The Law Firm Guide to CONTENT MARKETING

produced by GOOD2BSOCIAL

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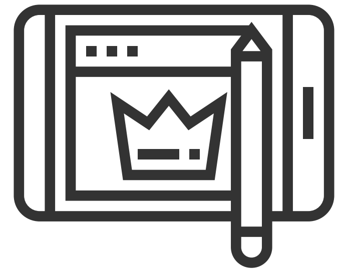
1 Introduction

Marketing success is increasingly linked to the quality of your law firm content. It's how you demonstrate expertise, build your brand, and create relationships with clients, prospects, and influencers. It's the center of your digital marketing strategy.

In this e-book, we discuss why content marketing is important, how to develop a meaningful strategy, ways to successful employ content assets, and how to measure results to know what's working and what needs to be improved.

Our goal is to strike a balance between communicating clearly what you want to get across and creating content that's important to your audience. Content marketing works when it's about them. If it's valuable to them, they'll keep coming back for more.

2 What Is Content Marketing?



Ninety percent of business-to-consumer (B2C) companies and 93 percent of business-to-business (B2B) companies use content in their marketing mix, according to a Marketing Profs/Content Marketing Institute study.

We can extrapolate that to law firms providing services to corporations (B2B) and boutique "consumer" firms helping to solve the legal problems of individuals (B2C). Bottom line is, whether you're Big Law or a solo practitioner or a small firm, you need to have a content marketing strategy—or you're missing out big-time.

What is law firm content marketing? Let's break it down.

Content

"Content is essentially everything your customer or prospect touches or interacts with." So writes Ann Handley, in *Everybody Writes*, the terrific new book on creating content in the digital landscape. This includes all of your online properties: website, blog, social media posts, newsletter, e-books, white papers, infographics, case studies, webinars, video, podcasts, and so on. These are your content assets.

Marketing

These assets, however, are meaningless without strategy. Law firm content marketing is the strategy or practice of creating useful, relevant content—instead of pitching your services—to establish thought leadership, inform and engage with clients, and be top-of-mind with prospects, influencers, and referral sources—ultimately to drive business.

You'll first need to identify your unique clients and prospects and their problems, and craft a content strategy aimed at helping them find solutions. Put yourself in their shoes. Let it guide your content strategy. In other words, write with empathy.

Blogging

A blog is your publishing platform on the web to inform and educate clients, prospects, and referral sources—and, in the process, build your brand. Just as importantly, each piece of content can be repurposed to other assets—whether it be a compilation of posts into a white paper or an e-book, fodder for infographics, links for your newsletter, or other tactics.

If you're on the fence about blogging, consider these statistics:

- B2B companies that blog generate 67 percent more leads per month than those that don't, and B2C companies that blog generate 88 percent more leads per month than those that don't.
- 75 percent of users never scroll past the first page of search results, and keywords in blogs drive traffic from search engines.
- Companies that blog receive 97 percent more links to their website, compared with those who don't.

Other unique **law firm content** to throw into the mix include:

- Attorney bios, each of which can be a microsite.
- CLE materials, including PowerPoint slides and video recordings.
- Reimagine and repurpose cient memos.
- Address the problems and issues general counsel and companies face in the industries you serve.

Stay Top-of-Mind With Clients and Prospects

How often does someone need legal help? Hopefully, for them, not often. When they do, you want to be the lawyer they call.

And how many times have you discovered that someone in your network hired another lawyer for the services you provide? It's a tale we hear from many lawyers who failed to stay top-of-mind.

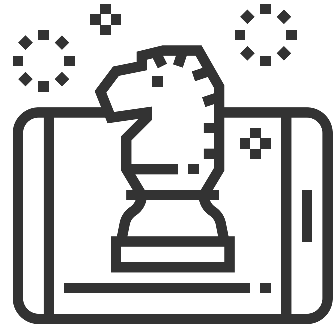
In order to do that, you need to stay top-of-mind. As with all marketing efforts, it starts with content. Here's a content road map to stay top-of-mind:

Create content on your blog and website

Share on social media

Include in your email newsletter

3 How to Develop an Effective Content Strategy



Creating an effective law firm content marketing strategy means making sure that you've clearly defined your goals. In this section we discuss three steps you can take to develop a law firm content marketing strategy to accomplish your overarching business development objectives.

1. Create a content mission statement.

A content mission statement is a great way to keep your law firm content marketing efforts on track. Mission statements should answer three key questions, including:

- **Who is your core audience target?** What type of person would benefit the most from the help provided by your content?
- **What are your deliverables to the audience?** What types of information will you provide through your content? How is your story different?
- **What is the desired outcome for the audience?** What's in it for them? Once your audience consumes your content, what would you like for them to do next?

Answering these questions is critical to a law firm content marketing strategy and will allow you to build a content mission statement that will guide content creation, publishing, and sharing.

2. Build a buyer persona.

A buyer persona is a composite sketch of a key segment of your clients. It characterizes who they are, what their relevant needs are, and the role they likely play in purchasing legal services. A buyer persona helps your firm visualize your clients' needs and how your firm's services can help them. If your law firm does not have at least one persona to guide its online contributors, its content may not adequately engage prospects with the information your client base is seeking.

- How do you build a persona? (A great way to start is to think of your law firm's ideal client.)
- What kind of legal help does the client need?
- How does the client consume content? On their cell phone? On TV? Are they social media junkies? Do they rely on email?
- How often are they checking for relevant information per day?
- Who influences your client's content consumption? Friends, colleagues, industry leaders? Or are they driven by specific subject areas?

The answers to these questions are the outline for creating an effective buyer persona. Once you've created a persona, you can tailor your content to specifically address the needs and interests of this client.

