

## Law Firm Marketing Research: Executives Rely on the Internet to Find Lawyers

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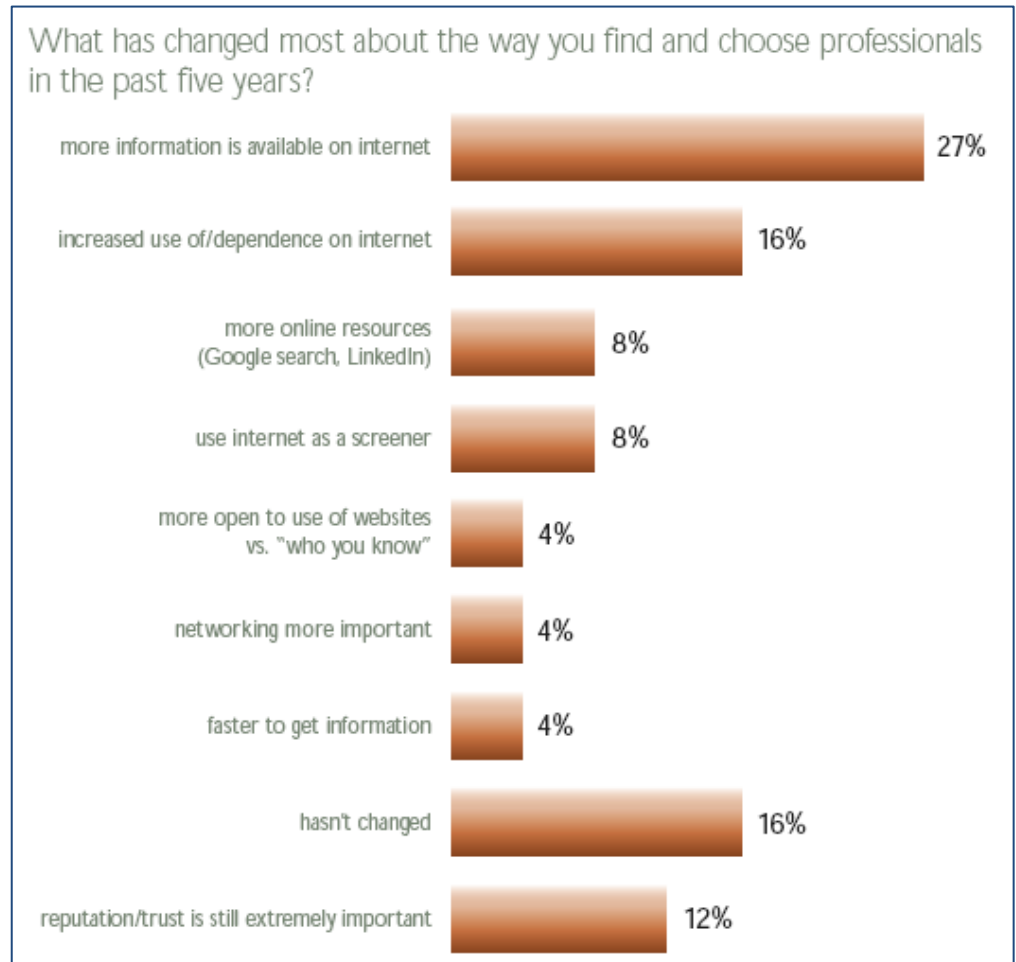
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A new survey by branding firm Greenfield/Belser and The Brand Research Company, spotlights that executive-level buyers are online, in droves and that search engines are a key tool for learning about professionals.

- 85% of executives consider professional service firm websites important sources of information in their search for professionals.
- Three in four say the quality of a firm's site influences whether they put a firm on their short list.
- 53% have put a firm on a short list based on the information found on the firm's site.
- Specific-industry experience tops the list of things executives find important on sites, with 78% saying it is must-have information.

### Executive-level buyers are online, in droves

- 82% report the Internet has replaced other methods of researching almost completely.



