

Social Media Strategies for Lawyers

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Larry Bodine

This is an excerpt of a MyLegal.com interview by Lisa Dimonte with Larry Bodine, Esq. Please go to <http://bit.ly/dkRMIr> to see the entire transcript. **Lisa DiMonte**, the CEO of MyLegal.com and has more than 33 years of experience in the legal space. You can reach her via email at lisa.dimonte@mylegal.com or connect with Lisa on www.MyLegal.com.

Please go to <http://bit.ly/97cFHW> to listen to the original podcast, "Social Media Strategies for Lawyers."

DiMONTE: Larry, you've been a business development advisor for the last 19 years, having assisted nearly a hundred law firms with getting more business. How has law firm marketing changed over the last 20 years? There has to have been a lot of changes.

BODINE: Up to two or three years ago, marketing involved branding and advertising, public relations, brochures, directories, and sponsorships. It was all marketing communications. But ever since the recession hit there's been a much greater emphasis on business development, which is code word for sales. **Now the attorneys are coming into the marketing department and they're not asking for brochures or press releases. They're saying "give me leads."**



Lisa DiMonte

Law firm marketing has turned more into the activity of identifying potential clients, pursuing them, arranging for face-to-face meetings with potential clients, looking for cross-selling opportunities, and finding ways to get the attorney out face to face with a potential client. That's a pretty huge change.

DiMONTE: Larry, one of the concerns for lawyers and other legal professionals is information overload. And what I mean by that is there's just so much information out there. There are so many social networks to choose from, and folks just don't know where to begin, how to start, what to do. Do you agree with that?

BODINE: That's very true. You've got everything from LinkedIn to JD Supra, to Plaxo, MySpace, Ning, Spoke, Facebook, Twitter. It's overwhelming if you really haven't had a chance to sort through what's important and what's not. The advice that I give to attorneys is to **pick one network and go deep** on that one and spend most of your time on it. And one of the positive statistics is that according to a recent survey by

leader networks, 78 percent of lawyers have joined one social network or another, so lawyers seem to be getting past their initial reluctance because of the second part of the survey found that 71 percent of in-house counsel have also joined networks.

So, attorneys have realized that there's business to be had from online social networking. There recent research that shows now that corporations and **in-house counsel are using online social networks to find attorneys**. They're going to LinkedIn and looking up a lawyer's profile generally because there's going to be a lot more activity in a LinkedIn profile than a law firm profile. So that's what's pushed the trend.



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DiMONTE: Obviously, if corporate counsel are looking for attorneys on sites such as LinkedIn, then it's really important for attorneys to be there with a profile, and you're going to share with us some tips here in a moment, but it's obviously important for them to have a presence where their potential clients are sort of playing or interacting.

BODINE: Absolutely. My favorite network, the one that really works the best for lawyers, is LinkedIn, and it's free. So you simply go to LinkedIn.com, open a profile, put in your picture, make it public, and bingo! -- You've created a presence on an online social network. I think once the lawyers realize that they don't need to take a training class on how to use this, they're going to become more willing to use it.

DiMONTE: Can you share with our listeners some of your favorite tips and techniques and how you use LinkedIn to develop your business?

BODINE: The best way to answer that would be to give you an example of **the best lawyer profile I've seen** on LinkedIn. I visit a lot of cities and look up the local lawyers, and the best one I found is a guy called Brian Burt. He's a partner at Snell and Wilmer in Phoenix. I'm not giving away any confidential information here. Anybody can look up Brian Burt and tell that he is really putting an effort into LinkedIn. He's really working it.

The first way you can tell is that he's got a fully complete bio, so you can find out not only where he went to school and where he's worked before, but **he lists the types of clients that he represents**. He discusses the sorts of industries that he's familiar with, and you know, ultimately this will lead to case histories. Those are three things that business people and corporations look for in a lawyer. A lawyer bio should answer the questions "Do you know my industry? Have you represented any companies like mine? Have you ever closed a deal or won a case?"

So in the example of Brian Burt, you can tell he's working it because he's got more than 500 connections. So this is a guy who is inviting people to connect and accepting

invitations and he's built his network.

Also, when you get a LinkedIn profile you get a web address and rather than just accept the machine-generated address that LinkedIn gives you, you can choose to put in your name and have that be part of the link, so when you go to Brian Burt, he's at [LinkedIn.com/in/brianburt](https://www.linkedin.com/in/brianburt). So he's put in his own name. But I think the smartest thing that this guy has done is **he's gotten more than 50 people to recommend him**.

So LinkedIn is a great way to sort of concentrate and present testimonials. So, for instance, just to pick three, he got someone he was working with at an investment firm to say that he's a business community leader. So if you're in business and you'd like to deal with a leader in business, this is your guy.

Someone from Merrill Lynch basically says in his recommendation that he's referred several clients to Brian with terrific results. So Brian has very cleverly made it known that he is available for referrals and from major companies like Merrill Lynch.

Brian focuses his practice on entrepreneurs. Those are most of his clients. So one of his entrepreneur clients put up a recommendation that he's remarkable counsel with first-hand entrepreneurial experience.

So from just these recommendations alone you can see he's a business leader. People refer clients to him with terrific results, and he's got a lot of entrepreneurial experience. Now these are all different kinds of magnets that are going to draw business to him.

DiMONTE: And certainly bring value to him as a lawyer who obviously brought value to his clients -- because he's demonstrating actual projects or cases that he's worked on, which have delivered results in a positive way for his clients.

BODINE: Exactly right.

DiMONTE: As we're talking about these recommendations, I've heard about the reciprocity rule regarding the importance of writing recommendations for other colleagues or other professionals with whom you work is the first step towards other folks writing recommendations for you.

BODINE: Exactly. I get requests all the time to recommend people, and if it's someone I know and I can offer a valid opinion, I'll do that. It's understood that it's a two-way street. If you recommend someone else, they're going to recommend you back and it's a real quick way to get 15 or 20 recommendations. The recommendations are very powerful because they're all testimonials.

DiMONTE: And I think people do tend to trust the opinion of other professionals more than they would if you're just trying to pitch your services to them. They'd rather hear it from a client who's actually worked with you and had experience with you so that they can hear what the results were as opposed to your just feeding them information and

doing the sales pitch that they probably don't want to hear.

BODINE: Right. It's always better to have someone else say how great they are as opposed to you walking in and saying, "I'm great."

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For more on this topic, call:
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