3. Document your strategy.

If you want your law firm content marketing strategy to succeed, you must document it. A documented strategy helps everyone in your law firm to understand opportunities and challenges, prioritize certain projects, and execute each effort with the same purpose and understanding in mind. Research by the Content Marketing Institute found that enterprises with a documented content marketing strategy are "far more likely to consider themselves effective at content marketing" and also consider themselves more effective across a variety of tactics and social media channels. They are also better able to manage and justify their marketing budget spend on content.

A content marketing strategy can help your firm stay organized, spend less money, and save time. For it to work, you need a defined content mission statement, a buyer persona, and a documented strategy.

We will discuss the mission statement and the buyer persona in more detail in the following chapters.

4 Craft a Content Marketing Mission Statement

According to the *2017 State of Digital & Content Marketing Survey,* only one in four law firm marketers say that they have a documented content strategy.

I'd wager that it's because the vast majority of content producers don't have a content marketing mission statement—the document you need before crafting a content strategy, before creating an editorial calendar, and before producing content.

So, what is a content marketing mission statement?

A mission statement is your purpose. Your firm's reason for existing. Why you do what you do. What you are today, and what you strive to be.

> **"To work, your mission statement has to be all about the pain points of your readers."**
>
> **–Joe Pulizzi, Content Marketing Institute**

In a post on mission statements from the aforementioned Content Marketing Institute, the author used *Inc.* magazine as an example:

Inc. has its mission statement in the first line of its About Us page.

Welcome to Inc.com, the place where entrepreneurs and business owners can find useful information, advice, insights, resources, and inspiration for running and growing their businesses.

Inc.'s mission statement includes:

1. The core audience target: entrepreneurs and business owners
2. What will be delivered to the audience: useful information, advice, insights, resources, and inspiration
3. The outcome for the audience: growing their businesses

Inc.'s mission statement is incredibly simple and includes no words that could be misunderstood.

To summarize, to craft your content mission statement, you need to know your target audience, what to deliver to address their needs, and how it will help them. We'll explore this in the next chapter on Buyer Personas.

Stay away from tongue-twisting jargon and buzzwords.

One way to do this is by keeping it concise. Think verb-target-outcome, the author of *The Eight-Word Mission Statement* (Harvard Business Review) recommends.

Using the Inc. example, we can reframe the mission statement to: *Inspire entrepreneurs to run and grow their business.* Verb-target-outcome in eight words.

To be sure, *Inc.'s* full mission statement is great just the way it is. The shortening exercise is an attempt to get into the habit of crafting a pithy statement that everyone can refer to before each piece of content is produced. The more concise, the easier it is to remember (and to imprint on marketing swag).

After you've crafted a content marketing mission statement, don't tuck it away. Hang it on the wall. Make it a permanent fixture on your whiteboard. Then, before you produce any more content or add it to your editorial calendar, ask, "Does the content support our mission statement?" Proceed if it does. Otherwise, reject it.

5 Identify Your Potential Clients With Buyer Personas

The first step in developing a content strategy for your law firm is to identify your buyer personas. According to HubSpot, "A buyer persona is a semi-fictional representation of your ideal customer based on market research and real data about your existing customers." For law firms, this means a representation of who your clients are, including their demographics, behavior patterns, needs, concerns, goals, and objectives.

A law firm may have multiple buyer personas. For example, if your firm is focused on corporate law, your buyer personas may include business owners, entrepreneurs, and in-house counsel. Each type of buyer is a different persona with different needs, concerns, and goals.

On the other hand, if you run a matrimonial practice, you probably only have one persona, an individual who is considering or is in the process of a divorce.

Nonetheless, identifying your buyer personas is critical to help you determine what kind of content you should be creating for your target audience and to help you develop an editorial calendar.

So how do you go about identifying and creating your buyer personas? Here are some tips:

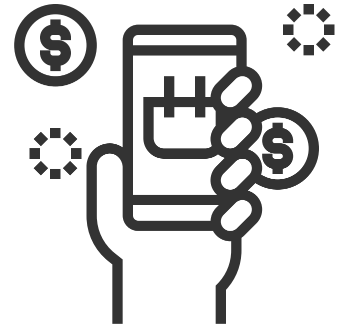
- Look through your **email database or your CRM system** to determine what your clients read on your email newsletters and on your websites.
- When you create **forms on your website**, make sure you capture as much information as possible, so you can easily segment your clients and prospects and deliver the right content to them at the right time.
- **Talk to your existing clients.** Ask them what their top concerns, needs, goals, and objectives are. Find out what keeps them up at night and what kind of opportunities they are interested in. Make sure you speak to both good and problem clients. Don't just talk to clients who love the service you are providing for them. Talk to clients who are unsatisfied with your service or who have complained.
- If you don't have any existing clients that fit a persona you are going after, **do some re search**. There are many tools available, including social media networks like LinkedIn and Twitter that can help you figure out what your target audience is interested in and what they are reading.

- **Look at what your competitors are doing.** What kind of content are they publishing? How much engagement are they getting? This will provide you with ideas and help you to identify gaps and opportunities with your content.
- **Talk to prospects.** If there is a certain type of client you would like to have, set up informational interviews with some prospects and ask them what they care about: what is important to them and what they are interested in learning more about.

Sometimes it may be difficult to get people to agree to be interviewed. If that is the case, you may want to consider an incentive. Make sure you let potential interviewees know that you are not trying to sell them anything. All you want is information. Be clear about what you want from them, and make sure that you make it as easy as possible for them to say yes. Go to their office or arrange for a quick phone call. Ask them to suggest a time that works for them.

Identifying your buyer personas is a critical step in developing a content marketing strategy for law firms. **Buyer personas will help you to determine what kind of content you should be creating for your target audience** and help you to develop an editorial calendar.

