

From the Great Jakes Blog

Cosmetic Website Changes vs. Total Redesign: Three things to consider



By Robert Algeri, Founder
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It's a good idea to periodically tidy up your website and prune away pages of outdated info or old messaging. Likewise, it makes sense to periodically adjust the design of your site. As your firm's business goals change, so should your website.

But at what point are message adjustments and cosmetic design fixes not enough? When do you know it's time to consider a total rethink of your website?

Here are three points to consider:

1. **Are you marketing? Then you're publishing.**

Marketers and lawyers alike know that unsupported statements amounting to, "Trust me, we're great attorneys" offer little value and rarely move the needle. Claims of expertise need to be demonstrated, otherwise they are not credible. That's why lawyers write and create content: articles, blog posts, etc.

A key objective for every law firm website should be to make it as easy as possible for attorneys to share the reputation-enhancing content that they create, in order to demonstrate and support their expertise.

Is the content that your attorneys create buried deep in the website? Could someone unfamiliar with your website find it in one or two clicks? Is it easy to share? Is the structure of your website designed to help your attorneys grow their business?

If you answered "no" to any of these questions, then it's probably time to rethink your website.



2. Does posting a video (and other odd-ball content) require a team of tech pros?

Traditional law firm websites were built to support “text” content, like articles. But in 2013, the content that attorneys produce is far beyond text. Video, podcasts, blog posts, tweets, presentations, photo-galleries – things that we playfully call “odd-ball content” – have become ubiquitous.

Unfortunately, older websites were not constructed to accommodate “odd-ball” content. That’s too bad, because each bit of content helps support an attorney’s or practice area’s claim of expertise in their area of focus. Not supporting “odd-ball” content is no longer viable.

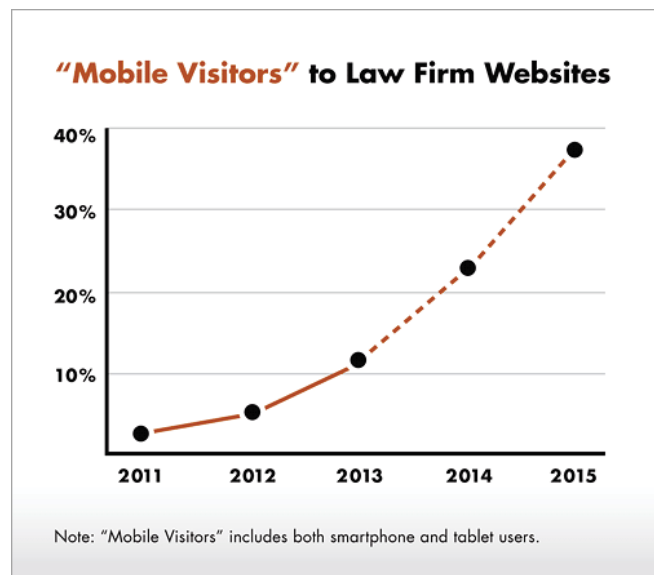
3. Does navigating your website on an iPhone give you a migraine?

Three mobile trends affecting law firms have emerged:

- i. The number of users visiting law firm websites from some type of mobile device (a smart phone or tablet) has increased 101% in the past year.
- ii. Mobile no longer means just iPhones. More types of devices are being used (Kindles, smart phones, tablets, iPad minis, etc.).
- iii. The experience that users have when viewing a website on a mobile device is not good: 48% say they feel “frustrated and annoyed” when on sites that are poorly optimized for mobile.

To address these converging trends, a new standard for mobile accessibility has been introduced, called Responsive Design. This coding technique automatically resizes and adjusts the content on each page of your website to fit perfectly on the screen that’s viewing it. The result is a better user-experience, regardless of what device the visitor is using.

What does it all mean for law firms? For one, mobile can no longer be an after-thought. But more important, it means that legal marketing has changed and the Band-Aid fixes might no longer be enough. As the nature of law firm marketing changes, our websites need to change with it.



SOURCE: GREAT JAKES MARKETING COMPANY