- 42% indicate the Internet has replaced other methods of securing business purchases almost completely.
- 78% surveyed say they go online to search for outside legal, accounting and consulting professionals.

### Search engines are a key tool to find professionals

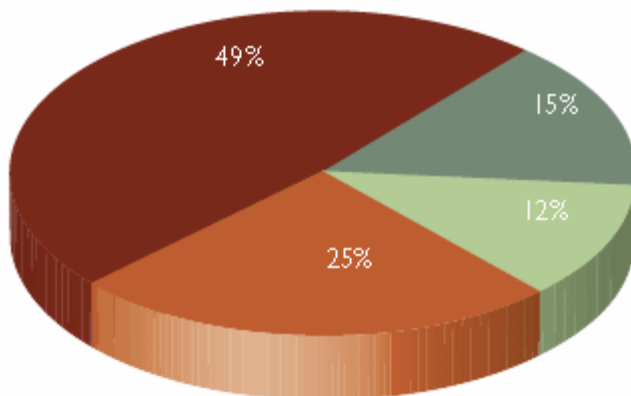
- 50% of executive decision makers say that search engines are important.
- 48% say that being listed near the top on Google matters.
- When they use search engines, one in two decision-makers always include keywords with specific expertise and industry.

### Newer media tools gain traction

- Two-thirds of executives surveyed use social networking sites. For business, LinkedIn tops the list.
- 75% read blogs, with 37% reading them on a daily or weekly basis.
- Mobile phones are ubiquitous, but only 28% of executive decision makers view or listen to online content of any type on their phones.

"Today, the web drives everything. Haul in that old fishing line because the web's sonar has taken over. Digital dominates, even transcends, other channels because the others seem more static, less energetic, less muscular than the web. We can learn virtually anything with just a few keystrokes," said Burkey Belser, President of Greenfield/Belser.

## WHAT BUYERS ARE DOING ONLINE BUSINESS PURCHASES



"Email excluded, 94% of buyers go online daily and more than 3/4 of decision makers search for professionals monthly or less often," he added. "This matches our experience with our clients on the receiving end of those online searches; that is, they tell us that they'll make a pitch for completely new business—on average—something less than once a month."

85% of decision makers consider a lawyer's website important; younger decision makers are especially likely to find all digital sources important. When clients for a professional, they