6 The Buyer's Journey: Awareness > Evaluation > Purchase



Some law firms create blog posts or videos or attorney bios, but this isn't necessarily what you want to create for an automated nurture or drip campaign. The buyer's journey consists of the awareness, evaluation, and purchase stages, with loyalty following close behind.

The same analysis can be used in legal services, even though it's slightly different. Instead of purchasing a product, the client decides to choose your firm's services. But how can you produce the right content that reaches the right people along with the right stage of the buyer's journey? Often law firms create a lot of content around the purchase stage, but forget about the awareness and evaluation stages.

What does each stage of the buyer's journey mean?

Awareness is the initial research stage, when someone is not ready to choose which product or service to buy, and they just want to be educated as much as possible. Then, once they decide on a budget, they begin to evaluate their options. They might also reach out to friends and family for recommendations or more information. Finally, they are ready to purchase.

Firms that focus on consumers have a shorter buyer's journey to work with than B2B law firms, whose buyers are typically much more complex, with more decisions to make. Whether purchasing a product or service, consumers will go through the buyer's journey.

What do you need to begin this process?

You must create buyer personas to figure out who your clients are, and the types of people who actually buy from you. You must define these personas and consider their challenges and questions to develop content that they will be interested in. According to your buyer persona research, you can identify topics and then understand what types of content to create for each stage of the buyer's journey.

Awareness-stage content is top-of-funnel, more general information. Then, evaluation- (or interest-) stage content is more in-depth, and for the middle of the funnel. Finally, the bottom of the funnel is where the purchasing (action) stage is found, and it's when you present prospects and clients with an offer. Your ultimate goal is to direct people toward the bottom of the funnel.

After you have a content strategy and a defined target audience, you need a platform to implement an automated marketing process. Marketing automation tools let you know where the person is, at what stage of the funnel or the journey. Without this level of individual tracking technology, you will just be guessing and cannot effectively produce the right content for the right people at the right time.

What kind of content should a law firm produce in the awareness stage?

Blogs are really good for the awareness level because they can effectively explain topics to your audience. They're high-level, educational, and easy to create.

Checklists are also great because they're easy for the consumers to read. Another medium to convey awareness-level content: explainer videos that discuss topics and trends in your practice areas. These are helpful in educating clients and prospects.

What kind of content should a law firm create for the evaluation stage?

The middle of the funnel is where you need to start demonstrating your expertise in a practice area or subject matter. At this point, prospective clients are already aware of their problem and are evaluating possible solutions. It's not enough to just state credentials in your attorney bio. People are evaluating you for experience, skills, and knowledge.

One of the best types of content for this stage is a case study. If you don't want to name clients, you can create general case studies that demonstrate your level of experience. Webinars, white papers, and e-books are other opportunities to establish yourself as an expert in a way that's more in-depth than blog posts or checklists. There's a lot you can do with this type of content afterward as well.

What kind of content should a law firm create for the purchase stage?

This can be the most difficult stage for legal services. However, you can provide foot-in-the-door services that can give prospects a small trial of what you offer. For example, audit tools or free consultations allow prospects to try out your services risk-free while helping your law firm build trust.

How does marketing automation implement this strategy?

With marketing automation tools, you can create workflows. When you're ready to launch a campaign, you can create a drip campaign that begins with awareness-type content, moves to evaluation-stage drips that include webinars or case studies, and finally gives your audience an offer.

Marketing automation allows you to create drip campaigns efficiently. You don't have to worry about manually sending these drips or categorizing contacts by buyer journey stage. Automation platforms do this all for you and allow you to monitor, analyze, and edit these campaigns after they start.

Law firms can begin implementing a buyer journey–driven content marketing strategy by creating just one campaign and seeing how that goes. It can make a big impact to actually see the results of marketing automation when you utilize it to its full potential.

7 Develop an Editorial Calendar

An editorial calendar saves time and keeps your content efforts organized, consistent, and on point with your content strategy.

Planning your content ahead of time allows you to step back and look at how everything fits together to serve an overall objective. If you're trying to come up with ideas and create content at the same time, it's difficult to maintain that kind of consistency.

Creating an Editorial Calendar

First, decide on the overall goal for the content your law practice is producing. Are you trying to educate readers? Build authority in your area of practice? Maybe the idea is to highlight events relevant to an industry your firm serves.

Once you have a clear goal, it becomes easy to sort through ideas and be sure that each individual piece of content serves that goal.

Next, try to come up with general ideas for the types of content you want to produce. These ideas will serve as templates that can be refined into individual pieces. Think about things like:

- Case studies
- Relevant industry news
- Solving specific problems
- Education about specific topics

Once you've decided on what types of content will work best, it comes down to ideas and topics for individual content pieces. These will become the entries on your calendar.

Tools for Creating Your Editorial Calendar

The right tool for putting together the calendar depends on how you prefer to do things, and the complexity of your content creation and scheduling. There are viable solutions for everyone, from a simple implementation suitable for a one-person show to complex applications for team collaboration.

Trello

Trello uses the simple idea of a kanban board to provide a powerful way to organize ideas and workflows. Their basic plan is free to use, and amazingly versatile. For larger projects, paid plans start at $9.99 per month.

CoSchedule

CoSchedule offers a powerful calendar interface that can be used for several different purposes. In addition to scheduling your content, there are functions allowing you to break things down into more specific areas, as well as social media integration and analytics. CoSchedule makes it easy to plan and collaborate with a team. Plans start at $30 per month.

Google Calendar

If your content creation team is pretty much just you, Google Calendar might be all you need. The trick is to create a new calendar under your existing account so that things like business meetings and personal appointments aren't mixed up with your content schedule.

