



DRAFT

Social Media Marketing for Lawyers:

What Is It and Why Does My Practice Need It?

Social Media Marketing for Lawyers

What is Social Media Marketing (SMM) and why do lawyers need to use these tools in the current legal climate? The growth of “social media,” such as facebook, twitter, blogging, and rating products and services on the internet, has impacted the way people and organizations communicate. SMM programs use these tools and center on efforts to create content that attracts attention and encourages readers to share. This is particularly useful for lawyers, as it focuses advertising on issues. It permits lawyers to provide something valuable to the community and in doing so foster self-promotion.

The business of practicing law is changing. Though there are many reasons for this, an important one is simply greater competition, the number of practicing lawyers increasing each year. Also, with the pervasive use of the internet average people are far more knowledgeable, or at least believe that they are, and are more inclined to scrutinize practitioners rather than trust based merely on a lawyer’s status. Lawyers are also now reviewed and ranked on hundreds of websites. Regardless of whether these reviews and ranks are an accurate reflection of a lawyer’s performance and abilities, they are taken seriously by potential clients and impact hiring decisions, for better or worse.

The Lawyer Pool is Changing

The number of people taking the Law School Admissions Test rose 20 percent between 2008 and 2010¹, and between 1995 and 1997 the number of ABA-accredited law schools increased by 11%². Yet in 2009 the Bureau of Statistics reports that there were 22,200 job cuts in the legal sector³. According to legal consulting firm Hildebrandt Baker Robbins almost 27 percent of the 65,000 non-partner lawyer jobs in the nation’s top 200 law firms, or 17,500 people, could be

¹ Ruiz, R. R. (2010, January 9). Recession spurs interest in graduate, law schools. *The New York Times*, p. A18.

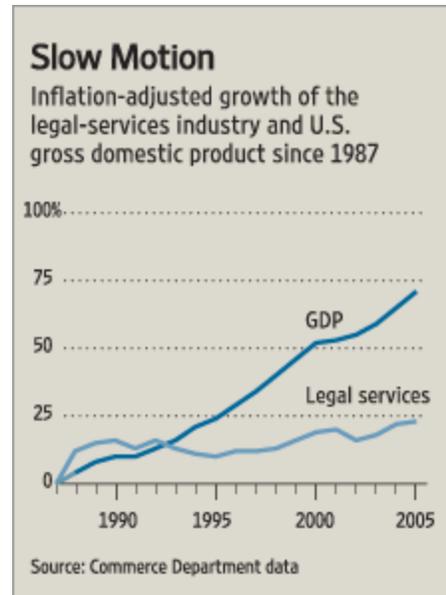
² Efrati, A. (2007, September 24). Hard case: job market wanes for U.S. lawyers. *The Wall Street Journal*, p. A1.

³ Hopkins, K. (2010, July 14). As law school tuitions climb, so does demand. *U.S. News & World Report*, from <http://www.usnews.com>.



eliminated or shifted to lower-paying assignments in the next five to seven years⁴. Big “white-shoe” law firms have typically made up 28 percent of recent law school grads' employment, but they have slashed their associate programs in 2009 and 2010, rescinding offers to thousands and deferring the start dates of thousands more.

Those who do land jobs with big firms have starting salaries of around \$160,000. But the majority of entry level lawyer jobs pay between \$40,000 and \$60,000, with these lawyers carrying well over \$100,000 in law school debt - calculating approximately 60 percent of the paycheck going toward student loans⁵. Between 1975 and 1995 the inflation-adjusted average income of 75% of U.S. lawyers dropped⁶.



Clearly, if you haven't felt the crunch as a lawyer, you are in the minority and the odds are, you will. The image of the fat-cat lawyer is largely the product of movies and television. But everyday lawyers have to assume part of the blame. The wealthy elitist image has been cultivated by firms that want to appear powerful to impress clients. It brings in wealth and justifies high fees. Unfortunately, for all but that minority of lawyers who actually represent the wealthy and are able to maintain high fees, it does the profession a disservice. Most legal clients are average people and average businesses who are intimidated by this image and find lawyers inaccessible, or worse.

Lawyer Reputations

Hardly a scientific poll, but one blogger on Yahoo Answers responds to the question “Why do people hate lawyers? Is it because they are considered corrupt?”

Lawyers are parasites on all of society. I have seen good quality industry put into bankruptcy by lawyers filing bogus suits -- just to line their pockets. Even Jesus did not like Lawyers. They operate like tape worms to bring down the standard of living of all societies while producing nothing and lining their own pockets!

