

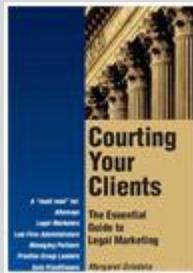


Legal Marketing Strategies

Social Media Tips for BP Oil Spill Defense Lawyers



Margaret Grisdela



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By Margaret Grisdela

While the plaintiff's bar has been quick to launch Internet marketing campaigns designed to attract victims of the Gulf oil spill, defense firms have been slow to respond online. This article provides a brief overview of BP oil spill litigation, with suggestions on how defense firms can use social media to attract new business from named defendants.

Hundreds of cases have been filed in federal courts against BP, Transocean, Halliburton, and Cameron International from April 20, 2010 through close of business on Friday, June 4th, according to a quick search of the PACER docket database.

Oil spill litigation covers the Gulf states, and involves a wide range of claims. The most popular actions as identified by the "nature of suit" in the federal docket database include:

- 120: Marine Contracts
- 160: Stockholders' Suits
- 190: Other Contracts
- 240: Torts to Land
- 290: All other Real Property
- 340: Torts, Personal Injury: Marine
- 345: Torts, Personal Injury: Marine Product Liability
- 365: Torts, Personal Injury: Product Liability
- 380: Other Personal Property Damage
- 893: Environmental Matters

BP has named Kirkland & Ellis as a lead defense firm, with Arnold & Porter and WilmerHale also providing services, while Transocean is working with Skadden Arps, Preis & Roy, and Sutherland Asbill according to the *Wall Street Journal* Law Blog.

Frequently the defense law firm is not named when a case is initially filed with the court, meaning that many of these cases may be subject to intense competition from other Big Law, mid-sized firms, or even solo practitioners who act as local counsel.

Social media campaigns can help to increase search engine visibility and attract qualified prospects for defense firms that write and speak about oil spill litigation.

Five ways that defense law firms can use social media for oil spill business development:

1. Build a blog, or write a series of focused articles for an existing blog.
2. Use the RSS feed from your blog to automatically feed other social media outlets, like LinkedIn and Twitter.
3. Use LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com) for online networking. Look for existing connections to the law firms that have already been appointed, with the intention of an introduction for possible overflow or conflict work. Join groups and answer questions relating to the oil spill.
4. Get involved in online discussions on sites like Martindale-Hubbell Connected (www.martindale.com/connected), which offers an Emerging Issues forum for the BP oil spill.
5. Self-publish on legal sites like JD Supra (www.jdsupra.com) for greater Internet visibility.

An essential first step is to create a strategy for your social media campaign. Identify your goals, objectives, target audience, and success measures. Equally important, create an outline of 10-20 topics related to your area of expertise as it relates to oil spill litigation. This type of an editorial calendar helps you organize your efforts, assign multiple attorneys to assist in writing articles, and plan a publication schedule.

More on Social Media, the BP Oil Spill, and Law Firm Marketing ...

Margaret Grisdela will be addressing this topic at a June 11, 2010 marketing presentation at the Florida Liability Claims Conference in Orlando, Florida sponsored by the Florida Defense Lawyers Association (www.fdma.org). She is available for other speaking engagements as well, and invites your comments.

Legal Marketing Strategies Courtesy of Legal Expert Connections, Inc.

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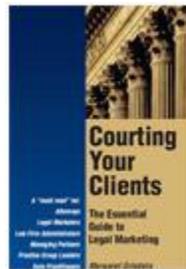
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Remember, never stop marketing! The author invites your questions and comments.