Simply create a new calendar and add events on the days where you want to publish. You can create repeating events and then just go through once a month to fill in specific topics. Google Calendar is also easy to share with anyone else using a Gmail account.

Google Sheets

If your needs are a little too complex for Google Calendar, but not quite complicated enough for paid solutions, Google Sheets might fit the bill. There will be a bit of effort needed to get the initial template set up, but it will be a time-saver in the end.

You can also try Google search to find ready-made templates that you can copy, customize, and use for your law firm's editorial calendar.

On Track and On Time

An editorial calendar might just be the best thing you do to increase the effectiveness of your law firm's content marketing. Creating the calendar will force you to put together a coherent plan. Referring to the calendar as content is produced will help maintain focus and ensure that everyone is working toward the same goal. In the end, your content will have an overall consistency that drives audience interest, engagement, and conversions.

8 Get Your Content Found and Read

Build it, and they will *not* come.

Your potential clients need some help to find you.

Aside from the therapeutic value of getting your thoughts down on paper (or screen), the super-useful piece you spent more than a little time writing does no one any good unless they can find it.

Writing a blog post or website page is just the first step in creating content. Next comes optimization for search engines so people can find it when they search online for solutions to their problems, and promotion of the piece via social media and email marketing.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Write for people, and optimize for search.

Your writing must be client-centric—speaking to the problems of clients and prospects rather than writing about what you do and what you can offer.

For instance, this piece is based on questions and feedback we received from lawyers and legal marketers, not on the services we offer related to those issues. Providing something useful rather than promotional builds trust.

After you've created your content, take a look at the list of keywords you want to be ranked for. These are keywords that prospects enter into a search engine when they look for information about their problem. Keep in mind that prospects can also be referral sources.

Social Media

Social media is not a bullhorn. It's all about engaging and building relationships. This includes sharing useful content you produce. Shoot for sharing other people's content 80 percent of the time, with the other 20 percent being promotional. This is especially true for Twitter. The approach to Facebook and LinkedIn varies, as you'll share content less frequently on those platforms.

Be aware that organic reach can be limited on the social channels. Consider boosting an occasional post for a few dollars on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. This allows you to reach your target audience.

Email Newsletter

The reports of the death of email have been greatly exaggerated. It's still one of the more impactful digital marketing efforts around. Email is a great way to stay top-of-mind with clients and prospects for when they, or others they know, need your service.

Since you're already creating content for your blog and website, and curating articles for your social media feeds, you already have fodder for a useful weekly or monthly email newsletter. Use an email platform like MailChimp, which comes with a library of templates and is free for up to 2,000 contacts. Track your open and click rates to find out what's resonating with your email subscribers and create additional content related to those issues.

These three practices—search engine optimization, social media engagement, and an email newsletter—will allow people to find your content when they need help.

9 COPE - Create Once, Publish Everywhere

Marketing success is increasingly linked to the quality of your law firm content. It's how you demonstrate expertise, build your brand, and create relationships with clients, prospects, and influencers. Where should you house your content? You want to be where your potential audience is, but with increasingly lean staff and ever-expanding formats, channels, and platforms, it can all seem a bit overwhelming. It doesn't have to be if you adopt a "create once, publish everywhere" (COPE) strategy of repurposing content.

Create once, publish everywhere (COPE)

Popularized by National Public Radio (NPR), the philosophy of creating once and publishing everywhere, or COPE, enables content creators at law firms to create useful information that clients and prospects increasingly look for, without burdening lean teams strapped for time.

Use a content editorial calendar

Before you start writing, devise a content strategy. An editorial calendar serves as a guidepost and keeps you on track with your content roadmap. Asana or Trello are useful tools for a team of writers, but a simple Google Calendar works just fine. In Google Calendar, click on "My calendars," choose "Create new calendar" and name it "Content Calendar." A great benefit of doing this is getting into the habit of calendaring your tasks. To-Do list meets Google Calendar.

Content formats, platforms, and channels

Content formats are limited only by your imagination and bandwidth. Our focus in this chapter is to show how each are linked so that you only have to write once and then repurpose. Your blog is your content home base, so we'll start with that.

Blogs. This is the epicenter of your COPE content strategy. It can be attached to your website or live on a separate domain. This is where your editorial calendar comes in especially handy. The platform you should use for this is WordPress. It's optimized for blogging right out of the box and provides an intuitive content management system that handles both websites and blogs.

Infographics. Some of your blog posts, particularly listicles, such as top 10 posts, can be repurposed into a graphical representation. Pictures get shared more often and give readers a super-quick view of what you're trying to convey. You'll need some design help with this. Infographic designers on Upwork charge from less than $10/hour to more than $60/hour. Find one that fits your budget.

E-books and White Papers. A collection of your blog posts and infographics can now be compiled into a white paper or e-book. You can also do the reverse. Dig in and write an e-book;then each chapter becomes a blog post with a call to action for the e-book. Gate these premium information pieces to gather email addresses for your newsletter. Again, Upwork or other online freelance marketplaces offer affordable e-book editing, formatting, and design options.

Webinars. Did a certain blog post blow up with lots of traffic, feedback, and conversations? Expand it into a webinar. This could be quarterly or twice a year. Some companies do this monthly, but for law firms, a quarterly webinar is fine. A wrap-up of the webinar including video and slides then becomes another blog post.

Videos. After some postproduction work, add your webinar to a video resource page on your website. You can further break the recording into bite-sized bits for visitors to your website looking to solve a specific problem. Vimeo is a great platform to host your videos and easily embed on your site.

Slides. Slideshare is an underutilized platform. You spent a lot of time creating beautiful slides chock-full of useful information for your webinar or in-person presentation. Don't limit that effort to a one-time engagement. Give your slides an extra shelf life online on Slideshare. Embed and expand each slide in a blog post.

