



## HOW TO WRITE LEGAL CONTENT THAT PEOPLE WILL READ

I wrote recently about how [the goal of any law firm website](#) is *to convince a defined audience that you can solve their problem and do it better than your competitors*. All of your law firm website's content should further this goal in some way.

To develop content that will reach your goal, you need to do three important things:

1. Know your audience;
2. Know your audience; and
3. Know your audience.

**Your law firm website will never reach its potential unless your content is directed to a clearly-defined audience.**

Before we go too far, let me be clear that by "audience" I mean "people." As in *human beings*. Too much content on law firm websites is directed more toward search engines than people. Content that reads like this:

**Bankruptcy law in Chicago** is practiced by our **Chicago bankruptcy attorney**, who knows the **Illinois law on bankruptcy**. You should contact our **bankruptcy lawyer in Chicago** immediately for help with **bankruptcy law in Illinois**.

Some law firm websites use content of this nature in hopes of snagging a stray ranking for a long-tail keyword. Not only is this unlikely to work, it is incredibly short-sighted. It damages your credibility and shows no value to the client.

It *is* okay to place a few strategic keywords here and there (more on that in my keyword research for lawyer series), but don't write primarily for search engines. Develop your content for people. Maybe people that will someday hire you. Maybe centers of influence that will share your content. Maybe your parents, who you want to impress with your success in life. Whatever. Just know who they are before you start and direct your content to them.

One of the best ways to target your content is to put a virtual face on your reader. Since you cannot know the exact characteristics of each potential reader, you should think in terms of *personas*. A persona is a fictional character that shares the characteristics of the *majority* of your target market. When you write with a persona in mind, your content is more likely to be targeted to your audience's needs, desires, and interests.

To develop your personas, ask a few questions to help you identify the key characteristics of your target audience:

- Gender – Is your target audience male or female?
- Education – What level of education has your target audience reached?
- Age – How old is your target audience?
- Income Level – What is the average income level of your target audience?
- Interests – What interests do members of your target audience share that also relate to your site?
- Common Enemy – What aversions or prejudices do members of your target audience share?

The answer to these questions can shape the overall tone and content of your law firm website. It is best to answer them up-front. (Note: For practical ways to research and develop your personas, stay tuned for future installments of my [Link Building for Lawyers](#) series.)

If you do a good job of listening, your understanding of your target audience will evolve over time. As you learn more about your audience, you will be better able to identify their needs, desires, and interests. Use what you learn to focus your content on meeting your audience's needs. Let your visitors know that you understand and can solve their problems, then watch them convert to paying clients.

To keep up to speed, [sign up for my newsletter](#) to get weekly updates by e-mail or [subscribe via RSS](#).

**About Jack Falconberg:** I am an SEO and internet marketing strategist for the law firm vertical. I spend a lot of time testing various ways to drive traffic to websites (search engine optimization) and to create experiences for visitors that will help them become paying customers (conversion rate optimization). I also [set up law firm blogs for free](#). Follow me on [Twitter](#), connect with me on [LinkedIn](#) and [Google+](#), or subscribe by [RSS](#) or [e-mail](#).