⁴ Cherney, M. (2010, September 27). More law firm jobs headed for the chopping block. *Law360*, from <http://www.law360.com>.

⁵ Lowrey, A. (2010, October 27). A case of supply v. demand. *Slate*, from <http://www.slate.com>.; Efrati, A. (2007, September 24). Hard case: job market wanes for U.S. lawyers. *The Wall Street Journal*, p. A1.

⁶ Efrati, A. (2007, September 24). Hard case: job market wanes for U.S. lawyers. *The Wall Street Journal*, p. A1.



Even if this perspective is a bit extreme, the point is taken. Lawyers are not beloved and this does nothing positive for the pursuit of engendering loyal trusting clients or engaging new ones.

The notion that lawyers are stuffed shirts with superior attitudes, and that they are corrupt, are two contradictory yet equally prevalent perspectives on lawyers. The former with a long history perpetuated by the profession as a whole, and the later most likely a more modern interpretation resulting from tort injury television commercials, and then supported politically by those who support tort reform. Outside influences notwithstanding, these perceptions are largely the progeny of lawyers themselves -- in large part because of the attitudes of lawyers toward advertising, and what we now call marketing.

Legal Advertising

The controversy over legal advertising in the U.S. goes back 100 years. Before the Canons of Professional Ethics were published by the American Bar Association (ABA) in 1908, advertising within the legal profession was common. The ABA believed that lawyer advertising was unprofessional and shined a negative light on the profession of law -- and with the drafting of the Canons, legal profession advertising became almost non-existent. In 1972 a battle began over this ban, and in 1976 the Supreme Court essentially lifted the ban based on trade and commerce laws and freedom of speech. States were still permitted to regulate for true and misleading information, but the tide had changed. This led to a boon on advertising, mostly on television by tort lawyers advertising their services for slip and fall cases, medical malpractice, and against the pharmaceutical industry⁷.

The battle over legal advertising continues today, though clearly change has been dramatic. Despite complex regulation in every state and ABA standards that attempt to maintain a certain image and “ethical standard” for the profession, simple common sense applications and disclaimers make advertising permissible and increasingly prevalent. Frankly, given the state of oversaturation of the market as described above, legal advertising is all but mandatory for a successful practice. And with advances in technology most lawyers at least market themselves with websites. Though website marketing is now hardly sufficient and some lawyers are expanding their internet and information technology presence in other forms, notably Social Media Marketing -- currently the gold standard of online marketing and perhaps a new requirement for all online marketing.

⁷ Legal Advertising in the United States. (n.d.). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved October 1, 2010, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legal_advertising_in_the_United_States.



The Internet and Social Media Marketing

SMM is a recent addition to organizational integrated marketing communications plans. With the emergence of Web 2.0, the internet provides a set of tools that allow people to build social and business connections, share information, and collaborate on projects online. The growth of “social media” has impacted the way organizations communicate. SMM programs usually center on efforts to create content that attracts attention and encourages readers to share it with their social networks. A corporate message spreads from user to user and presumably resonates because it is coming from a trusted source, as opposed to the brand or company itself.

Social media has become a platform that is easily accessible to anyone with internet access, opening doors for organizations to increase their brand awareness and facilitate conversations with the customer. Additionally, social media serves as a relatively inexpensive platform for organizations to implement marketing campaigns.

Organizations can receive direct feedback from their customers and targeted markets⁸.

This is particularly useful for lawyers, as it focuses advertising on issues, rather than on the law firm explicitly. It permits lawyers to provide something valuable to the community and in doing so foster self-promotion. It is perhaps the antithesis of the tort-law television advertising we have become familiar with. Rather than boast about jackpot winnings, express disdain for potential defendants, or implicitly compare legal prowess, it engages the community in a positive and productive fashion which fosters trust and demonstrates concern without distastefully aggressive tactics. It also permits lawyers to prove their value through information and interaction, rather than a self satisfied proclamation -- combating both the public perceptions that lawyers are inaccessible and sleazy. Of course, this is only true if SMM is done right.

Search Engine Optimization

Many, if not most, lawyers and law firms now have websites to market their services. Generally websites are built by website designers or marketing firms that incorporate website design into a marketing package. Behind the scenes website builders use tools to aid in the visibility of the website -- meaning optimizing the ranking of the website on search engines, increasing links to the website from other online sources, and maximizing the success of search-ability through keywords, etc. Until recently the primary focus for obtaining website visibility was Search Engine Optimization (SEO).