Podcasts. Podcasts are all the rage. A 20- to 40-minute recording weekly or even monthly is all it takes. Each episode then becomes a blog post. You can create a page on your site for the podcasts or simply add a "podcast" category or tag to each post so visitors can easily get a list of all podcast episodes on your site.

Email Newsletters. Your weekly or monthly newsletter keeps clients, prospects, and referral sources top-of-mind. You've already created useful content to share. Note that your gated e-books, white papers, and webinars also serve to grow your list of email contacts for the newsletter. This is very important for keeping your firm on the minds of potential clients, since they may not need your help at the moment, but may down the road.

Forms Databases. Build a page on your site with links to helpful forms. Often, that's how potential clients find you. Give a tutorial on how to fill out the form in a 2-minute video or script, and put it in a blog post.

Press Releases. This is still a potent tool. Not only do you get the distribution might of PRWeb or BusinessWire behind your bit of news, but it provides links back to your site, and you can create a blog post announcement with a link to the full press release.

Client Memos or Client Alerts. These are short pieces in response to court cases or regulatory changes that affect your clients. Every law firm does this. Repurpose, with some editing, as information pieces on your blog. If it was important to a current client, it certainly is to potential clients.

Guest Writing. Write a blog post for another publication. The byline will include a link back to your site. And you can create a summary of the post on your own blog with a link to the full text. Win-win.

Social Media. Share everywhere. 'Nuff said.

There you have it. Create content once, with your blog as control center, repurpose to other formats, and publish everywhere.

10 Tracking and Measuring Your Content Effort

How to Use Google Analytics to Measure the Impact of Your Law Firm Website

If you want to know what kind of impact your website and marketing efforts have made, you need to know which statistics to look at. Google Analytics allows you to track and analyze every last detail of your law firm's website and traffic. In fact, Google Analytics gives you so many options, and so much detail, that it can seem overwhelming and confusing.

Depending on what you are trying to measure, some of the numbers that Google Analytics provides will be relevant, while others will just get in the way.

Below are five specific areas you can look at to determine the impact your law firm's website is having and how well your marketing and advertising efforts are performing.

Traffic To Landing Pages

Setting up specific landing pages for specific marketing campaigns is an important part of online marketing. The target audience for each of your campaigns should be sent to a page tailored just for them.

Since all traffic coming into landing pages should be coming from advertisements, the amount of traffic they receive is a good indicator of how well your current ads are doing. By comparing traffic to your landing pages between campaigns and over time, you can see which advertising methods are producing the best results.

For example, if the landing page for campaign A is getting more traffic than the page for campaign B, you should be thinking about what is making campaign A work so much better and how that can be applied to campaign B.

You'll find statistics on landing pages under "Acquisition," then "Search Console."

Traffic Sources

Listed in Google Analytics as "Source/Medium" under "All Traffic," "Source/Medium" gives you an overview of where traffic to your law firm's website is coming from. These numbers will let you see which domains are sending the most traffic without getting into the details of individual URLs. For example, if you've got ads running on Facebook, Facebook should be high on the list of traffic sources.

By monitoring this section of Google Analytics regularly, you'll also be able to discover new sources of traffic that you may have been unaware of. For example, if your law practice gets mentioned on a popular forum or similar site, you'll see that domain rising in the list. You should take note and see if there's a way to work that site into future marketing efforts.

Referrals

Also found under the "All Traffic" section, referrals are similar to the traffic source, but will allow you to get more detail about where traffic is coming from. Here, you'll be able to see the individual URLs (pages) that sent traffic to your site.

The information in this section can help you further break down details from sources where you have ads running. It can also help you find individual mentions of your law practice on smaller sites. For example, if you find that your firm has been mentioned in an article on a somewhat popular site, it could be worth contacting the site owner(s) to see if there is a way to partner with them for more content or use that article to your advantage.

Conversions

It takes a bit more effort to set everything up, but by taking advantage of Google Analytics's conversion tracking, you can ascertain the value of traffic from specific sources. This will allow you to calculate the return on investment (ROI) on specific campaigns and advertising networks, as well as give you an idea of which sources deliver the most valuable traffic.

Popular Pages

If you click on "Behavior" and then "Site Content," you'll see a section labeled "Content Drill-down." This section will show you the most popular content on your site. This information is invaluable for fine-tuning your content to provide the most helpful, resonant information, and produce the best traffic results.

Once you know which pages are attracting the most visitors, you can make adjustments to those pages to help your firm provide more useful content, generate more leads, and recruit more clients.

By monitoring these areas of your statistics regularly, you should be able to form a clear picture of where your website traffic is coming from, how much that traffic is really worth, and what your law firm is doing to attract those viewers.

11 Blogging Tools

Blogging helps you become established as an expert in your area(s) of practice. It provides useful information for those in need. And, as you become a trusted resource, potential clients and referral sources engage. But you already know that, and the only thing holding you back is the time to write. Here's some help.

First, you must be passionate about what you write. You will find the time to write, and the words will flow. Next, use the proper tools. Here are a few to get you started.

Feedly. How many times have you come across an article on Facebook or Twitter or while researching something and wanted to read more from the author or site? You can with an RSS aggregator like Feedly. Sign up for an account and subscribe to blogs and other sites of interest, and whenever a new piece is published, it will automagically appear in your Feedly stream. It's how to keep up with what's happening in the legal profession, and it provides lots of ideas for blog posts and presentations.

Pocket. Ever have 23 tabs open in Chrome and another 14 in Firefox? Sign up for a Pocket account, install the browser add-ons, and save articles and web pages of interest. If you're working on a few different ideas for blog posts, you can assign a tag to each page you save, so when you're ready to compile research materials for the post, you're way ahead of the game.

