

Social Media Guide



for Lawyers v. 2.0

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INTRODUCTION

In our first edition of the *Social Media Guide for Lawyers*, the 2010-2011 Leadership Institute proclaimed that “the world is changing.” Nothing could be closer to the truth, but not in the way one might expect. A recent study entitled “2012 In-House Counsel New Media Engagement Survey,” conducted by Greentarget, Zeuhauser Group and *Inside Counsel*, illustrates how the generational gap for social media use is closing as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn are no longer exclusively utilized by up-and-coming lawyers. In fact, lawyers in the 40-year-old to 60-year-old range are rapidly adapting to social media to complement their traditional marketing efforts and to build and strengthen relationships. In-house counsel and potential clients alike are increasingly using social media as a 21st-century way to select lawyers and outside counsel.

The first edition of the *Guide* featured a “Best Practices Guide” on how law firms and individual lawyers can use social media to add value and generate business. The *Guide* also provided step-by-step instructions for effectively using the “Big Three”—LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter—and sample social media policies for law firms as they established parameters for social media use within their firms. Basically, that first edition served as a “Social Media 101.” We have incorporated the majority of that text within this edition for those just diving into the social media pool.

With this second edition, the 2010-2011 Leadership Institute elevates Meritas to the second level of social media use. It shows lawyers and law firms how to harness social media to their advantage by integrating “traditional” media with these new technologies to further expand visibility and exposure. As with the first edition, the goal is not to convince lawyers that social media is the only tool for business development, but rather to demonstrate how social media can serve as yet another tool in a lawyer’s marketing toolbox. Accordingly, version 2.0 of the *Guide* features:

- A list of Facebook’s new features, including Timeline and the new privacy settings,
- Step-by-step guides for creating and using LinkedIn Groups and Twitter Lists, and
- Tips for effectively using social media to share “traditional” marketing materials.

We hope you enjoy the *Social Media Guide for Lawyers v. 2.0*, and we welcome any feedback.

The 2010-2011 Leadership Institute

How To Effectively Use Social Media



INTEGRATING SOCIAL MEDIA AND TRADITIONAL MEDIA

Once a lawyer becomes familiar with how to use social media, the next step is to learn how to use these technologies effectively. Traditional online marketing activities such as firm web sites, email newsletter, and blogs are an effective and accepted way of promoting one's practice. While most lawyers and firms are comfortable with these existing online marketing activities, they are much less comfortable with interacting on online social networks. Therefore, we recommend lawyers share their existing marketing materials with their online audience on social media.

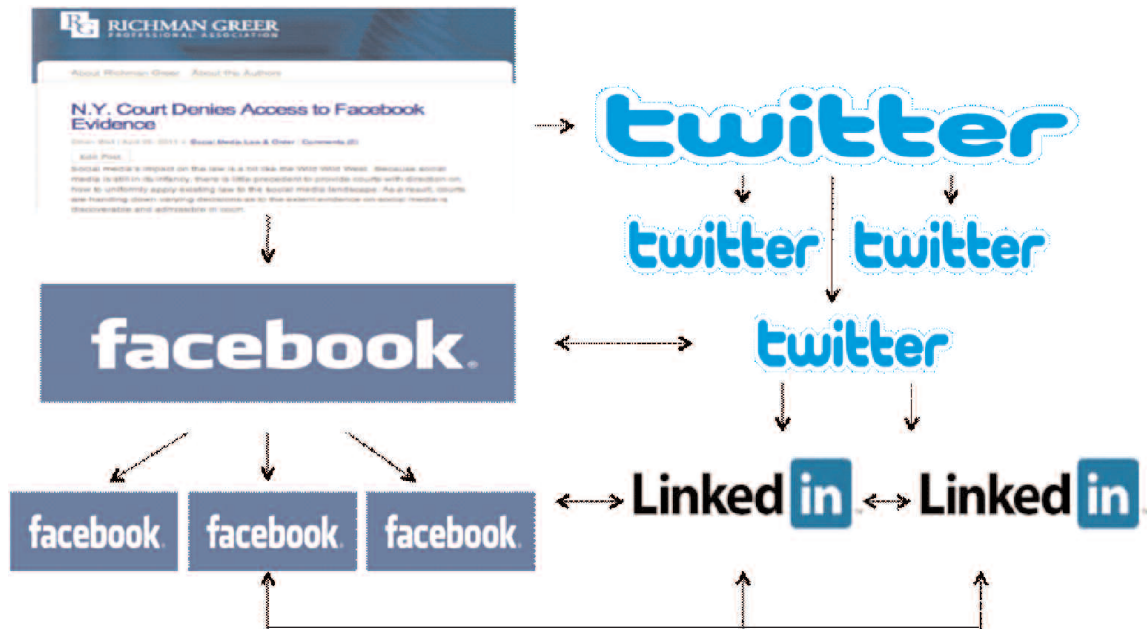
Publicizing a law firm's "traditional" online marketing materials on social media is a powerful method to remain on the radar screen of potential clients and referral sources. Lawyers who share news, case updates, articles, achievements, and blogs with social media's vast online community create greater exposure for themselves and their firms. They can use this opportunity to link their social media content back to the firm's web site, where they are more comfortable promoting themselves and their practice areas. By sharing traditional online marketing activities on social media, lawyers and firms can comfortably engage with a wider online audience while at the same time directing that audience back to their existing marketing platforms.