⁸ Social Media Marketing. (n.d.). In Wikipedia. Retrieved October 1, 2010, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_media_marketing.



SEO is the process of improving the visibility of a web site or a web page in search engines via the "natural" or un-paid ("organic" or "algorithmic") search results. As an Internet marketing strategy, SEO considers how search engines work and what people search for. Optimizing a website may involve editing its content and HTML and associated coding to both increase its relevance to specific keywords and to remove barriers to the indexing activities of search engines. Promoting a site to increase the number of backlinks, or inbound links, is another SEO tactic⁹.

Though this is arguably no longer the gold standard, it is still the primary focus of most website builders. The internet moves fast, often much faster than the learning curve of people implementing tools.

In the broadest sense, SEO is nothing more than the process of improving the volume or quality of traffic to a website or a web page from search engines, using natural or un-paid search results. This is contrast to other forms of search engine marketing which generate traffic through direct-paid methods like PPC [pay per click] advertising and paid placements. The problem is that many SEO agencies continue to market and implement old SEO methods that are largely ineffective, generate junk traffic, damage online reputations, are often slow to achieve results and are very expensive.

This is bad news for SEO companies that raked in huge profits in the past, but it's actually good news for both consumers and companies that do business on the web. When SEO was dominant, search engines directed us to pages that didn't necessarily offer what we needed. But the game is changing and more relevant results are now delivered by search engines¹⁰.

Social Media Marketing

In comes Social Media Marketing. Today most website builders will incorporate some SMM into the web design. This is usually in the form of incorporating a facebook and twitter page. Some of the more sophisticated legal websites will include blogs and video.

The best way to generate high-volume quality traffic for your website is to implement a comprehensive online visibility strategy using a wide variety of methods. Today's preferred methods include strategies such as posting useful comments on third-party blogs and forums, encouraging customers to write positive online reviews, engaging consumers in feedback

⁹ Search Engine Optimization. (n.d.). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved October 1, 2010, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Search_engine_optimization.

¹⁰ Moschini, S. (2010, August 10). SEO dethroned online visibility is the new king. *OnlineVisibilityExperts.com*, from <http://onlinevisibilityexperts.com>.



forums, producing compelling videos, placing well-written articles on quality sites, blogging, and much more.

Case Studies on Lawyers and SMM

Frankly, lawyers are not on the SMM cutting edge, though some have begun to test the waters.

Migra & Co

A typical example of SMM used by lawyers is Migra & Co¹¹, a UK firm that specializes in immigration issues. Their website is pleasing and informative. It is well designed to offer substantial information without being overwhelming or confusing. The SMM components incorporated are a blog, a LinkedIn business profile, and press releases which appear under their news headings. This is a prime example of the legal community recognizing that the internet is a valuable tool and that SMM has potential. However, Migra has not yet reached its potential, as acknowledged in an email discussion with Monika Jablecka, Managing Director.

From [my] experience I know that with the on-line presence, effective SEO, financial resources and dedication it is possible to generate substantial amounts of business through online enquires. Only in the last couple of years the UK based immigration consultancies started investing their money in an on-line advertising campaigns and social media. At Migra & Co we try lean towards the on-line media as it has much widespread reach and seem more effective in the long run. We have noticed a significant increase in the number of on-line generated enquires through advertising on Google, participating in online forums or writing immigration related articles, which will hopefully allow further growth.

¹¹ Migra & Co. <http://www.migraco.com>.





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The Justice Room

The Justice Room¹² is a more aggressive and comprehensive legal SMM project. The Justice Room was created by Defense Investigation Specialist Jay Jacome, who began the project in order to have a source of answers to the questions his clients ask him day-to-day. Concerned with criminal matters, divorces, disputes, driving infractions, and other predicaments clients find themselves in, they had no convenient resource for answers. Mr. Jacome, having experience with online marketing and video production, pulled together a group of Florida attorneys to educate the public on various legal subjects, and in turn have an opportunity to market their practices through podcasts, videocasts, blogs, questions and answers, and other tools to engage potential client interest. Using provocative titles such as “5th Amendment Right Made Simple – SHUT UP!,” lawyers educate the public on issues of particular concern. The Justice room incorporates many popular SMM tools: facebook, twitter, YouTube, StumbleUpon, iTunes, and

¹² The Justice Room. <http://www.thejusticeroom.com>.

