



5 Lawyer Marketing Mistakes To Avoid





According to Consumer Reports, the average American is exposed to over 3,000 advertisements per day as corporations spend approximately \$620 billion each year in the global marketplace to sell their products.

Do you find yourself or your practice pumping money into this annual total while continually getting poor results on your advertisements? Most lawyers believe that if they simply saturate the market with ads then they will be able to get more leads. Well, in today's advertising world, this approach is COMPLETELY wrong.

Do you ever ask these questions of your lawyer advertisements?

- **Why am I losing money on my ads?**
- **How come I can't generate any leads?**
- **What are my ads even about?**

These thoughts are common to anyone spending money on lawyer marketing. With that said, I want to discuss five common mistakes that lawyers and practices make that prevent them from implementing the kinds of advertising that they desire. I believe if you stop making these five mistakes you will begin to reap the benefits and generate more leads.

Forgetting To Do Research

Many lawyers spend too much money on marketing and advertising, combined with poor placement, because they have not done the proper research ahead of time. Advertising is a learning process and with the current state of the business world, it is becoming more about adapting to your audience. Research is important in order to understand the tendencies of your target audience, what tactics work the best, and how to budget an effective campaign.

Unless you have a huge marketing budget, chances are you can handle this work yourself. However, your marketing goals will never be met without researching advertising options, pricing, markets exposure, etc. One wrong move can entirely damage a campaign.

What Am I Researching?

For starters, you may not be familiar with the advertising process and its terminology so it might be necessary to do some preliminary research before you get going. More often than not, the biggest hurdle for lawyers is to understand the advertising climate that they are attempting to enter.

Then you should start researching the types of options that are available to you. Would your ads work the best on television, radio, Internet, or print? For example, if you decide to run a television advertisement, you should find out pricing and all about viewers' demographics. If you're thinking about running an advertisement in a newspaper or magazine, you should find out about pricing and display options, readership, and distribution. All of these elements are essential in helping you decide which direction to take your campaign.

Moreover, you might want to look at other lawyer advertisements to see what they are doing wrong and what they are doing well. Do you see more advertisements running locally or nationally? The point is, you must research every aspect of your marketing campaigns in order to get the type of lead generation you are looking for. Otherwise, you will be wasting your time and money.

How Do I Do This Research?

With the reach of technology today, most of this research is simple. Most media outlets post pricing and availability options on their websites or you can easily give them a call for more information. Also, there are options for gathering statistics on previous campaigns and other lawyers. If you don't think you can do all of this research while tending to your clients at the same time, then you might be over-advertising or you might need to hire someone to help.

Failing to Distinguish Yourself

Like I said before, we are bombarded by advertisements and marketing messages each day. In fact, we have gotten so good at drowning out most of these messages that we don't even notice most of them. One of the biggest mistakes that lawyers make is failing to distinguish themselves and their campaigns from everything else.

Most lawyers, whether they do adequate research or not, fail because they just plug their information into the general mold for lawyer advertisements. They see a competitor's commercial or print advertisements and replace it with their information instead.

Marketing expert Seth Godin provides a great analogy for this in his book, Purple Cow: Transform Your Business by Being Remarkable. If you drive through a cow pasture, you hardly notice the brown cows after a while. They all look exactly alike, so you don't pay any attention to them. But what if there was a purple cow in the same field? You would certainly notice that, wouldn't you?

The whole point is that if you distinguish yourself from all of the other lawyer advertisements you will get noticed more and be able to generate more leads.

How Can I Distinguish Myself?

Godin also talks about a company called Little Miss Matched. They sell socks that offer crazy patterned socks and miss-matched designs. This company gets much more exposure and buzz than others because it is breaking a social norm.

The best way to distinguish your lawyer advertisements is to break the current norms of lawyer marketing. Use caps in your print campaign or come up with a catchy headline. You will see much better results if you generate an original “selling proposition” to attract your audience.

Trying To Do Too Much In One Ad

Often lawyers screw up a brilliant marketing campaign by trying to pack their commercials or advertisements with too much information, especially in a small amount of time. If you overload your prospects then they will get confused and dismiss all the information that you are offering.

The best thing to do when creating your advertisements is to come up with one to three main messages that you want to get across and try to incorporate them into your message. In some cases, you may only want to include one overall message, whichever is easier for the client to understand and take action on.

Ads Do Not Encourage People To Take Action

Lawyers often carry out marketing programs under the misconception that if they offer general information about their practice, then prospective clients will figure out the rest. Instead, you need force customers to take action because without this then everything else is useless.

Depending on how you develop your marketing message and how you deliver information directly relates to whether your customers focus on your message or tune it out. I would say that when it comes to lawyer marketing, the most influential messages are

SPECIFIC and DIRECT. They leave nothing to your reader's imagination. Moreover, you'll find that the more information you provide, the more your prospects believe your message. For example, which statement is more persuasive?

1. Lawyers who market their practices increase their caseload
2. Lawyers who market their practices increase their caseload by 15%
3. Lawyers who market their practices increase their caseload from 250 to 750 per year.

Don't pay attention to the numbers I used because they are made-up, but here is the point: Statement one offers no specifics. It may be true, but it contains no facts. It is nothing more than an unsupported claim. Statement two is stronger due to the percentage, which is clearly an eye opener. Yet statement three is the most persuasive because it gives exact numbers that are easy to understand.

When readers understand what they are being told then they are more likely to take action. If you are direct and persuasive your advertisement carries more weight and power. Tell your prospects exactly what you want them to do and use specifics because it increases your credibility.

Failing to Measure and Track Your Results

I saved this mistake for the end, because it is by far the most common and usually the most detrimental to any lawyer marketing campaign. If you aren't measuring and tracking the results of your advertisements on a consistent basis then you are bound to repeat the same mistakes over and over again. Without measuring results you have no idea whether prospects are responding to your tactics and if you are getting any kind of return on your investment.

How Can I Measure My Results?

For web based advertising, installing an analytics program will provide you with the ability to track and measure your results. Google has a free analytics program you can use (<http://www.google.com/analytics/>).

When dealing with newspapers, magazines, or television advertising there are a number of ways to track your results. For instance you can use a unique URL or website address to send potential clients to, you could have a specific 1-800 number to call based on the advertisement, or you can tell prospects to mention an advertisement when contacting you for an incentive. These are just some of the ways you can track your results for individual advertisements.

How Can I Measure My Return on Investment?

The return on investment formula is:

$$\text{ROI} = \frac{\text{(Gain On Investment-Cost of Investment)}}{\text{Cost of Investment}}$$

Basically, what this formula says is, for every dollar I invest into a particular advertising source, how much can I expect to get back in return. If ROI is 20% then for every \$100 I invest, I will make an additional \$20. This is an easy way to calculate and understand if your campaign is effective and properly placed.