

SEO Tips for Optimizing JD Supra Profiles

Steve Matthews | August 2009

One of the best ways to achieve higher rankings within the search engines is to create a network of inbound links that are trusted and aligned with your service offerings. Most contributors understand how JD Supra helps to simplify the marketing of publications and work product (<http://scoop.jdsupra.com/2009/03/articles/law-firm-marketing/where-does-jd-supra-distribute-my-work/>), but the site also plays an important role in helping to diversify your underlying link network.

The hub of any lawyer's presence on JD Supra (<http://www.jdsupra.com/>) is their profile page. From a search marketing perspective, contributors should be concerned with two objectives. First, that their profile is constructed in a way that supports keyword targets for their core areas of practice and geographical targets. And second, that they create link structures that connect in both directions between their JD Supra profile page and their other web properties.

How can you do that? Here are some tips to get you started:

1. Know the Search Terms People Use

One of the basic elements of any law firm SEO program is to understand what people search for. The starting point I recommend for most is the Google Keyword research tool (<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>) which can show the volume of searches conducted each month and, just as important, the keyword order people type most frequently into the search engines. I also recommend that firms create a master spreadsheet to identify and track their ongoing search targets. It adds structure to the process, and makes setting web-marketing priorities much easier.

2. Describe Your Practice or Organization

The Practice/Organization Description is one of the most important elements of your JD Supra profile. In terms of length, I would suggest between three and five paragraphs of text. Maybe six. Once you know the keyword search order of your target phrases, I would recommend embedding a few target phrases into your practice description, but with a note of caution. Including a target phrase once and without altering marketing copy can help build subject relevance. Including the same phrase repeatedly not only looks spammy, but it won't help connect with the reader, and can actually hurt your optimization efforts. Simply put: don't do it.

3. Link In to Your JD Supra Profile

Like other elements of your firm's web presence, creating link connectivity is key. Wherever possible, build your JD Supra profile into the link structure of your web network. If you're a solo practitioner, use JD Supra

(Continued on page 2)

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widgets to display your personal document collection. If you're a blogger, post a small announcement when you release/add a new document. And if you're marketing a Practice Group or the larger firm, try aggregating documents from like-minded lawyers into substantive collections that reflect well on the firm's expertise.

4. Create a 'Full' Profile

Be sure to make your JD Supra profile as complete as possible, and not to leave fields blank. Mark off all of the Areas of Practice your firm works in, and identify all the locations your firm serves. Search engines are looking to establish topical and geographic relevance between linking pages; so using these features to embed relevant text into your JD Supra profile will help by establishing that common keyword context. For example, it's valuable to have both your firm website and JD Supra profile pages reference 'Chicago, Illinois' if that's the city in which you practice.

5. Expand Your Document Collection

Every document you post to JD Supra means a larger link network behind your profile. Increased link connections not only support higher rankings for your profile page, but will also pass along that link value to firm websites outside of JD Supra. Consider embedding links within your firm's MS Word or PDF submissions back to the firm website, practice pages, and lawyer author profiles. Every document added means an expanded digital footprint; which can help expose and support a firm's entire network of web properties. It also helps your submissions rank better for internal JD Supra searches!

6. Protect Your Firm Identity

When someone searches your firm's name, what do they find? Even firms with solid web marketing programs will normally only control a couple entries on the first page of their search results. One of the advantages of a JD Supra profile that some lawyers might not consider, is that it provides an additional firm-controlled website that appears in those results. In good times, it provides additional context about the firm's services. And in times of trouble when a negative profile event occurs, the firm has an additional web-asset providing protection for searches on the firm name. With any luck, an asset that helps push that unflattering newspaper story off of page-one.

7. Go Premium

JD Supra is a great open platform for sharing legal document collections, but they're also a business. A business that includes providing increased exposure for premium account holders. Going premium helps your firm's SEO marketing by including profile links back to your firm's websites. It also means the JD Supra team actively works to create exposure for both your profile page and your content.

*Full disclosure: I've worked with JD Supra since their beginning, but I give my word on this one as an SEO: it's money well spent.

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