RSS feeds. In a 2010 interview Jay Jacome states “the site is a resource to gather information to help educate you on legal matters¹³.”

Mr. Jacome believes that what makes The Justice Room a stand out from other blog and videocast sites is the quality of the production. “Programs” are professionally recorded using skilled video and audio engineers. Again, Jacome feels the upside of this is that the high quality lends itself to educational and trustworthy programming. The attorneys presenting on their topics appear highly competent and offer valuable information as a public service. The downside is these videos are expensive and time consuming to produce.

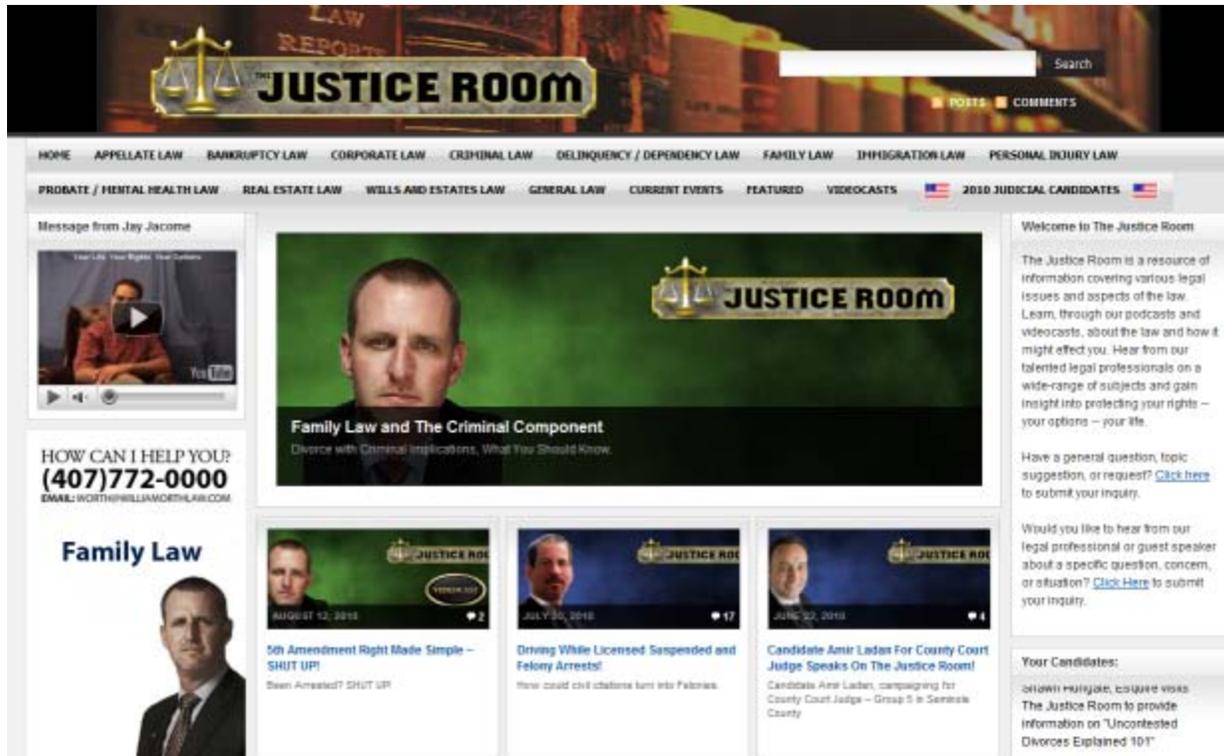
Both audio podcasts and videos are coupled with transcripts, to aid in cataloging by search engines. New content is added regularly, and Mr. Jacome points out that in social media doing something once is hardly worth doing; repetition of processes and unique content is critical. Jacome expresses he is “quite proud of how the internet rankings of the participating lawyers improve,” and he uses this information to help convince skeptical lawyers to participate. Once they do participate they learn the value of SMM. Jacome points out how important it is to “put a face with the information. People respond to the connection between the information and the person. Videos are better than podcasts for that reason. People trust who they can see.” So it is worth it to make the highest quality video, even if development is a more complex process¹⁴.

The Justice room is a good start and has the right idea. However it is narrow in scope -- only focusing on a local Florida area. It also does not exploit the less costly and more interactive areas of SMM, such as discussion groups that highlight the social nature of Social Media Marketing.

¹³ Peters, L. (2010, June 23). What’s your niche? WDBO, from <http://wdbo.com>.

