



5 Ways to Get a Better Return on Your Legal Advertising Dollars



See if any of this strikes a chord with you:

You are spending money on advertising, attempting to grow your practice.

You've tried different types of legal advertising programs, with varying degrees of success.

You want to maximize your efforts so that you can weed out the programs that work from the ones that don't.

You want a better return on the advertising dollars you spend.

I believe these thoughts are common to anyone that is involved in spending money on lawyer advertising. What I want to do is discuss five ways you can get a better return on your legal advertising dollars. By understanding and utilizing these 5 points, you will ensure that your advertising dollars are bringing you the best return possible.

Measure and Tracking Your Results

Continuously measuring and tracking results of your legal advertising will be the single biggest factor between success and failure. Time and time again, lawyers advertise based upon what they feel is working, what they heard worked for someone else, or what they have done in past. However, measuring your **actual** results is the only way to know for sure what advertising works for you.

So what am I measuring?

The most important measure of your marketing is ROI (Return on investment). Investopedia.com defines ROI as:

"A performance measure used to evaluate the efficiency of an investment or to compare the efficiency of a number of different investments. To calculate ROI, the benefit (return) of an investment is divided by the cost of the investment; the result is expressed as a percentage or a ratio."

The return on investment formula:

$$ROI = \frac{\text{Gain from Investment} - \text{Cost of Investment}}{\text{Cost of Investment}}$$

In other words, for every dollar I invest into a particular advertising source how much can I expect to get back in return. If my ROI is 20% than for every \$100 I invest, I will make an additional \$20 on top of the original \$100.

How Can I Go About Measuring My Advertising?

For web based advertising, installing an analytics program will provide you with the ability to track and measure your results. Google has a [free analytics solution](http://www.google.com/analytics/) (<http://www.google.com/analytics/>) you can use.

When dealing with newspaper, magazine, or television ads there are a number of different ways you can track results. For instance, on each ad you can use a unique URL or website address to send potential clients to. You could have a specific 1-800 number to call based on the ad. This way you can track the responses for each individual advertisement.

This is by no means a comprehensive list of suggestions. The main takeaway is that it is critical you are measuring results so you spend money on what is bringing in the best ROI.

Setup and Critically Examine Your System for Working Incoming Leads

The best advertising in the world won't compensate for the lack of a good system to follow up on the inquiries your ads produce. Here are some things to consider when setting up that system:

Follow up with every lead in a timely fashion and learn more about what the client needs. Never pre-judge a lead until you've taken the time to speak with the potential client about all the details of their issue.

Make it someone's job at the firm to follow up on the leads. Invest in training this individual to help the conversion process.

Communicate the value your firm can offer the consumer. Every potential client wants to know what is in it for them. Make sure you can differentiate your firm and offer a solution to the client's problems.

Understand What You Are Paying For

There are so many different forms of advertising, it is critical to understand what you are actually paying for and what your ROI is. Your interests and the advertisers' interests are not always aligned. Take for example newspaper or television advertising. They make money based on the frequency with which you run your ads, not on the success of the ads. It is up to you to measure the results and understand what you are paying for and what is working.

With internet advertising, this is just as important. Some companies will charge based on CPM, in other words a set amount based on every 1000 impressions of your ad. Others will charge every time

someone clicks on your ad (Google pay per click works this way). Some will charge monthly or yearly subscription fees and others still charge each time you get a lead or phone call from a potential client.

It is critical that you understand and research what you are paying for and then measure the success of each program based on the ROI. We must compare apples to apples to see the effectiveness for each of your advertising efforts.

While branding a firm name is important, the name of the game with advertising is increasing a bottom line. Branding will occur from word of mouth, through your happy former customers. Unless you are Pepsi or Microsoft, paying a lot of money “to get your name out there” without some type of tangible results is a waste of money. Check your ego at the door when you analyze the effectiveness of your advertising.

Target Your Audience – Understand Your Audience and Focus Your Efforts

This is often overlooked when thinking about advertising. A common mistake is to look through our own prism when we design and launch our advertising campaigns. We think, what would appeal to me? What type of advertising would I be interested in? This is all well and good, but not if you aren't the target audience.

Advertising should to appeal to the demographic and audience that needs your services. In addition, you should focus your advertising where this audience will be able to find you. For example, if you are a divorce attorney, showing ads on Nickelodeon isn't targeting the right audience. While this is an extreme and obvious example, it is important to think about.

Spend some time researching where your target audience is looking for you. These places will produce the best ROI.

Hire an Advertising Professional

I have seen some terrible lawyer advertisements over the years. They are easy to spot and do more damage than good for the lawyer. If you have no experience creating professional looking ads for television, internet, newspaper, etc. then find someone who does. This can be the difference between tremendous success and dismal failure. A good advertising professional will also help with other points in this article.