



The Single Most-Important Question to Ask About Your Marketing...

I read a discussion recently detailing the many questions a law firm should ask a potential website developer. Dozens of potentially enlightening questions were raised and considered. As expected, the questions focused on **Design** issues like color and layout, or **Technical** issues like links, URLs, and hosting. But no one mentioned, the single most-important question:

"How is this going to make us MONEY?"

Whenever you're discussing redesigning your website, **THAT** is, the fundamental question you need directly answered. In fact, you need to answer that question regarding **EVERY** marketing tool or tactic you create or use.

Your firm must remember, in this and every other economy, is that Marketing's job is to generate revenue. Law firms have a variety of potentially powerful tools at their disposal to accomplish this, including a website. Most lawyers, however, do not realize that they can use them to seek **greatness**.

A website overhaul is one of the few opportunities a law firm has to climb out above the competition. We can use it as the hook to develop market dominance - a powerful winning strategy. We can't let the firm squander this rare opportunity by settling for a website that's just a newer, prettier, or more feature-rich implementation of an ineffectual strategy.

In a couple LMA presentations I gave last week, I discussed how **law firms get exactly the marketing they deserve**.

Lawyers who believe it's "just marketing," or "just a website," and that these tools can't directly generate any revenue, will get mediocre marketing that WON'T. That's exactly what they *should* get.

It's a shame - they'll achieve their low expectations by hiring weak marketers, or ham-stringing the skilled ones. They will never achieve beyond their second-rate expectations because their archaic opinions have made true success impossible. Marketing will thus remain "overhead," which is easy to slash when the firm wants to save money. Their marketers will get no respect, a limited budget, and tenuous tenure.

Firms that WANT great marketing usually GET it. They hire talented people and give them the budget and latitude necessary to achieve their high expectations. They outperform the market. They have greater job satisfaction. **They make more money.**



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Of course, most law firms today don't demand great marketing. Most of the firms that come to Fishman Marketing don't think that they want "great marketing," they simply want to improve something they currently have -- for example they want their tired, old website to be less embarrassing. As far as they know, they would be satisfied simply to update the design and slap photos of smiling lawyers onto the home page.

They don't know any better. Frankly, it's not their job to know better, they haven't had the class. Someone has to TEACH them.

We must provide the education necessary to elevate their expectations -- to give them what they NEED, instead of what they WANT. Someone needs to teach the marketing class they didn't get in law school. If you can't seem to do it inside your own firm, if your message isn't getting through to them, then change how you're teaching them. If that still doesn't work, then bring in an outside consultant who CAN teach them, or drag them to local Legal Marketing Association (LMA) meetings to learn more about it. **The more educated they are, the better decisions they can make.**

There are no "stupid marketing partners or "too-conservative" committees, there are only uneducated ones. Lawyers are smart; if they won't do what you know they should do, it's because they don't understand it well enough yet.

You need to teach them.

I've never met a marketing committee that can't learn sophisticated marketing strategies or techniques.

I've told the story of how I thought my first Marketing Partner was an idiot because he "didn't get it" when he shot down what I thought was an obviously good idea. Later, I realized that HE wasn't the idiot, but rather *I* was -- because I hadn't taught him enough about that particular topic to enable him to make an informed decision.

Once I realized that the failing was really MINE, I completely overhauled how I pitched ideas to him - and to every other lawyer and marketing committee in the past 20 years. Today, I get most of my new ideas implemented, nearly always in "very conservative" firms. You can too, if you first teach the lawyers what they need to know.

So, to connect this rant back up - a website is the tool you can use to back into an exciting new strategy, or brand, or message. It's the hook you can use to develop new social media tools or a wide array of new marketing tactics. Don't waste it by discussing colors, or design, or functionality, or even budget.



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Don't bother discussing budget until you know precisely how you're going to be able to use the website to generate significant additional revenue. If your money-making strategy demands a website with expensive bells and whistles, then it's worth spending a lot of money developing it because you see where the ROI is.

If you just want a slightly prettier version of your non-strategic online-brochure website, showing photos of a skyline, column, your smiling lawyers, or other similarly lame cliché, then at least hire someone cheap to develop it. No reason to throw good money after bad.

However, if you're ready to be great, with the right plan, it can all start with a website...

Good luck.

