

Zen & The Art of Legal Networking

INSIGHTS & COMMENTARY ON RELATIONSHIP BUILDING WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL LAWYERS NETWORK

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Webinar Re-cap: Facebook & Twitter for Lawyers with Dave Kerpen of Likeable Media and Nancy Myrland of Myrland Marketing Part I

The ILN has offered a webinar series to our members for the past two years, and in 2010/2011, we offered a three-part series on social networking. In October, we started with, "[Social Networking Strategy & Blogging](#)," with Kevin O'Keefe of LexBlog and in December, we had Freesource's Nathan Egan discuss "[LinkedIn for Lawyers](#)." January's webinar with [Dave Kerpen](#) of [Likeable Media](#) and [Nancy Myrland](#) of [Myrland Marketing](#) focused on Facebook and Twitter for Lawyers.

Nancy kicked off the session with some fantastic information for our audience about Twitter. I'll be splitting my posts into two with Part I focused on Twitter and Part II dealing with Dave's comments on Facebook. Due to some technical difficulties, our webinar didn't record any sound, so I'll be re-capping the presentations based on my (hopefully) excellent memory, and the slide decks of our presenters.

As we mentioned during the intro, Nancy is a social media consultant, speaker and trainer, and a professional marketing advisor, specializing in helping firms, companies and associations grow their business by strengthening relationships with their clients through the strategic use of social media. As one of the earliest adopters of Twitter and one of the most adept at leveraging it, it has been said that Twitter users should be required [to follow Nancy](#) in order to tweet.



Twitter - The Basics

Nancy started with a quick definition of Twitter for those who are unfamiliar with the service - Twitter is considered to be a "micro-blogging service" because users can share messages of up to 140 characters with whomever is following them. She pointed out that anyone can follow you on Twitter, without your permission, and messages are sent in real time.

In its best and highest use, Twitter exists to help build relationships, provide education and has become one of the easiest forms of self-publishing. Nancy then shared some surprising statistics about Twitter:

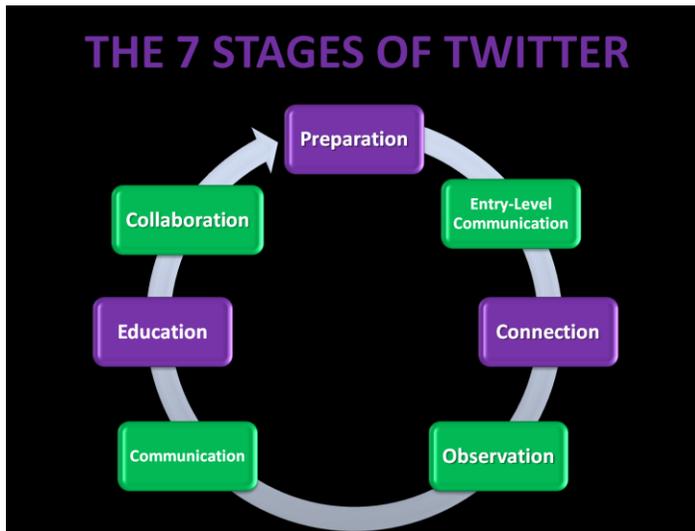
- Twitter has 175 million accounts
- 300,000 new users a day
- 60% of these are outside of the US
- 180 million unique visitors a month
- 95 million tweets are sent every day
- Over 600 million search queries every day
- 81 of the AmLaw 100 are using Twitter
- 52% of Twitter users update their status every day
- Top languages are English, Portuguese, Japanese and Spanish
- Top countries using Twitter are the US, India, Japan, Germany, UK, Brazil, Canada, Indonesia, Australia, and Spain

Nancy then went on to talk about what Twitter could do for the audience, giving my favorite answer - "It depends." She said it's hard to know exactly what Twitter can do for one person, attorney or firm unless first assessing the person's personality to see if this type of networking is suitable for them.

She added that social networking takes commitment and consistency, and emphasized that having a plan or being open to having a plan for integrating Twitter and social media into an existing marketing and business development activities is essential.

The bottom line according to Nancy? "Twitter is a contact sport - it's not a networking tool to be taken lightly, or to sign up for, then stop by once a month or less. Just like with any networking activity that we plan on bearing fruit, it takes proper care and feeding."