¹⁴ Jacome, J. (personal communication, November 5, 2010).





Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe

A different use of SMM is by the law firm Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe which hired marketing firm Greenfield/Belser Ltd. to design a branding strategy. According to the Greenfield/Belser website:

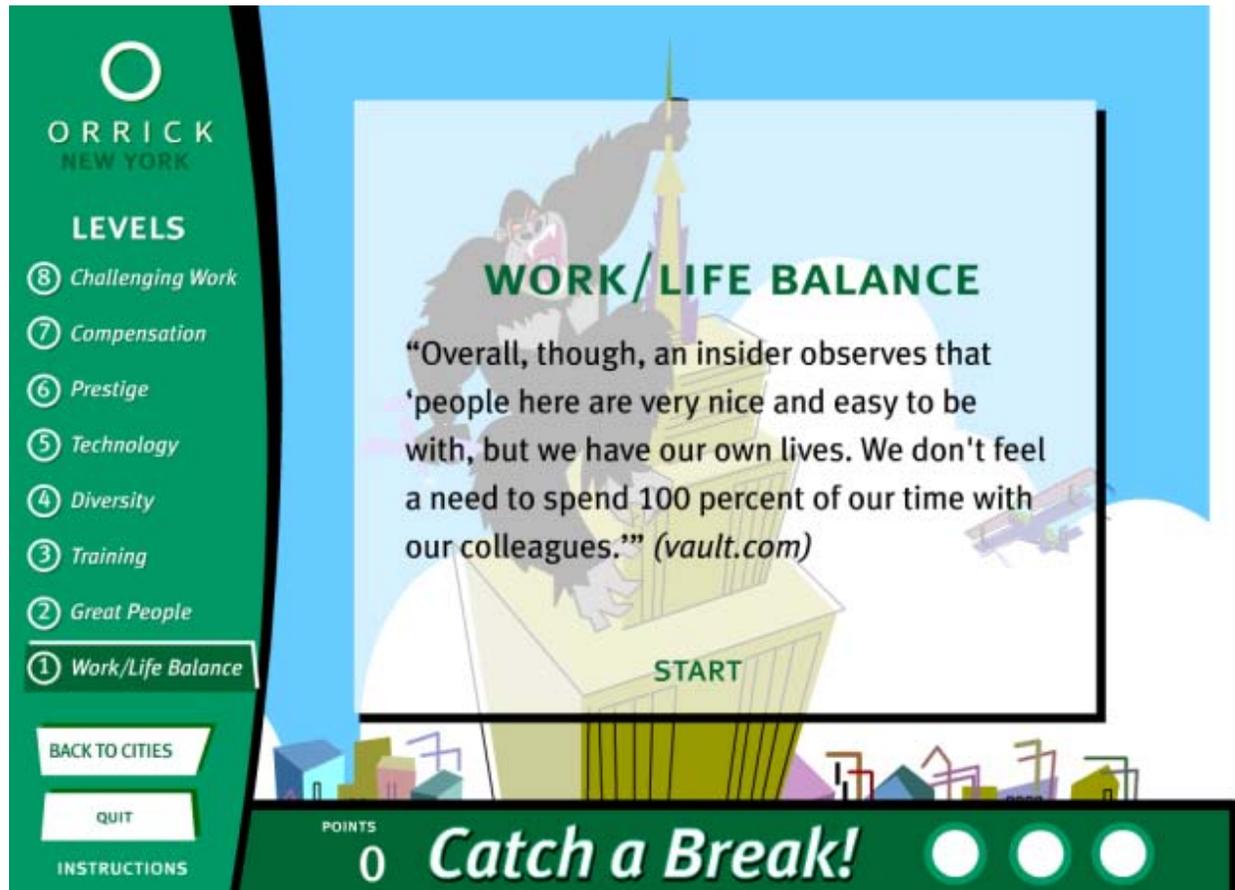
We developed [an] idea for a video game that was to be emailed to students during the recruiting season. We coded the game entirely in Flash so the final product was highly compressed. The game was organized around issues we know from research are important to students. Players gained points by catching falling objects in different settings. Scores could be emailed to Orrick and the firm would respond with sweatshirts, T-shirts and other gifts to the student¹⁵.