Evernote. If you haven't given Evernote a try, now's the time to do so. It's a note-taking and information management application that sits on your desktop and syncs with browser and mobile versions. Keep it open all day so you can jot down ideas and store and organize information. Create a "Blog Posts" notebook and start adding notes. (Evernote is organized by Notebooks and Notes—hence the name.) Each note can be a blog post title and contain links and text and images.

Don't waste time researching and testing blogging platforms. Use WordPress. It's user-friendly and extensible with thousands of plugins, and it has a vibrant, helpful community of users and developers. Simply log in to the application, click on "new post," and start typing. Or, if you've already started the post in Evernote, copy and paste, and finish up in WordPress.

Just because you compose beautiful prose and useful content doesn't mean that anyone will read it. Why? Because they can't find it. You'll need to do some very basic search engine optimization. Since you're already using WordPress, add the SEO Yoast plugin and tinker with your keyword, title, and meta description to increase the chances of being found when someone searches for the topic you just wrote about.

An email newsletter is an oldie but goodie. A compilation of your blog posts becomes a weekly or monthly email newsletter. This increases traffic to your blog and keeps your firm top-of-mind. Put a newsletter sign-up widget on your blog. Again, because you're using WordPress, it's a simple plugin configuration that feeds the email addresses directly into your MailChimp account.

You'll need to share your content on social media. This is a no-brainer. And it won't require that you waste hours on Facebook and Twitter. Buffer and HootSuite are social media management tools, and they both have free versions. Schedule your posts in either app, and engage as time permits.

You only need one tool for measurement and analytics, and, surprise, it's a Google tool. Sign up for Google Analytics and use a WordPress plugin (yes, another one) to connect your blog to your analytics account. You will then be able to track which blog posts are being read, referral sources (who's citing them), and a whole lot more. Start with just the top blog posts and referral sources metrics to build relationships and create content strategies. You can go deeper as you become more familiar with the platform.

12 Appendix: Law Firm Content Marketing Checklists

A. Blogging Checklist

Here's a checklist for blogging to help guide you when you sit down to write a blog post, to make the exercise more productive and beneficial.

☑ Watch your word count.

Word count makes a difference to both readers and search engines. If content is too short, it tends to be ignored by both. If there is such a thing as an industry standard, it would be 500-700 words per post. Most blog posts will fall within this range; 300 words is considered a bare minimum. If you're on a roll and end up with with a thought-leadership piece over 1,000 words, that's also great.

☑ The right title can take you to the top.

Most readers will decide if they are going to read an article solely on the basis of the title. Many writers say they spend just as much time creating a title as they do writing the article itself. Experts say that you should aim for titles with at least six words and no more than 13. That's around 50-60 characters. It's also highly recommended to make use of "power" words to grab attention.

Tip: The title of your posts can be in the form of questions from your clients.

☑ Ask a question and offer a solution.

Readers want to know what they're going to get up front. Your introduction should include a question that you intend to answer or a brief explanation of how you'll solve a problem. Bonus points if you can do both.

☑ People (and social media) like pictures.

You should always include at least one picture in a blog post. Try to include more if you have places where you can fit in relevant images or videos. Pictures are visually pleasing on their own but also serve to break up blocks of text and make reading easier.

Studies show that users pay attention to information-carrying images that show relevant content, so choose your images wisely.

The image is also auto-added when you post links on social media channels, including Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, increasing the likelihood of the link being clicked on and shared.

☑ Use keywords in headings and text.

Blogs are the perfect SEO tool. Don't overdo anything, but make sure to include relevant keywords throughout the text. Try to work the most important ones into the title or headings. It's also helpful to use keywords in "alt" image descriptions and captions.

☑ Link to relevant internal content.

There are benefits for both search engines and readers when you link to other relevant content on your site. To improve SEO, the words in your links should describe the content you are linking to.

For example, avoid "click here" type links. If you want to link to legal information, use a sentence like "We have a large online library of legal information," and link the words "library of legal information."

☑ Write a real meta description.

The meta description is what the search engines will show to viewers when your pages appear in search results. Make sure it contains your main keyword or phrase and genuinely describes what a reader will find on the page. The meta description should be between 150 and 170 characters.

☑ Include a call to action on each post.

One of the most effective and most overlooked methods for generating leads and conversions is to simply tell the reader what you want them to do. Don't be afraid to ask a direct question or give instructions. Just adding the phrase "Get in touch with us today" to the end of blog posts will increase the number of people who contact your firm.

☑ Get the word out.

It's nice when readers find your content on their own, but that's not going to happen for the most part—at least, not right away. Whenever your law firm publishes a new piece of blog content, it should be shared through any and all of your firm's social media accounts. If possible, it should be shared several times over several days to get the most eyes on it.

B. Buyer Persona Checklist

To create a credible buyer persona for your target audience, you can use the following focus areas and questions as a framework for your checklist. Depending on the area(s) of law that you or your firm deal with, some points may become more important than others. Use your best judgment to decide which will be most relevant for your specific situation.

☑ Personal Demographics

What is your gender? How old are you? Where do you live? Are you single? Are you married? Do you have children? If yes, how many? What is the annual average income of your household?

Key Point: Demographic stats are easy to get. They also paint a more distinct and personal picture of your target market.

☑ Educational Background

What education level did you complete? Did you go to college? What university did you attend? What degree did you get?

Key Point: In this category, you need to be specific. For example, "NYU Tisch School of Arts" is better than just "film acting conservatory."

☑ Career Path

What job(s) did you have before? How did you wind up where you are right now? Did you choose your profession according to your major in school? Have you ever been promoted?

Key Point: As with the educational background, you need specific details here.

☑ Company

Which industry is your company in? What is the size of the business? How many employees are there?

Key Point: Learning the specifics of your persona's company will help you create better forms for landing pages on your firm's website.

