

10 reasons why a law blog does not belong inside your law firm website

I'm always ask about putting a blog in a law firm website. The answer is you don't do it. Anyone telling you to do so is wrong.

Putting a blog your law firm's website makes as much sense as adopting law firm policies requiring that the firm's lawyers only speak at industry conferences held in your firm's conference room and that your firm's lawyers only be quoted in your firm's publications, as opposed to industry and widely read periodicals.

Here's 10 reasons why a law blog should be independent from a law firm website.

- 1) Your law firm website, as it should be, is overt marketing collateral. Your website is all about your law firm, your firm's lawyers, the services your law firm provides, who your law firm represents, and how we contact your law firm and its professionals. A blog is about providing valuable information, insight, and commentary to your target audience. Don't detract from the effective reputation enhancement, networking, and client development power of your law blog by making it part of your firm's overt marketing collateral.
- 2) Google is only going to display the most relevant content page from your law firm's website, it's not going to display 2 pages in the search results. Having a blog and website allows relevant content from each to display in Google search results.
- 3) Search engine optimization. Links from relevant websites or blogs to your firm's website or blog are critical for search engine performance. Blogs are link magnets. Websites are not. A blog inside your website is going to generate few, if any, incoming

links. Not only will a well done blog perform exceedingly well in search engine results, but links to your website from the blog and links to your website as a result of blogging will dramatically improve your law firm's website search engine rankings.

- 4) Effective blogging is all about entering into a conversation with both thought leaders in your field and your target audience. How do you dialogue from your law firm's website? You don't. Step one in effective blogging is listening to what thought leaders are saying on their blogs, what they're saying in the media, and following key words and key phrases relevant to your niche in Google Blog Search and Google News. Referencing this content and offering your take is what you'll be doing in your law blog. Thought leaders, your target audience, and the media will then see your contributions to the conversation and begin to reference you. It's very, very hard for people to reference your blogging when you're wearing the trappings of a law firm website. We're just not inclined to do it.
- 5) Marketing success for your blog. The best way to get exposure for your law blog is to blog about what leading bloggers and reporters are writing about in your niche. They'll then see you, subscribe to your blog, and cite your blog posts with their commentary. The thousands of subscribers of these leaders will see your name and tacit reference to you as an authority. They'll subscribe to your blog, and those who blog will in turn reference you and your blog content on their blogs. You're not to garner these citations with a blog in your website.
- 6) Getting subscribers to your blog. Your target audience is looking for the context you can offer on subjects relevant to your niche. Your audience is not looking for overt marketing information. Blog subscribers want to see that you are first concerned about offering value to them. Placing a blog in a website shows you're too afraid to give without at the same time telling people about

how wonderful you are and the wonderful things you've done. On the net, you can have everything you want as long as you help enough other people get what they want. Show it.

- 7) Public relations success. 75% of reporters use blogs to identify experts and gain insight on stories they're writing. Public relations is no longer about press releases. It's about demonstrating yourself as a thought leader by entering into a dialogue. You're much less likely to be called by reporters with a blog in a website that hamstrings open dialogue and reputation building.
- 8) Ease of use. An effective user interface for readers of a blog and a website are two different animals. Weaving the necessary navigation elements of a blog into your law firm's website is likely to lead to reader confusion.
- 9) Good design. Your law firm's website and blog should complement each other, not look the same. Your website is your overt marketing. Your blog is an educational magazine allowing you to enter into a dialogue.
- 10) Social media success. In addition to your content being cited on other blogs, blogging success comes from having your content cited on Twitter and social bookmarking websites. Content from a blog in your website is much less likely to be shared and spread via social media, if at all.

Putting a blog in your law firm may be the easy thing to do. You may have marketing or tech professionals telling you to do so.

But if your looking for your blog to enhance your reputation as a thought leader in your niche, to allow for networking among your target audience, and to serve as an effective client development tool, don't do it. Keep your blog outside your law firm website.