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## **Survey Says: New Media Has Become Mainstream Media**

**By: Joe Geisman**

When it comes to marketing, providers of professional services typically look to what others in their industry are doing and follow suit. Indeed, most professionals – especially those in traditionally conservative industries like the legal services industry – are resistant to technological changes and generally dislike deviating from their comfort zone. This status quo mentality makes law firms an excellent reference point when analyzing new media usage by professionals.

Several surveys have recently been conducted to measure the use of new media by law firms and in-house attorneys. On the service provider side of the equation, these studies reveal that law firms are embracing new media to develop business and market themselves to clients, prospects and referral sources. For example, this year's ALM Legal Intelligence report found that 85% of law firms in the United States are using social media as part of their business development strategies. In addition:

- 🌱 More than 60% of the survey's respondents reported that their firms maintain one or more blogs.
- 🌱 Nearly half reported that blogging and social networking helped them get new leads, with 40% saying that new media helped them actually get business.
- 🌱 Nearly 90% said that the integration of social media into their firm's business development efforts should be an important priority, with more than 40% rating social media initiatives as very important.

Given this movement among providers of legal service, it's not surprising to see the client side of the equation experiencing a similar shift. A recent survey of in-house lawyers conducted by Greentarget revealed that the demographics of the new media audience have moved towards the middle, with in-house counsel in their 40s, 50s and 60s using social media in far greater numbers than they were a few years ago. In addition:

- 🌱 84% of the survey's respondents said they believe blogs are credible.
- 🌱 76% said they attribute some level of importance to a law firm's blog when deciding which lawyer to retain, with 55% saying that a blog influenced their hiring decisions.

The takeaway here is that new media has become mainstream media. Law firms and other providers of professional services are using owned media such as blogs, and social networks such as LinkedIn and Twitter, to position themselves, drive their brands, increase their online visibility, elevate their reputation, connect with and engage prospective clients and referral sources, and establish themselves as thought leaders.