

Give Your Legal Writing Nine Lives

By [Adrian Dayton](#)



“If you build it, he will come.”

– Voice heard by Kevin Costner in [Field of Dreams](#)

Writing a book, blog, article or white paper are all great ways to get noticed and build relationships in the legal industry. Unfortunately, practicing lawyers confront great demands on their time, and even though they have good intentions, the work of creating this type of content is often delegated to associates or put off altogether. Part of the problem is that writing blog posts and articles is a loss leader. You spend too much time writing without business coming in, and soon enough you'll be out of business.

Here is where social media and email marketing comes in. Every article and piece of content you create no longer has just one life. Now it can easily have nine. Hopefully one of these nine lives will give you the extra motivation to start writing more.

Life 1: Blog.

The law blog is your home base for all your new content. Creating blog posts on a regular basis is the single most powerful tool for business development in the online world. The search engines love fresh content, and [once you have enough content](#) on your blog, you will create a steady flow of traffic to your site....

Life 2: Share on Twitter, LinkedIN and Facebook.

Bring a second life to your new posts by sharing the link with your contacts on Twitter, LinkedIN and Facebook. For an idea of which articles really resonate with your audience I recommend using a site like <http://bit.ly> to shrink down your URL. The best part is that by using <http://bit.ly> you can track how many people click on each article. You can use these links on each of the social networks.

If you don't have time to go to each social media site individually, I recommend downloading an application called [Tweetdeck](#) that allows you to post a single update to all three sites in a single click. There is also a feature that allows you to schedule out your messages days or weeks in advance so that you don't need to be jumping on and off multiple times each day.

Life 3: Join a group on LinkedIn and share your articles within the group.

What clubs, organizations or associations are you a member of? Would they be interested in your article? Search for the "group" on LinkedIn and share your article using the "add news" box.



This way you get access to an extremely targeted group of people who are probably not direct connections. This technique can substantially increase traffic to your blog and website.

Life 4: Upload to JD Supra and share through legal updates.

Using legal updates is one step beyond simply sharing with your network and groups on LinkedIn. Through legal updates your articles will actually be pushed out to a a potential audience of 75 million people and over 1 million lawyers. While I mentioned how this works in last week's article, there are complete details here: [LinkedIn & JD Supra change the game](#).

You can find "Legal Updates" on the LinkedIn bar along the top by clicking "More..."



Then scrolling down to "Application Directory":



You can then choose “Legal Updates”:



Upload a Word doc or PDF directly through LinkedIn and it can be shared across the entire LinkedIn network.

Life 5: List your article on [Legal OnRamp](#) or [Martindale Hubbell Connected](#).

Legal OnRamp is great for in-house and corporate lawyers, while Martindale-Hubbell Connected has all types of lawyers, with a good concentration of international lawyers. There are also dozens of other lawyer-only online communities, but these are two I think should be considered as great places to share your content.

Life 6: Send your new article to your top prospects in a personalized email.

I know this is kind of old school, but don't forget about it. This is a great way to touch bases with an existing client or prospect because (1) it gives you an excuse to reach out that doesn't seem forced, (2) it gives you a chance to show your expertise, and (3) the personalized message in the email shows they are a special contact.

Life 7: Create a monthly e-newsletter out of your blogs posts and use a service like Aweber to send it to your targeted email lists.

There are a lot of ways to do this, and no “right way.” Your newsletter can be one old article and one new article, or it can just be a summary of your best articles from the past month or two.

You do have an email list, don’t you? If not, your legal writing can help with that as well.

Life 8: Give your article or white paper away as an opt-in.

[One of the big bonuses to having written a book](#) is that you can give away a free chapter as an opt-in. You win because you get the email address of somebody interested in your topic, and they win because they are emailed a PDF of your chapter. Building your email list is a vital part of your online business development efforts. As [Stephen Fairley](#) says, “he who has the biggest list wins.”

You don’t need a book to gather email lists, though; you can use a long article, white paper or even a list or chart. Create something of value that would help out your average client. Make sure to mention it at the end of every blog post in the signature line.

Life 9: Print out your article or post and give it away when you speak, in exchange for a business card.

This is one of my favorite tactics. Take your article, print it out and physically show it to people when you present at a speaking event. Give a free copy to everyone in the audience in exchange for a business card. Should you just offer to email it to them? No. I’ve tried it both ways, and having a physical document to hand to people substantially increases the chance of them giving you their business card, which can then be added to your list.

Conclusion

There is a lot of work to do once your content is created, but keep in mind that your secretary, assistant or marketing department can take your content and make it live again through these various steps. What your staff most likely *can’t* do is write your articles for you. You need to make the time to build up your blog by writing original content. Because remember, if you build it . . . well, you know the rest.