This example of SMM is interesting because the law firm was willing to incorporate a lighter attitude to attract attention. Humor, fun, and entertainment are integral parts of SMM. Social Media Marketing is social. This game engaged the prospective students in a way a brochure or website never could. Whatever else it accomplished, no doubt it got the firm noticed and gave the impression that students might enjoy their time at this law firm, an essential factor in any

¹⁵ Greenfield/Belser Ltd. (2010). *Case Studies*. Retrieved October 5, 2010, from <http://www.gbltd.com/casestudies/171/orrick-herrington-sutcliffe>.



decision to commit. Apply this to attracting clients and the firm appears less intimidating, the lawyers more “human,” and there is a suggestion the legal process will be less painful for the client. A sense of humor does not have to detract from the prestige of the firm or the appearance of competence of the lawyers. Lawyers are people too.



The Volokh Conspiracy

Most law related SMM is not actually produced by law firms marketing to clients, but rather by legal academics and lawyers concerned with specific issues. Blogs (or Blawgs) and podcasts are very popular in the legal community. While these can be excellent tools in the SMM arsenal, the most prolific uses are not, yet, for marketing purposes.

The Volokh Conspiracy¹⁶ is a blawg which mostly covers United States legal and political issues, generally from a libertarian or conservative perspective. One of the most widely read

¹⁶ The Volokh Conspiracy. <http://www.volokh.com>.



legal publications in the United States, The Volokh Conspiracy has roughly one million page views each month. This group blog has more than a dozen contributors, most of whom are law professors, and all of whom sign their names to their posts. In 2006, Technorati rated his blog as the 100th most popular worldwide. The Volokh Conspiracy was founded by attorney Eugene Volokh, professor of free speech law, criminal law, tort law, religious freedom law, and church-state relations law at UCLA School of Law.

Although this is not an example of SMM from lawyers to clients, it does demonstrate the power of substantive information on the internet. Not all one million page views per month are by lawyers. People in the general public interested in these issues read The Volokh Conspiracy. The lawyers who post blogs are highly respected and appreciated for their writing. Though these essays may at times be a bit “high brow” compared to some SMM, substantial and informative content is very relevant to typical SMM. SMM is not advertising, it is an exchange with other people on the internet. It can be many things: entertaining, comical, informative, and quite serious. The subject matter and content depend entirely on the audience one wishes to reach.



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Should We Teach Kids to Play to Win?

Ilya Somin • November 9, 2010 1:36 am

Political scientist Barry Rubin has an [interesting column](#) criticizing the modern tendency to teach kids that playing to win is bad:

My son is playing on a local soccer team which has lost every one of its games, often by humiliating scores. The coach is a nice guy, but seems an archetype of contemporary thinking: he tells the kids not to care about whether they win, puts players at any positions they want, and doesn't listen to their suggestions.

He never criticizes a player or suggests how a player could do better. My son, bless him, once remarked to me: "How are you going to play better if nobody tells you what you're doing wrong?" The coach just tells them how well they are playing. Even after an 8-0 defeat, he told them they'd played a great game.

And of course, the league gives trophies to everyone, whether their team finishes in first or last place.....

[A]m I right in thinking that sports should prepare children for life, competition, the desire to win, and an understanding that not every individual has the same level of skills? A central element in that world is rewarding those who do better, which also offers an incentive for them and others to strive....

The playing field was perfectly even, but the boys were clearly miserable. They felt like losers, their behavior rejecting the claim that everything was just great, or that mediocrity was satisfactory as long as

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Bitter Lawyer



A different style of blawg is Bitter Lawyer ¹⁷, a legal humor and news blog targeted at disgruntled lawyers. The site features a webshow titled “Living the Dream” which follows a bumbling fictional junior associate at a large law firm. Accompanying blog posts describe the real-life inspirations behind each “webisode.” Bitter Lawyer is also known for its notable interviews with celebrities and others who are former lawyers and now successful in another profession. Creator of the site Rick Eid is executive producer of the CBS series *The Ex List*. He has also been a producer and writer for numerous law oriented television dramas. He is a former law partner at Manatt, Phelps & Phillip. Bitter Lawyer was ranked in the ABA Journal Blawg 100 in the "Lighter Fare" category, calling the blog "a category killer for legal humor websites." In 2010 Bitter Lawyer won a Webby for best legal website.



