



## A Perspective on Lawyers and Social Media Marketing

Written on December 17, 2009 by [Donna Seyle](#)

I was researching material for this post, which was originally on an entirely different matter, when I came across a blog that stopped me in my tracks. It was both misleading and mean-spirited, not something you see often in the spirit of providing useful information. And so, running the risk that I will get on this blogger's radar (where I certainly don't want to be), I decided to switch gears and talk about a subject that comes up now and then in conversation about lawyers-turned-social-media-marketing-consultants. And the subject is this: why would a lawyer give up his/her practice to become a "snake-oil salesman"?

(I am purposely leaving out the link to this blog because the writer disparages a few people I happen to know and respect for their talents.)

First, let's talk about the things I agree with in the blog:

1. There is no such thing as a social media "expert". There are only advocates, practitioners or consultants who have a greater degree of knowledge of, and creativity with, the use of online marketing techniques;
2. The economic downturn as forced lawyers to seek a career change; and
3. There is no 3. There are only 2.

OK, so let's move on to the genuine question: why WOULD a lawyer leave an esteemed profession and decide to use his/her social media skills to benefit other lawyers? The writer lists several reasons:

1. They were failures as lawyers.
2. They can't find a job in this economic climate that has devastated the legal profession (and your point is. . .?).
3. Although the combination of a legal/social media background seems the perfect fit to be able to customize a social media strategy to the legal profession, most of these people never practiced law long enough to gain that insight.
4. They've been disbarred, sanctioned or suspended.

The writer goes on to point out that they don't even comply with the ethical rules of "full disclosure" to their marketing clients that is required of lawyers when retaining legal clients. (Now, the last time I checked, the requirement of "full disclosure" related to lawyers practicing law, not lawyers offering marketing services.)

And all of this stated by someone, himself an attorney, who holds himself out to be a nationally recognized speaker in the area of – you guessed it – social media. . . hmmm. And your credentials are what?

So back to the question. Here are my top 10 reasons why any lawyer who is active in social media, has used it to market themselves, and believes he/she can help other lawyers use these tools to market their practices would change careers:

1. They don't like practicing law.
2. They really enjoy participating in social media communities.
3. They've discovered new and different ways to use these mediums to create successful marketing strategies.
4. They've found that developing new businesses in the social media arena motivates them to be successful.
5. They would rather work with lawyers than against them.
6. They enjoy writing, speaking and being creative in their use of new marketing tools.
7. They are really excited when they wake up in the morning and realize they don't have to go to court.
8. They hands-down prefer a tweet-up over a local bar dinner.
9. If they stay up all night working, it's because they're on to something and can't stop.
10. The social media world is vibrant, challenging and cutting-edge.

So why do I think this issue is important enough to blog about? Because today, integrating social media into your legal marketing plan is essential to any lawyer's success. In truth, lawyers make good legal social media marketers because they know the rules of the game. A good mix might be to consult with them in combination with traditional marketing professionals. Of course you're going to check out anyone's credentials or recommendations before hiring them to perform these important services. But don't think for one minute that because they've traded in their lawyer's suit for more casual wear that they

are any less smart and clever than your worthy opponent across the courtroom. They're not losing lawyers. They're winning social media. . . experts. (Ha! Sorry, I couldn't resist)

I'd love to hear your perspective.