This section will demonstrate how lawyers and law firms can quickly and easily share their content on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter. While the examples will describe how blogs can be shared on social media, lawyers can replicate these methods to share any type of existing marketing material.

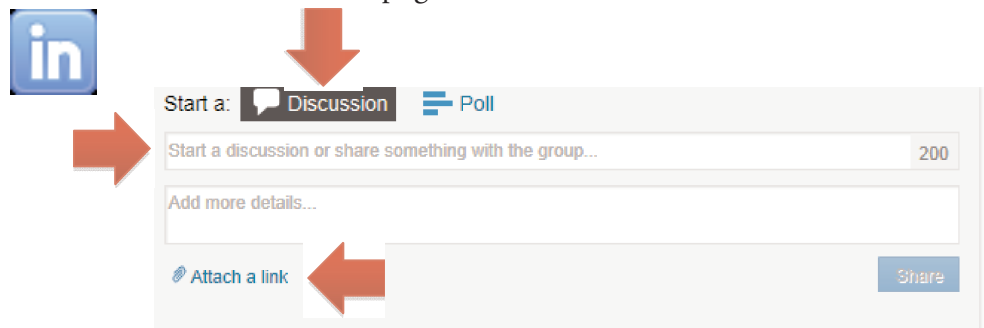
SHARING CONTENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Blogs allow lawyers to develop an in-depth analysis of legal issues to educate their client base and demonstrate knowledge on a particular subject or area of the law. Social media increases the exposure for blog content by allowing a lawyer to quickly and easily disseminate this content to a broad online audience. Once the content is uploaded or “linked” on social media, other social media users can instantly interact and share the content across the Internet.



Share Content on LinkedIn

1. To share content with a LinkedIn Group, go to **Start a Discussion**.

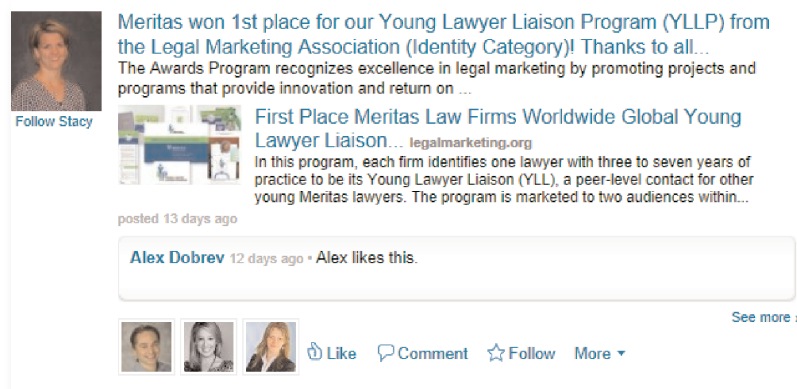


2. Insert the name of the blog article or an engaging heading in the Start a Discussion box. This heading must be 200 characters or less.
3. The user can then add additional information below the Start a Discussion box.

- To attach a link to a firm's blog, web site, email newsletter, or other content, select **Attach a link**.