☑ Role

What is your job title? What do you specifically do? Who is your immediate boss? What is his/her position? Who reports to you?

Key Point: If your firm handles business clients, these pieces of information are crucial. Case in point: if your buyer persona is well-versed in the ins and outs of the industry, no unnecessary intro is needed. They don't need help from others to make a buying decision. If your firm is more consumer-focused, look at the details as extra information to better understand the subtleties of your persona's lifestyle.

☑ Skills and Tools

What are the skills you must handle as part of your job responsibilities? Where did you learn these skills? Which programs and tools do you use every day? Every week?

Key Point: Being aware of the resources and tools they use (and don't) helps you determine parallels in your service. As such, you can make any necessary adjustments.

☑ Challenges

What is your biggest struggles right now? How do you plan to solve them?

Key Point: Your firm solves a specific problem your target clients have. Make sure to learn how these challenges affect their daily lives. Go into details. Pay attention to the nuances that underscore how their problem makes them feel.

☑ Lifestyle (Both Work and Off-Time)

How does your typical day go? What does "busy work schedule" look like? What do you specifically do when you're most productive? Outside of work, what do you do? What hobbies occupy your time? What do you do for fun? What TV shows do you watch? What books do you read? How often do you use the internet? Do you have a social media account? Do you read blogs?

Key Point: This set should incorporate the activities and tasks your target audience does both in and out of work. To piece together how their typical day goes, it's important to know how they stay informed. Once you learn how they get the news, you can create (or solidify) presence in those places. You can also put more emphasis on building credibility on those platforms.

☑ Buying Habits

How do you prefer to shop? Do you do a lot of online shopping? Do you prefer going to physical stores? Do you like talking to a salesperson? How do you search for product information online? What is your most recent purchase?

Key Point: The experience of engaging your legal services should line up with your persona's expectations. When you can predict their questions or objections, you can prepare for them from the get-go. You may even educate them through your marketing endeavors.

C. SEO Checklist

Following is a checklist that you can use to make sure you're hitting all the important points as you put SEO techniques to work for your law firm.

☑ Do your keyword research.

The starting point for your SEO efforts is always going to be keyword research. First, you'll need to pick a few words or phrases that are relevant to your law practice. From there, you can find related terms to consider and make estimates of the traffic that these keywords will drive if you rank well in the search results. The idea is to find keywords that will give you a good balance of high traffic and low competition.

☑ Select a target keyword for each page you create.

Every page of your firm's website should be created with a specific keyword in mind. This basically means that each page needs to stay on topic. Discussing more than one topic on a page will dilute your results. The only exception might be your home page, which could list several different services that your firm provides. Even this is debatable, though.

☑ Build inbound links that include target keywords in their text.

Inbound links are an important part of SEO. Search engines see many inbound links as a testament to the quality of the information on a page. Their logic is that there must be a good reason that so many people are linking to the same page. The result is higher ranking in search results.

As you set up inbound links or contact others to ask them to link to your site, it's important to make sure that links contain the keywords you're targeting. Again, if the search engines see many links using the same or similar keywords, they assume that this page has authoritative information on the topic. You should try to avoid links that say "Click Here" in favor of specific links like "Corporate Law for Small Businesses."

☑ Page titles should include the target keywords.

Each page should include the target keyword or phrase in the title, preferably in the first two or three words, and written in natural language. Consider that the page title will be the first thing that a user sees in the search results. It should tell the reader (and the search engine) quickly and clearly what they will find on the page.

Keep page titles under 70 characters. Anything longer will be truncated.

☑ Include target keywords in the meta description.

The meta description will appear immediately after the page title in search results. Like the title, it should contain the target keywords written in natural language, and within the first few words, if possible. The description should be clear and concise and entice the reader to click on your page in the search results.

☑ Use sub headers to reinforce ideas on the page.

Usually placed as "H2" tags, sub headers help break up blocks of text on the page for readers, and, more importantly, help reinforce the ideas behind your content to search engines.

☑ Include target keywords in "H" (H1, H2, H3, etc.) tags.

Your target keywords should appear in at least one page or paragraph heading. Again, don't force anything. Make sure it appears in naturally written language.

☑ Create a human-readable URL structure.

Whenever possible, you should try to create URLs that describe the content of the page and include your keywords.

This means, for example, that in place of a URL such as "example.com/?post=4753," you should strive to create URLs more like "example.com/laymans-small-business-law-guide." Most content management or blogging systems can be configured to do this automatically.

☑ Create HTML and XML sitemaps.

Sitemaps are basically a list of all the pages that appear on your site; an index. A sitemap allows search engines to quickly and accurately see every page that your site has to offer. The result is faster and more accurate inclusion in search results.

☑ Maintain a robots.txt file.

Most search engines will look for a robots.txt file on your site. Generally, sites use this file to tell web robots (like search engine spiders) to ignore certain files or directories on the site.

If you want absolutely everything on your site to appear on search engines, you might not need this file, but you should familiarize yourself with how it works and what it can do before you make that decision.

☑ Establish a presence on major social media platforms.

Aside from using social media to engage and share and promote your content and curate useful information, it can help to boost search results. As more people find your site and share your content, your perceived authority will grow.

☑ Complete your firm's profile on Google Business.

A Google Business listing is especially important for reaching your firm's local audience. Not only will people in nearby geographic areas be more likely to see your listings, they can read and write reviews of your service, get directions to your office, and easily find things like contact information and hours of operation.

D. Social Media Checklist

To make sure that your firm gets going in the right direction, we've put together a social media strategy checklist. If you're just starting out, this checklist will help you put together a reliable social media strategy. If you've already started building a presence, it will show you where you might be able to make adjustments to improve the effectiveness of your current strategy.

