

The Do-It-Yourself SEO Camp

You're In The Driver's Seat – Doing it yourself gives you complete control of each element of your firm's progress online. There is no question about when, where, how, or why a link was

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created or a part of your site modified. You don't have to be concerned that someone is doing something wrong or improper (that is except for you).

Trial And Error – As you try new strategies you'll be able to see the results of your work. By watching your rankings, you'll learn what is working and what isn't. The appearance, quality and quantity of links, timing, and on-page optimizations will be fully visible and measurable.

It's All On You – Whether or not you have success will fall directly on your shoulders.

Cost Savings – Perhaps the best part of doing SEO yourself means you don't have to pay someone to do it. However, don't be surprised if you find that your time spent on SEO is more expensive than hiring an outsourced consultant. While do-it-yourself SEO can be a great way to save money, you have to measure it based on the results you are getting and the cost in terms of your professional time.

Taking into consideration these pros and cons, you're in a position to decide whether hiring a law firm SEO consultant makes sense for you.

If, on balance, you decide that hiring a law firm SEO consultant is the best route for you, keep in mind the following when you are shopping for the right consultant:

Finding the Right Law Firm SEO Consultant

Once you have made the choice to hire a law firm SEO professional, you need to consider the many schemes, pitfalls, and traps that you will undoubtedly encounter. Unfortunately, many law firm SEOs have become peddlers of snake oil. This has led to an overall negative perception for the entire industry.

However, by paying attention to the following, you can avoid some of the most common traps:

Guaranteed Rankings – Guaranteeing rankings should be an immediate SNAKE OIL ALERT. No SEO can guarantee rankings, because the search engines are responsible for the results and are constantly changing. Also be on the lookout for promised success at “thousands of engines”, direct submission and other “tricks”. Rankings come from quality sites with quality links – not tricks or secrets.

Exclusive Territory – Many of the larger law firm web consulting services have a “come one come all” policy for taking on new clients. For example, some firms are representing over 50 Chicago personal injury lawyers.

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While, at first glance, this may not seem to be a problem, it fails to take into consideration the ultra-competitive landscape of search in the legal industry. Let's face it, there are only 10 spots on the first page of Google. If your SEO consultant is helping your competition, he's competing with you, with your money. Look for law firm SEO professionals that take on only one firm, per given practice area, per geographic region.

Accountable & Transparent - Some law firm SEOs will employ overly aggressive or unethical tactics that can get you banned from, or penalized by, search engines. That is why it is important to know what your SEO plans to do in advance. Look for firms that provide complete transparency with their strategies and performance.

It is also important to make your SEO consultant accountable. Some consultants will make you pay huge fees for a year's worth of service up front. This arrangement insulates them from having to demonstrate any results to you. Look for firms that you can employ on a month to month or hourly basis, without a long-term contract. That way, if they fail to demonstrate their value, you can fire them.

Comprehensive- SEO is about more than just getting your site ranked in a search engine. Proper keyword research should be done so you are getting ranked for terms people are actually searching for. Your site should be optimized so that more traffic coming to the site converts into leads and contacts. Content creation and social media strategies should be implemented. A good SEO firm needs to offer more than getting ranked for "3 keywords phrases".

Specific To Law Firms- Some SEOs will take on all types of businesses for clients. While this benefits them in being able to tap a large base for new clients, typically these firms aren't familiar with the unique considerations to be made when marketing a law firm. As you know, each state bar regulates its attorneys. Be sure to hire a consultant that specializes in the legal field and is aware of these professional ethical considerations.

Customized For Your Goals And Budget – Watch out for consultants that are "one size fits all". For instance, they might promise first page results by submitting "1 article a month" or building "5 one-way links a month". Although these are good strategies to employ, your website, competitors, the keywords you are going after, and your geographic area all effect the amount of work it will take to get your site found. Each search engine optimization campaign will be slightly different. Look for services that allow you to select different packages or services based on your needs. Better yet, look for services that are willing to customize a package for you based on your budget.

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A Note From Google

Here are just a few questions to ask your prospective lawyer internet marketing consultant from [Google's Webmaster Central](#):

-Do you offer any online marketing services or advice to complement your organic search business?

-What kind of results do you expect to see, and in what timeframe? How do you measure your success?

-What are your most important SEO techniques?

-How can I expect to communicate with you?

-Will you share with me all the changes you make to my site, and provide detailed information about your recommendations and the reasoning behind them?

Bottom line, **No law firm SEO can guarantee a #1 ranking on Google.**

"Beware of SEOs that claim to guarantee rankings, allege a "special relationship" with Google, or advertise a "priority submit" to Google. There is no priority submit for Google. In fact, the only way to submit a site to Google directly is through our Add URL page or by submitting a Sitemap and you can do this yourself at no cost whatsoever."

-Google Webmaster Central

In the end, the best advice is simply to avoid companies that are secretive or won't clearly explain what they intend to do.

For more information on SEO for specifically for law firms, check out our [Law Firm SEO Blog](#).

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