Nancy has developed what she calls the 7 Stages of Twitter, which she shared with the audience:



1. **Preparation:** The first stage involves setting yourself up to use Twitter, including reserving your personal name (with underscores, if necessary). Nancy cautioned against using clever names, tricky monikers or logos that would be difficult for people to remember and recommended reserving your name even if you're not sure you'll use it yet. The next step is to build a good profile. With a limited number of characters to describe who you are, the key is to be direct. Nancy recommends letting people know what you do, where you live, and with whom you want to work. She also suggests giving a good link to a blog or website where followers can go to learn more about you. Another important tip is to upload a photo before ever following anyone else, so that other users will take you seriously.
2. **Entry-level communication:** Nancy calls this stage "entry-level" because users are just testing the waters at this point. At this stage, she recommends posting a few simple messages ("tweets") so that when you begin to follow people in the next stage and they look at your profile, they will see the substance that is behind you. A good introductory message, Nancy says, would be "Hi, just joining Twitter...looking forward to connecting with others who care about legal marketing and the law," or "Hoping to understand Twitter etiquette through observation soon so I can understand how and whom to follow."
3. **Connection:** Nancy mentions that the next two stages (connection and observation) co-exist, but she discussed them separately. In terms of connecting, she recommends looking for people that you want to learn from, teach, have fun talking to, have as clients, or hire, depending on what your goals are. To do this, you can search with specific terms. Additionally, you can look at the connections of the people you choose to follow for additional connection possibilities.
4. **Observation:** While connecting, she also recommends observing how other people behave on Twitter. However, Nancy also cautions that "it is just their way, not necessarily the only way." So she suggests using your observations to develop your own style for using social media.
5. **Communication:** Stage 5 is about communication, where, as Nancy says "social media begin to become fun and useful." This is the stage where users should start to say something, either by commenting on something someone else has said, jumping into a conversation between users, or making statements about what you're working on or reading. Another suggestion Nancy had was to share and forward what other users have

said - this is called a "retweet" or "RT." Additionally, an excellent way of communicating with your followers is to ask their opinion or post a link to a blog post or article you are reading or have written. This leads into Nancy's next stage, which is...

6. **Education:** The education stage is both about teaching, and being educated by, your followers. Nancy says (and I agree!) that "this is one of the richest, most amazing growth tools available to us...our growth and that of our followers."
7. **Collaboration:** The 7th and final stage is collaboration. Nancy indicates that this is where your efforts in the previous six stages begin to pay off, because you are developing relationships with some of your contacts and followers. This can result in referring and receiving business.

After providing this introduction to Twitter and how to use it, Nancy shared with the audience a case study for a Twitter success, as well as some comments from lawyers that she is connected to through Twitter.

Kenan Farrell, Attorney - Case Study

Nancy said:

"One night a few years ago on Twitter, someone conversationally posted a casual question on Twitter, wondering whether a certain Social Media term was copyrighted. A few attorneys replied, saying how it could be researched, or where to find it. Kenan posted shortly thereafter that, in his initial search of databases, that no, this term didn't appear to be registered, but that other databases would also have to be checked. This prompted the original questioner to ask another question, then to begin to converse with him over the next few weeks about general issues. This person grew to *know, like and trust* Kenan (emphasis mine) because he stepped forward that first night, then spent time conversing and showing his human and professional side over the next few weeks to this person. This person ended up emailing Kenan to ask what it would take for him to conduct an official search, then to file an application to register a trademark for her. Over the next 6 months, they worked together on a few matters."

Nancy pointed out that not every connection and relationship will automatically lead to business, but used this example to show that it is possible to use Twitter as a referral source.

A Few Comments from Lawyers on Twitter

As Nancy had mentioned during the 7 Stages of Twitter, an effective use of the tool is to "crowdsource" or ask your followers for input on a question or decision. The day before the presentation, Nancy had asked her followers to talk about what they like about Twitter. She got a few responses, some from her direct network and some from connections her followers have, because they had shared her question through a retweet:

- [Tom Valenti](#): "For me it gives me the chance to talk with and meet local people and [communicate] with people around the world."
- [Jon Lewis](#): "The main reason I like Twitter is the ability to meet people through new technology. I have met over 20 people in the Birmingham area as a result of Twitter." Additionally, Jon was featured in the Birmingham news because of an app he developed in

connection with a Twitter follower.

- [Jim Denver](#): "I like searching twitter to make subject matter connections & for research on business issues."
- [Troy Foster](#): "Love that I'm able to nurture client [relationships] by providing helpful timely information of use to them [without] them paying!"

Okay, I'm Sold. Now What??

Nancy then gave some advice to the audience on some key questions she anticipated them having, such as "Whom should I follow?" Giving the caveat that it depends on the targets identified in an individual's marketing plan, she suggested friends, attorneys, referral sources, potential clients, clients, the media, and thought leaders.