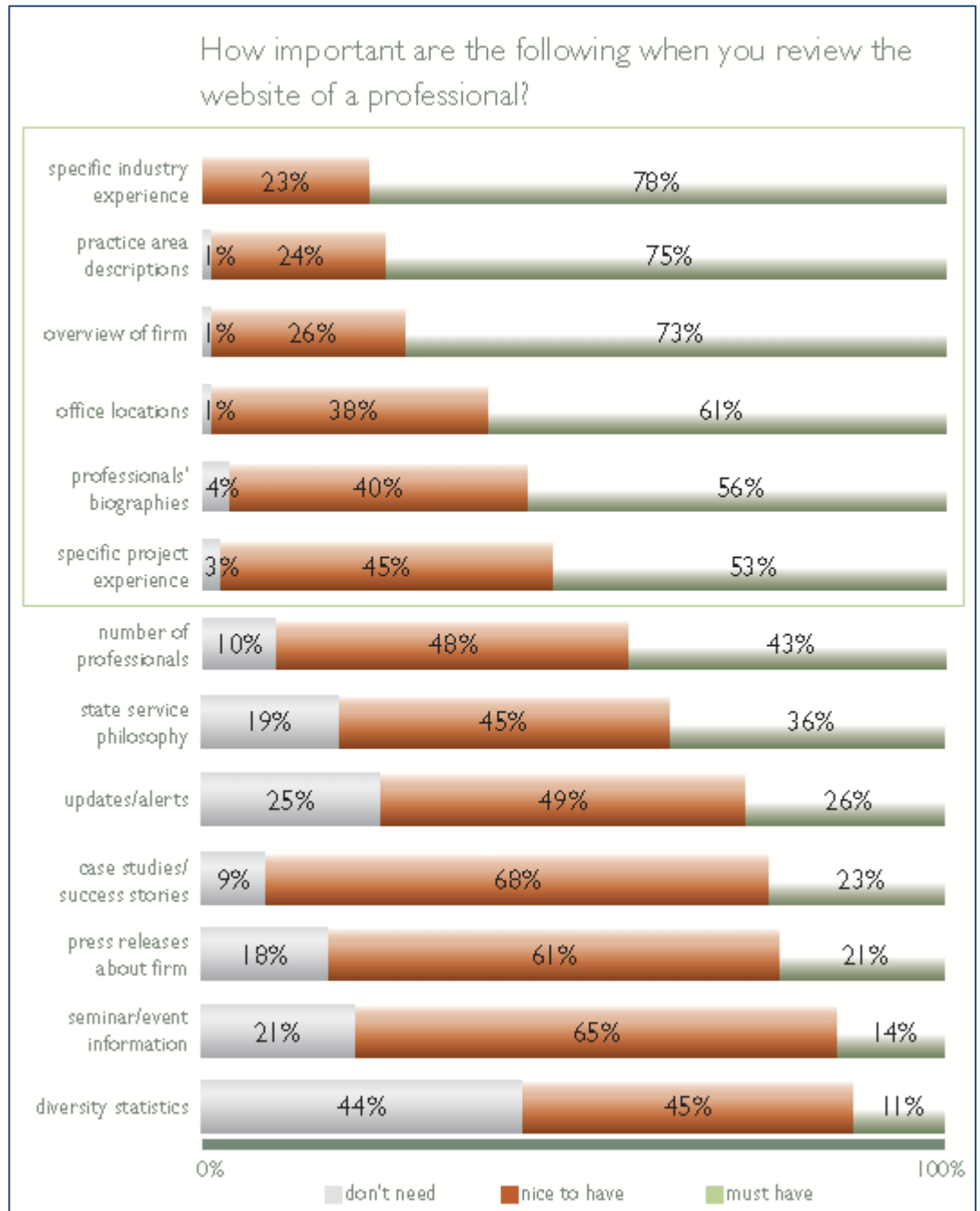
use keywords from the following categories:

- 52% always search for specific expertise.
- 46% always search for an industry.
- 33% always search for a state.
- 42% always search for a city.
- 30% always search for a general practice area.
- 46% always search for an industry.

Most (3/4) are aware of the various types of Google search results, but they dramatically favor organic search results.

"Two-thirds have had their curiosity piqued by a news article but what may surprise many is traditional methods still work. Now is not the time to abandon familiar strategies but it is the time to embrace the opportunities offered by the Internet," Belser said.

Three-fourths (76%) say they are likely to be influenced by your website's quality. Moreover, more than half put professionals on their short list based on information found on the website. Specific industry experience is the most important qualification to



searchers. "This confirms what we've learned time and time again. People looking for services are wearing their industry hat," Belser said.

When searching for a professional on a firm's website, clients use the following in this order:

1. Practice area.
2. Industry.
3. Office location.
4. Name of professional.

When examining a lawyer profile online, clients want to see:

1. Recent experience.
2. Law or graduate school.
3. Undergraduate school.
4. Professional memberships and activities.

Two-thirds of respondents use networking sites with 1/3+ paying attention to LinkedIn. Fully 3/4 read blogs -- and 1/3+ do so on a daily or weekly basis.

### Info to push electronically

Clients like electronic alerts from law firms on the following topics:

- 84% want original research about topics important to them.
- 84% want industry updates.
- 82% want summaries of recent cases affecting their industry.
- 82% want invitations to seminars or events.
- 79% want practice area updates.
- 79% want legislative or regulatory alerts
- 76% want white papers (analyses written by professionals)

You can download the full report at <http://www.gbltd.com/bigideas/news/102-268/digital-marketing-2010>

For more on this topic, call:

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