☑ Define your audience.

The single most important part of planning your strategy is to know your audience. Everything you do is going to be geared toward nurturing and growing your audience.

You should be as detailed as possible when considering who you are trying to reach. Think about age, gender, profession, marital status, etc. No detail is too small to be considered. Go beyond generalizations. You shouldn't be looking for "people who need a lawyer." You should be looking for "people in the New York City area who have recently been involved in a traffic accident and might be looking for a personal injury or criminal defense lawyer."

☑ Select your platform(s).

If you've created a good profile of your ideal audience, you should be able to pick out the social media platforms they are most likely to use. For example, if your audience is made up of professionals, they're likely on LinkedIn and Twitter. A different demographic may be on Facebook, Pinterest, and Instagram.

It's important not to spread yourself too thin. Try to pick one to three platforms on which to be active. It's much better to do well on one or two than to perform badly on five or six.

☑ Define clear, realistic goals.

It is important to have clear and specific goals in mind as you're planning your firm's strategy. For example, are you trying to generate more hits to your website, or increase your following on a specific platform? Do you want more subscriptions to your newsletter, or are you trying to generate more inbound telephone consultations?

Make your goals as specific as possible. "Increase our Facebook following" is not a clear goal. "Increase our Facebook following by 20 percent over the next 60 days" is clear and measurable.

☑ Create and curate content that speaks to your audience.

With a clearly defined audience and realistic goals in mind, the next step is to create and share content that aligns with your goals and provides real value. It should be educational or help audience members solve a problem. You could, for example, post content on legal terms and examples, or news involving trials or changes in the law.

The idea is to show that you are knowledgeable and up-to-date in your area of practice without making your account look like an endless, self-promotional commercial.

☑ Create policies on how to respond to your audience.

If more than one person will be interacting with your audience, it's important to make sure that everyone involved knows what's expected of them. Responses should appear unified and consistent. The personality presented should be that of your law firm, not the individuals doing the posting.

It is especially important that everyone involved knows how to deal with negative comments. Responding improperly to negative comments can do great harm to your law firm's reputation.

☑ Measure your results.

Like everything else involved with online marketing, you should be tracking the results you get from social media. You should be watching several factors, such as:

- Size and growth of your audience on social platforms
- What types of content create the most engagement
- Visitors referred to your website through social media
- Leads generated through social media

E. Email Newsletter Checklist

If you have never put together an email newsletter, or even if you're already using email but not getting the results you're after, the following checklist will get you well on your way to optimizing the ROI of your email marketing campaigns.

☑ **Make it easy for people to sign up.**

First and foremost, you need to find people to send your newsletter to. It should be incredibly easy for people to subscribe. Especially if your firm is using blog software like WordPress, you should have an email signup form that appears "above the fold" on every page of your site. Pop-ups that appear as someone scrolls down the page, or when they seem to be exiting the page, also work very well.

You'll find plugins for most platforms that can help you set this up. Email service providers will also provide help if you need it.

☑ **Send your newsletter at least once a month.**

The main idea behind sending a newsletter is to keep your law firm top-of-mind with your readers. At a minimum, you should send out a newsletter at least once per month. If you can generate enough relevant content, sending one out weekly should provide even better results.

☑ **Draw readers back to your website.**

The overall goal should be to entice readers to return to your website. Ideally, newsletter links should lead to more content that will interest readers, or to specific landing pages designed to convert them into new clients.

☑ **Track statistics.**

Just like everything else you do within your firm's marketing efforts, it is essential that you track your results. You should be looking at how many emails are opened, which links within the emails generate clicks, and how many readers end up back on your website.

☑ **Use those statistics to optimize send times.**

Once you've sent out a few newsletters, you will undoubtedly see certain patterns develop. If you see higher engagement rates at certain times or on certain days, you should schedule emails to go out at those times. In general, emails sent in the middle of the week between 10 a.m. and 12 p.m. tend to get the best results.

☑ Never send emails on Friday.

Friday is the end of the workweek. People are anxious to get done and get home. It's a terrible time to try to reach anyone. There is a very high chance that your newsletter will be put off for next week—and then completely forgotten under a mountain of Monday morning emails—or that it will be ignored altogether.

☑ Put thought into your subject line.

The subject line of your emails can make a tremendous difference in how many people actually open and read your newsletter. One major email service provider released a report showing that subject lines can make the difference between open rates under 10 percent and others over 85 percent. SubjectLine.com provides a free tool to help you analyze your own subject lines for better performance.

☑ Keep it short.

Remember, the idea is to draw people back to your website. Even if your subject line is enticing, nobody is going to read your email if they are greeted with a huge block of text when they open it. Try to provide short, relevant, interesting points to draw readers back to your site for more content and information. Your newsletter should be a sort of digest, not the whole book.

13 About Good2bSocial

Good2bSocial works with law firms and companies in the legal industry who are serious about growth but are often frustrated that they've spent time, money, and effort on their website and on digital marketing, yet they still don't get the traffic and leads they had hoped for.

Good2bSocial is a growth agency that uses a methodology that focuses on attracting clients by offering valuable content at each step of their customer journey. We attract web visitors by creating remarkable content such as videos and blog posts that serve as the foundation of every effective inbound strategy.

Next, we convert visitors into qualified leads by creating lead magnets such as webinars, white papers and case studies that segment prospects by their level of interest in your services and their propensity to make a hiring decision.

Finally, we implement strategic nurturing campaigns that help our client's close deals and secure new business for their firm/company.

Good2bSocial offers a full suite of digital marketing services including: high-impact content strategy and production, SEO, email marketing, online advertising, video and podcast production, marketing automation, social media management and monitoring and website development and redesign.

Want to learn more about legal marketing?

Go to

good2bsocial.com