



Law Blogs: How To Combine Information and Compassion

Written on May 17, 2010 by Donna Seyle

I recently came across a post by 16-year-old Nigerian entrepreneur named Onibalusi Bamidele on www.ariwriter.com called Blogging with Influence in 5 Easy Steps. Besides being so moved by the fact that such a young man has been able to comprehend and distill the elements of a good blog, I was left with a bigger question: how do lawyers combine information with compassion?

These are the 5 steps Onibalusi includes:

1. Content: *"Your content is you; you are your content. The power your content can hold, the influence it can add to you should not be underestimated."*
2. Passion: *"Your passion is a building block for your content. If you seriously have passion for what you do, it will definitely reflect in what you write. . . . Your passion has a lot to do with your content (which is a building block to your influence)."*
3. Care: *"Do you care for your readers? Caring for your readers is a great element that should not be neglected if truly you want to have great influence on them."*

4. Authority: *"Let people know you are an authority. You don't need to be subjective but let there be sounds of authority, assurance, and affirmation in anything you write."*
5. Distinction: *"The final step to influential blogging is distinction. You should be able to distinguish yourself from other bloggers. You should be different."*

Any good blog coach will tell you that your blog must reflect who you are so your readers can begin to know and trust you. It must show that you care about your audience, that you're passionate about your subject matter, that you know what you're talking about, and, as if that weren't enough, you must do it differently. When you're talking about law blogging, that is not an easy task.

Grant Griffiths at [Blawging Lawyers](#) puts it this way:

Blogs build trust and reputation "organically" by allowing potential clients to see the people behind the law practice in action, not mediated by slick marketing. Ironically, this is the most powerful form of marketing there is.

By providing information to the public, you become a trusted and reputable resource. Trusted and reputable resources get clients, period. . . It is well-known in marketing and consumer psychology circles that people prefer to do business with other people they like and who are like them. People cannot like you if they don't know you, and a normal Web site doesn't give them a chance to know you and like you.

But we're talking law, here. We're talking about an intellectual exercise that requires considering permutations of thought that challenge the best of minds.

How do you present this kind of information in a blog post that will reach out and touch someone and invite them to rely on you?

Here's some ideas that will help you create a blogging perspective that combines substance with style:

- Have a conversation with your best friend. You are not interacting with your monitor, or even the (hopefully) masses of people that will read your post. You're talking to your best non-lawyer friend, chatting about an interesting situation he/she encountered and wondered how that would be viewed from a legal perspective. It's a conversation at the end of a golf game over a good, cold beer on a beautiful sunny afternoon. Enjoy yourself.
- Assume your friend knows you and trusts you. You've been friends for 15 years. There's a reason for that. You're likable, reasonable and you know your stuff. You know you are held in some esteem by your friend, so there is no reason to shy away from asserting your knowledge with confidence.
- Use a "How to" approach. The majority (I don't know the exact statistics) of online searches start with the phrase "How to. . ." Now, your friend has presented you with this dilemma or desire. Approach your response from a practical point of view. What can/should one do in that situation to resolve the dilemma, or what steps should he/she take to achieve the desired result? You can use some limited legal analysis to give credibility to your advice, but only for that reason. Your

friend won't benefit from a full-blow diatribe on how the courts have viewed the subject, and doesn't really care.

- Embellish the topic with an example. Giving examples of similar situations and their outcomes shows you are really relating to the topic and feel strongly about it, so much so that you remember once about 10 years ago when. . . Just remember it MUST BE FICTIONAL. An amalgamation, perhaps, of several different scenarios. But you must respect and ethical obligations to your clients and your attorney/client privilege, and write accordingly.
- Speak from a preventative point of view. No one wants to get entangled in a lawsuit anymore, it's just no fun, it costs too much money and you hardly ever get what you want, anyway. Give your friend advice about how to be sure to avoid the dilemma in the future, or the most important things he/she must do to prevent the lawsuit monster from visiting when he/she has achieved the desired result.

You can decide to blog because someone told you to, and hate it. Or you can embrace it as an opportunity to help someone, to use your specialized knowledge to advise someone on how to stay out of trouble. The former will never turn into a success story, but the latter surely will. Play with it, have fun with it. No one will laugh(unless you tell jokes) and if they do, you won't know it!

Please share with your friends!