Needless to say, this site isn’t exactly promoting the legal profession. However, it is well read by lawyers and it demonstrates that even lawyers can laugh at themselves. This is very important for developing a non-intimidating image. No one knows more lawyer jokes, or enjoys telling them more, than lawyers. Lawyers are fully aware of how the public perceives them, and sometimes agrees. Lawyers also know that mockery is only fair to a point. Most lawyers are honorable decent people performing important work that would be largely unnecessary if

¹⁷ Bitter Lawyer. <http://www.bitterlawyer.com>.



average citizens didn't have so many disputes. Lawyers have a role in perpetuating any litigious society, but they are not the cause. The point is, self deprecation is a useful and appropriate tool if employed with a good hearted sense of humor. Of course smart choices about what is funny, and what is insulting, is required.

Lawyers.com

Perhaps the most pervasive use of SMM by lawyers is incorporating blogging as well as question and answer forums into big lawyer marketing websites, such as Lawyers.com¹⁸, a partnership with LexisNexis. Lawyers.com is among the most used law related websites, with traffic of more than 2.26 million views per month and increasing steadily at 12% per year. Lawyers.com provides various SMM related features, such as:

- Understand Your Legal Issue (general information about thousands of legal issues).
- Discuss Your Legal Issue/Ask a Lawyer (discussion forums on legal issues).
- Legal Help & Resources.
- Law Blog (tens of thousands of blog posts with thousands of bloggers).

Though Lawyers.com does get a great deal of traffic, there are so many lawyers blogging and otherwise participating, that no lawyer is a standout. It is a sea of legal names, advice, and opinions. Useful to the public if they are seeking a variety of thoughts on a matter, but not focused enough to be a truly effective marketing tool for most lawyers or law firms. The idea of SMM is to get noticed. Big is not always better. Social Media Marketing is about social interaction, in other words personal interaction, not merely online presence. Sites like this are to some degree an easy way out for lawyers who wish to engage in SMM but don't wish to put in the energy to develop a truly effective strategy. Ironically, using such a site can be just as time consuming as more individualized SMM if you want to get noticed. That's not to say participating at Lawyers.com or the like is pointless. It is a good start and there is indeed a level of traffic one is highly unlikely to achieve independently. Lawyers.com is an excellent tool in an arsenal of SMM techniques, but it should not be the only tool.

¹⁸ Lawyers.com. <http://www.lawyers.com>.



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DIVORCE INSURANCE: SOME FACTS AND PROS AND CONS

Monday, November 1, 2010 by [Mark A. Chinn](#)
Divorce insurance is being marketed by Wedlock Divorce Insurance. You may visit their web site at <http://www.wedlockinsurance.com/>. The basics of the insurance are as follows:

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Nolocast.com

Alternative legal services also use SMM; in fact they are in the forefront of the legal SMM arena because unlike many of the SMM applications by lawyers, these alternative services direct their marketing to the customer, their clients, as opposed to other lawyers.

Nolo Press is a premier provider of legal do-it-yourself materials, general information texts, and online legal tools for the general public. Nolo Press podcasts¹⁹ are designed for the lay person and deal with a variety of legal topics of interest to the general public. Nolo has produced 114 podcasts to date on legal topics for the general public. Nolocast.com has approximately 9,000 page views per month. This does not reflect listeners through iTunes or subscribers to the RSS feed.

Podcasts are a good SMM marketing tool, though podcasts alone are probably not sufficient to draw substantial traffic. For one thing search engines have difficulty recognizing audio and therefore podcasts do not increase internet rankings particularly well. Also, people need a reason

¹⁹ Nolo Press. <http://www.nolocast.com>.



to be driven to your podcasts. In this case Nolo Press is one of the primary publishers of do-it-yourself legal texts, software, and forms. The podcasts appear to be more of a courtesy to customers than a marketing tool. Perhaps they give customers a taste of the Nolo product as a promotion. The importance of these podcasts in the context of SMM is that good content is essential. Nolo produces substantive and highly useful podcasts that will leave the customer wanting more, which translates into book sales. Nolo provides a good educational resource through podcast development.

The screenshot shows the Nolo website interface. At the top left is the Nolo logo (scales of justice) and the tagline "YOUR LEGAL COMPANION". To the right is a microphone icon with "ON THE AIR" written on it. Below the tagline are links to "Subscribe via iTunes" and "Subscribe via RSS". The main content area features a podcast player for "114. Divorce After 50" dated Oct 16th, 2010. The player includes a book cover for "Divorce After 50" and a play button. Below the player are tags for "divorce", "estate planning", and "family", and a "No Comments" link. To the right of the player is a promotional banner for "Shop for Nolo products" showing various Nolo books and a "Work Less, Live" banner. On the left side, there is a navigation menu with links for "HOME", "ABOUT", "ARCHIVES", and "CONTACT". Below the menu is a "NOLO Podcasts" section with an "ON AIR" banner. Further down is a "SEARCH" box and a "CATEGORIES" section with a link to "All".