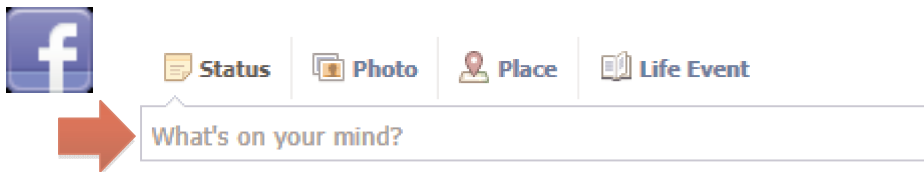
To share the comment with the Group, select **Share**. Below is an example of a recently linked Meritas article.

- Other group members can continue the discussion by “liking” or commenting below the post.



Share Content on Facebook

- Copy the Internet URL link of the blog or other content the user would like to share on Facebook.
- Log into the user's Facebook Profile, and locate the What's on Your Mind? box below the Status heading.



- Paste the URL link in the “What's on your mind?” box. Facebook will automatically generate a title and brief description of the user's linked content or post. Facebook may also generate a thumbnail image from the web site.



4. Modify the heading and/or description, if desired, by selecting the text and typing in a new description of the linked content.



5. Select **Share** to upload the link to Facebook. Depending on the user's privacy features, other Facebook users can comment or interact with the linked content.



Share Content on Twitter

1. Copy the Internet URL link of the blog or other content the user would like to share on Twitter.
2. Since Tweets are limited to 140 characters, the user may wish to shorten the link through a web site such as <http://tinyurl.com>.
3. Visit <http://tinyurl.com> and paste the Internet URL address into the box marked: “Enter a long URL to make tiny.” Copy the shortened URL provided.
4. Return to Twitter, select **Compose new Tweet** and paste the shortened URL. Describe the user’s blog post or other content in 140 characters or less (including the shortened link).
5. Consider using hash tags (#) to categorize your tweets (i.e., #Meritas or #SocialMediaLaw).

The example below illustrates how a user’s Tweet utilizes a shortened URL address to his Ohio Employer’s Law Blog and a hash tag for workers compensation (#workerscomp).



Conclusion and Next Steps



The Meritas Leadership Institute hopes that the *Social Media Guide for Lawyers v. 2.0* serves as a helpful handbook for lawyers and law firms who want to use social media to effectively promote their practice. The next steps will depend on each reader's personal and professional goals and interests for using social media in his or her career. We recommend the following three steps as a good place to start:

1. Determine the Right Social Media Platform for the Lawyer or Law Firm

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to selecting the appropriate social media platform(s). We suggest lawyers set aside an hour on their calendar one afternoon to visit the three main social media sites and see what they have to offer. They should ask their contemporaries about the social media sites they use, consider how each site can benefit them or their firm, and then sign up for one. Social media is still in its infancy and will continue to grow steadily, so lawyers who come on board now will have an advantage as social media continues to gain momentum.

2. Consider Whether Your Firm Should Adopt a Social Media Policy

The Leadership Institute believes the benefits of social media outweigh the concerns, as long as the sites are used appropriately. Law firms may already have a policy in place to govern social media use by lawyers and staff. If not, the social media policies suggested in this *Guide* can serve as a good template for forming the policy that works best for each firm. Lawyers can share this *Guide* with their managing partner or human resource director to see if our suggested policies are right for their situation.

3. Still Undecided? We Recommend Lawyers and Firms Begin with LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a great starting place for a lawyer's or firm's social media presence because it is "less social and more networking." Business leaders and lawyers alike generally feel most comfortable using LinkedIn because it is a trusted place for interacting with business leaders without the fear of others posting unwanted content on the profiles. LinkedIn is user-friendly and allows lawyers to create a professional profile with a minimal investment of time. If they're still skeptical about the benefits of social media, we suggest lawyers search for their colleagues on LinkedIn and see for themselves who is already connecting with people they know through social media.

If readers have any questions about the *Guide*, or how they can incorporate social media into their practice, they are welcome to contact their nearest 2010-2011 Meritas Leadership Institute class member, listed on the following page. Leadership Institute members can serve as a helpful social media resource and are available for speaking engagements and social media demonstrations.

Happy Tweeting!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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