



## Should you use QR codes in you law firm marketing?

QR (Quick Response) codes have been popping up everywhere over the past few years. Some businesses have been in such a rush to be a part of the technological in crowd that QR codes have appeared in some fairly ridiculous places, like highway billboards and airplane banners. Who, exactly, is going to scan those codes?

Some of this over-coding is likely the result of the relative ease of creating and printing a code. Anyone can create a free QR code online – directing people to the url of their choice – that can be printed in high resolution or distributed digitally.

There has also been some buzz recently over a ScanLife study that showed scanning of QR codes increased by 157% in Q1 2012 over Q1 2011. These are impressive numbers. In context, scanning in 2011 was low, around 5% of smart phone users. The jump still represents a relatively low number.

Even with the seeming ubiquity of those little barcode squares, there is disagreement over whether the technology is useful enough to fully catch on and achieve longevity as a marketing tool. In an editorial on mashable.com, Joe Barocas argues that the codes, while cool at first, can actually become a barrier to communication. If they are not placed in an easy to scan location or do not offer any reward for the scanning effort, they may actually turn people away.

Like any other marketing tool, QR codes can can be integrated into an overall strategy if executed correctly. Obviously, you firm wants to spend its marketing dollars in an effective manner. So when in the arena of law firm marketing should your firm use a QR code?

1. If your firm focuses on an appropriate practice area. QR Codes work better for some practice areas than they do for others. Attorneys who deal with certain types of business clients or technology related law would be better able target prospects with QR codes than attorneys who focus on elder law or personal bankruptcy, for example. If your ideal client is unlikely to scan the code, or worse to be confused by it, leave it off.
2. If you can offer a real benefit when the prospect scans the code. Part of consumer annoyance with QR codes stems from the anti-climax of a non-reward upon scanning. If someone sees a code, gets interested, takes the time to scan, and then is simply taken to a website without any special benefit or even acknowledgement of how they arrived there, their interest is instantly lost. You may have even hindered your ability to reach them in the future.

QR codes should take a prospect to a targeted page that recognizes what they did to get there. The page should offer something useful like a free ebook or exclusive blog content – something that does not leave the scanner feeling ripped off.





3. As part of an overall marketing strategy, thoughtfully placed. Studies have shown that those who do scan QR codes are more likely to do so at home. Place QR codes on materials that people will have available and that are easy to scan, like brochures or in some cases business cards.

4. For business to business marketing. More attorneys are beginning to use QR codes on a digital business card through a Vizibility account. Vizibility allows you to create a SearchMe link and personalized QR code that take scanners to your social networking and online profiles. This creates a way for you to show off hand picked information about yourself and to direct colleagues and clients to network with you online.

When you ask a prospect to do something, even something minor like taking the time to scan a code, you must recognize their efforts. If you use QR codes to create value, they can be a helpful law firm marketing tool.

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