LegalZoom

Perhaps the most comprehensive use of SMM, and a stand out among law related sites, is LegalZoom²⁰. According to their website, LegalZoom is “an easy-to-use, online service that helps people create their own legal documents.”

²⁰ LegalZoom. <http://www.legalzoom.com>.



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Whatever their success as a company, their success at using SMM is unparalleled in the legal community. It's not so much that they use novel or highly creative SMM tools, but rather, what tools they do use, they use well. They are a prime example of how SMM does not require expensive marketing firms or technology gurus. With the free tools that are already out there, SMM has the potential to reach a mass audience, simply by engaging it. LegalZoom capitalizes on the potential of SMM, and essentially guides the client to do their marketing for them. Not only does this build a ground swell and exponential growth, real customers not edited for television are trustworthy. When genuine clients speak, unedited or manipulated by advertising slogans and promotions, all of the image problems discussed above (i.e. the lawyer as fat-cat or ambulance chaser) fall away. And with individualized adjustments, there is nothing LegalZoom does that any lawyer or law firm can't do, practically speaking or ethically.

Among the tools LegalZoom uses successfully is facebook. Unlike typical law related sites with a hundred facebook "friends," LegalZoom has over 10,000. They manage this by having useful

and ongoing conversations about issues that concern their clients. It is a free exchange of ideas with LegalZoom directing, but welcoming and encouraging participation. A relaxed and entertaining environment is inviting and unthreatening. With all of their SMM outlets connected, they direct facebook posts to twitter and videos to YouTube. They produce a blog, and newsletter, offer promotional deals like “refer a friend,” initiate fun contests (such as posting Halloween costumes on facebook), and overall build a community. The operative word in Social Media Marketing is not marketing, it’s social.



LegalZoom also ties all of its SMM to traditional television marketing. Their TV commercials are the stories of actual customers who sent in videos of businesses, services, or inventions for which they used LegalZoom to perform legal work. Homemade videos are sent in by clients and the best stories are made into professionally produced mainstream commercials, using the actual clients, not actors. Both the original homemade videos and television commercials are posted on the LegalZoom YouTube site. Not only is this brilliant marketing for LegalZoom, it is a lifetime



opportunity for the client, who stars in a national television commercial featuring their business, service, or invention.

The screenshot shows a YouTube video player interface. The main video is titled "Patent, Trademark, and LLC - Chris Schutte LegalZoom Commercial" and has 2,775 views. The video content shows a man in a lab coat using a steamer. Below the video player, there are options for "Info", "Favorite", "Share", "Playlists", and "Flag". To the right of the video player, there is a list of related videos, including "Patent, Trademark, and LLC - Chris Schutte LegalZoom - 2,775 views", "Starting a Business - Billy Smith/Sporting LegalZoom - 2,749 views", "Securing a Patent Video: The LegalZoom - 2,231 views", "GRAND PRIZE VIDEO: The Hotdog Ez Bun LegalZoom - 3,961 views", "The COOLEST GUITAR / BANJO LegalZoom - 307 views", and "Paul Katami It was all because of an LegalZoom - 89 views".

Although the SMM tools LegalZoom uses are free or inexpensive, they put a great deal of time into their SMM campaigns. New content is added daily. Their facebook and twitter pages have a regular stream posts and interaction. It is clear, however, the more a community is built and others participate, the less LegalZoom has to do to keep the flow of conversation going. This is of course the goal of SMM, to engage enough people in a campaign that the community essentially runs it. Started in 2001, LegalZoom did not build its community overnight. What they did do was have the vision to recognize an opportunity. Though hundreds of internet-based legal form websites have emerged during the last 10 years, LegalZoom claims it has delivered over 1,000,000 wills to consumers, and that it is the largest incorporation company in the country. They provide access on their website to thousands of pages of free legal information on hundreds of subjects and they rely on informed consumers to do part of the work, often called



co-production²¹. LegalZoom is widely considered the number one provider of online legal services, and considering their reliance on SMM, it is clear it is a tool that works for them.

²¹ Granat, R. (2010, September 10). What lawyers can learn from LegalZoom. *eLawyering Blog*, from <http://www.elawyeringredux.com>.

