LAW FIRM SEO – HOW TO DO IT YOURSELF IN 20 STEPS

I was recently asked to review a new website for a friend and give some high-level advice on how to get started with basic law firm SEO. I thought I would share my recommendations here for those of you looking for some do-it-yourself instructions on how to optimize your own law firm website, along with a few broader inbound marketing tips.

Before we get started, a few caveats:

- I am going to assume that you are either using Wordpress as a CMS or have at least some familiarity HTML and CSS.
- I am going to assume that you already have a decent website. Hopefully you used an [SEO-friendly Wordpress theme](#) that will give you a solid site architecture and allow you to easily customize your meta tags.
- This post is about the basics. Just doing these things will put you ahead of much of your competition, but there's much more that could be said.

Let's get started.

The Easy(ish) Part – On-Site Setup and Optimization

1. Set up Google Analytics, Google Webmaster Tools, and Bing Webmaster Tools. Consider using a heatmap tracking system like [CrazyEgg](#) for more site intelligence.
2. Be sure your server is configured correctly. Go to http://responsetester.appspot.com/ and enter in your URL. Be sure that you get a good grade. If not, talk to your host or IT person. Get it fixed.
3. Download [Screaming Frog SEO Spider](#) and/or [Xenu Link Sleuth](#) and analyze your site. Fix every single broken link (404 error) that occurs on your site and convert your 302 redirects into 301 redirects.
4. While you're at it, take a look at your redirects (301) as well. They could be coming from improper internal linking. If so, fix those as well. And in the future, be sure to use the proper link structure for internal links (e.g., don't link to www.yoursite.com if the correct URL is www.yoursite.com/, with a backslash).
5. Be sure that you have a user-friendly 404 error page. It should give the visitor a next step, like contacting you, searching your site, or browsing to another portion of your site.
6. Install an XML Sitemap Plugin (I use [Google XML Sitemaps](#)) or otherwise build an XML sitemap for your site. If your site includes video, use a video sitemap as well.
7. Use [Google PageSpeed](#) or YSlow ([Chrome](#) or [Firefox](#)) to check out your site speed. Fix any major problems.

8. Read my series on Keyword Research for Law Firm Websites, then apply it. Get an understanding of what keywords your potential clients are using to find your services.
9. Download the Scribe SEO plugin to help you with your on-page SEO. Using it for even a few months will help you understand how to write in a search-engine-friendly manner.
10. Burn your RSS feed to Feedburner and redirect the RSS feed on your site to your Feedburner feed.

The Hard(er) Part – Off-Site SEO and Social Media

1. Be sure that your local address is on every page of your site (the footer is fine). Then go to GetListed.org and be sure that you are listed in all of the sites mentioned there. Just doing that will put you ahead of 90% of your local competition in most markets.
2. Create an e-mail template that gently offers an opportunity for prior or potential clients to review your services in one of the local review sites listed in step 1, starting with Google. Use it when you feel it would be appropriate. Be sure to comply with your local ethics rules.
3. Get a list of your top keywords (see number 8 above), then search for the top sites that are ranking for those terms. Drop those sites into Link Diagnosis or Open Site Explorer to find out which sites are linking to them. Then visit those sites and, assuming that they are not spammy, get those links.
4. Read my series on Link-Building for Lawyers and go through the steps there to identify more link opportunities. Sign up for my newsletter to get new link sources delivered monthly. Make manual link-building an ongoing part of your marketing efforts.
5. Set up a Google Plus profile page for your law firm. Implement authorship markup so that Google recognizes that page as being associated with your site. Then share content on your Google Plus page (you can do this directly from Google Reader with a click of a button).
6. Identify the top 10 blogs in your niche (see here). You want those people to know you, even if they are competitors. Trust me on that one. Start following those blogs in Google Reader (or whatever reader you use). Comment when you have something meaningful to contribute.
7. Sign up for a Twitter account. See if any of those top 10 bloggers are using Twitter. If so, follow them. If not, find 10 more thought leaders that are using Twitter and follow them. Comment when you have something meaningful to contribute.
8. Find LinkedIn groups that are related to your area of expertise. Join them and participate. Try to comment on at least a weekly basis. Comment when … you know.
9. Dedicate a half hour of your day to content curation. Set up a social media platform like Hootesuite and share the content of the people that you are connecting with. This will get you noticed by those people, provide value to people who follow you, and increase the likelihood that people will read and share your own content.
10. Speaking of your own content, share it across as many social media channels as possible and encourage others to do the same. If you've done a good job of building relationships,

and if your content is any good, you will begin to pull traffic from these social media channels.

I plan to revise this list from time to time. If I've missed anything or been unclear, let me know in the comments on my website and I'll address it.

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Link O' The Month – Get a monthly e-mail that gives you one place to obtain a valuable link to your law firm website.

Monthly Roundup of SEO Tips and Tricks - A monthly newsletter full of practical and actionable information to help you get your law firm in front of prospective clients.

Deals on Valuable Resources – Good deals on tools to help promote your website.

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