Next, Nancy talked about what users should share with their audience - she said that people often ask her what they should say and share that they don't think that they have enough interesting things to say. She tells them that they'll be surprised by what they have to say, and that they shouldn't put so much pressure on themselves. Some suggestions for tweets include:

- Hello
- Share, or ReTweet blog posts
- Comments about blog posts
- Relevant news articles
- Discuss practice area content
- Career developments: Your & others

She added some additional topics, but prefaced these by saying that a user should only tweet these after they've "earned the right to promote." Earning the right to promote means that a user has already demonstrated his or her interest in others, and has taken the time to observe Twitter etiquette, before they start to self-promote.

Nancy compared this to going to a cocktail party, saying that you wouldn't walk up to a group of people and just start telling them how wonderful you are. Instead, you'd listen, say hello, figure out what they're talking about, and provide commentary, add insight, and ask questions about the current conversation. Twitter is just the same.

After you've earned the right to promote, you can talk about:

- Something you're working on
- Webinars
- Firm's anniversary
- Community initiatives-photos
- Mergers or laterals
- Your blog posts

Drinking from a Firehose

Nancy pointed out that all of this information about Twitter can feel like you're drinking from a firehose, and can quickly become overwhelming and time consuming if you allow it. To avoid either spending all your time networking or becoming so overwhelmed that you don't use social networking tools at all, Nancy suggested some ideas to help prioritize

and manage your time.

1. Write out a marketing action plan - once you have a plan with goals and targets, it's easier to decide how to integrate social media. And with a plan, it's easier to maintain focus.
2. Use a Twitter management tool, such as [Tweetdeck](#) or [Hootsuite](#). Nancy recommended Tweetdeck as her personal favorite, because you can build columns of contacts and categorize them to your personal preference. I agree with her wholeheartedly - I only use Twitter.com to follow or "list" people ("listing" is a feature that Twitter rolled out a few months ago that allows you to separate your followers by self-designated categories. Other users can then "follow" these lists without having to follow the individuals included in them.)

Two Important Points About Social Media Marketing

What's really important to know about social media marketing? Nancy says that it's 1) integrated and 2) it's effects are cumulative.

Integrated

Social media marketing is coordinated and complimentary. For example, your firm can do a news release about laterals, and a member of the firm could write a blog post about the same. They can follow this up with a tweet saying that the firm is excited about their new hires (linking to the post or news release), and add it to their Facebook page. Perhaps they do a short video with the new hires and the firm's managing partner, and send a LinkedIn post to their group. They can also include this in their firm newsletters. In this way, they reach a wide audience.

Cumulative

Social media marketing also builds over time. People like instant gratification, but social media isn't direct response. It's important for a firm to have goals, and to write tweets and messages of quality - however, don't get hung up on always writing something epic. A key to social media marketing is follow-through: if someone responds to you in some way (either on Twitter, or a comment on your blog post or Facebook page), it's essential to engage with them. This is particularly important if the comment is negative - it must be addressed; don't just delete it. It's also essential to have patience, because social media marketing takes time to show results, like any good business development activity.

In-House Counsel

Nancy finished with some important statistics to help the audience decide whether they and their firms should be paying attention to social media as part of their communications' strategy:

- 53% of in-house counsel expect their consumption of industry news and information via new media to increase in the next 6-12 months*
- Professional use: LinkedIn, Blogs, Wikipedia*
- An increasing number want info on their PDAs and Smart Phones
- Personal use: Facebook, Wikipedia, YouTube*
- 43% cited blogs as leading source for news*
- 25% use social networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook & LinkedIn*

- 50% use LinkedIn*
- 68% are on Facebook*

(*From [Greentarget, American Lawyer & Zeughauser study](#))

Moving Forward

So with all of this information, how should the audience move forward? Nancy advised them to strengthen their weaknesses and make sure that their commitment to social media is secure. She suggested deciding who would be in charge of social media marketing, then build a plan that includes social media guidelines. Finally "Communicate, communicate, communicate!"

Nancy also recommended some best practices:

- Learn social media etiquette
- Add value
- Don't over-automate
- Create a plan
- Integrate social with overall
- Commitment
- Long-term
- Proper care & feeding
- Think relationships

Nancy ended with the recommendation that social media users "ask not what social media can do for you, but what you can do for others." As with any referral source, the most successful social media efforts are about finding the people you want to be connected to, and then identifying ways that YOU can help THEM. Some of these including retweeting their content, answering questions, linking to their articles or posts that are helpful, and whatever else might be consistent with the brand you're trying to communicate.

If you'd like to get in touch with Nancy, you can follow her on Twitter via the link above or:

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- YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/nancymyrland>

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