



Marketing, Managing and Growing a Profitable Law Firm

When Marketing Your Law Firm Online, Remember The Lurkers

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When marketing your law firm online, your focus is on the prospective clients who take action to contact you - either through a form, a phone call, or email marketing opt-in. But that ignores a whole segment of valuable readers.

When I started blogging as a part of my online legal marketing plans, it was as if I was shouting down a sewer in the middle of Manhattan. All around me there was noise, but my shouts brought back only echos of my own voice.

For months I blogged (and produced a podcast) about issues central to my field of practice, news of the day, and other things that would be important to anyone who was interested in the solutions I provided.

And for months, nothing happened. I'm glad I was a solo at the time, because any business partner would have told me that the methods I was using to market my law firm online were just not working.

Go back to AdWords, he or she would have said. Hit the Yellow Pages hard! Call back that TV sales rep!

I tracked my web analytics programs on a daily basis, looking for clues as to why it wasn't working. I saw a trickle of visitors coming to the blog, and a few subscribers to the podcast.

But the phone wasn't ringing, and my email box was still empty. I started doubting my strategies - how could I have been so off-base?

When all you have is a hammer ... yada, yada, yada

You know the old saying that when all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail? Well, that's where I was - holding a big, stupid hammer and searching for nails in vain.

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The blog was designed to get people to call my law firm and hire me to help them. That's the goal of any legal marketing effort, and I'd been sold on the notion that blogging was the ticket to ride online. But it wasn't working.

Sure, I wasn't spending any money on it, but this was sucking up at least an hour of my day - every single day (I was blogging on weekends at the time).

Maybe there was a better way, or I was just doing it all wrong.

The first phone call shattered my expectations.

You know where this is going, right? Of course you do, smart reader that you are.

The woman on the other end of the line explained that she'd been reading my blog for six months and just hadn't been emotionally ready to call. But now that she was armed with the information she needed, she wanted to hire me.

Funny thing was, the question of price never came up. Not during that call, nor during the initial consultation. She was my client before she even came into the office. Heck, she was my client before she picked up the phone to call me. She'd been my client for six months - all that remained were the formalities of a retainer agreement.

That's when I realized that marketing your law firm online wasn't about the conversions, it was about the engagement.

In fact, a one-time reader who called me wasn't as good of a client as someone who'd been reading without action for months.

The silent readers are sometimes the most engaged.

They read your blog, come back a few times, and compile information. Maybe they go elsewhere to compare notes, then they come back to check in. Your name becomes known, your updates show up in their inbox day in and day out (hence the reason why you want to create content regularly) and they learn.

That's legal marketing in a nutshell, folks - the gradual process of education, trust-building, and creation of the building blocks of engagement.

As someone becomes more entrenched in your world, you become friends of a sort. Not the "let's go for pizza" sort of friends, but two people who rely upon one another for something. You want their attention, they want your help. Perhaps your reader is shy, isn't ready, isn't convinced that they need you (or that you're worthy of their business). Whatever the reason, it's an incubation period just

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like for any relationship.

At the very least, the engaged lurker will think of you as the "go to" person for trustworthy information. When it comes time to make a hiring decision or a referral, your name rolls off the tongue rather than anyone else's. You are the solution, plain and simple.

Now I've got a question for you - every one of you who is reading those words. What have you learned about marketing your law firm here? What have your experiences been in your own online legal marketing efforts? What are your experiences building relationships with your potential clients?

Jay S. Fleischman is a consumer bankruptcy lawyer practicing in New York City, as well as an [online legal marketing expert](#) who helps solo and small-firm lawyers get more of the clients they want to work with.



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