**The Power of Personal Marketing with Social Media**

People have legal needs; lawyers have solutions.

Thoughtful personal marketing connects people and lawyers. Social media makes this happen just when a prospective client is actively looking to solve a need. Social media has fundamentally shifted the way people access information, form opinions, and make decisions. The effective use of social media can connect attorneys to a prospective client just when the client is actively seeking solutions.

Today and tomorrow’s rainmakers “get” that sustainable business development requires a systematic personal marketing program. This program should (i) build a substantive online presence; (ii) strengthen their personal brand; and (iii) provide relevant legal and business insight *(not advice)* online. This is what leads to profitable offline interactions.

**Your Clients Are Using Social Media**

Your past, current, and prospective clients are using the Internet and social media to connect, engage, and verify information. Yes, *your* clients.

When people want to know something, Google or Facebook (*depending on age)* are most often the first stop. People across all age groups routinely use the Internet and social media to interact with family, friends, and colleagues. They also search for information about things they care about and form or reinforce opinions about professional service providers, including lawyers and law firms.

Like it or not, what clients and prospective clients find when they “Google” your name will influence their perception of you. The depth of your online presence makes an increasingly significant statement that indicates your ability to be current and relevant in today’s rapidly changing digital world.

When used effectively, social media can turn what could be random distribution of information, into relevant and thoughtful insight. This can happen because social media provides tools that make it easy to gather data, share information, and engage in conversations. These activities demonstrate your ability to solve problems and create solutions for prospective clients, based on the terms of the person receiving the information.

**17 Ways to Increase Your Impact, Influence, and Income from Personal Marketing with Social Media**

Lawyers who use social media to listen, learn, attract, and engage their target audience are simultaneously building an influential personal brand while implementing a personal marketing plan that leads to referrals and new client engagements. Here are 17 ways to make this happen in your law practice.

1. Get clear about what information your ideal clients need and want to know before engaging an attorney for the solutions provided by your firm. Determine how you want to share this information with your target audience.  Blog posts, articles, podcasts, videos, and social media updates are all great ways to add value in a way that is relevant for your target audience and comfortable for you.
2. Develop an editorial calendar to:

(a) Help filter ideas and determine what content will advance your specific personal marketing and business development goals.

(b) Plan the distribution of your content.

(c) Schedule the distribution of your content.

(d) Strategically build relationships with colleagues, peers, and industry leaders through online cross-marketing.

(e) Track and monitor the impact of your content across online and offline platforms.

1. Use an online information management, collaboration, and storage tool like Evernote ([www.Evernote.com](http://www.Evernote.com)) to organize, manage, and share access to your editorial calendar, content ideas, and completed text, audio and/or video-based content. Install this software on your computer, tablet, and smartphone to make your information available to you or your staff whether you are in the office or on the go.
2. Use online monitoring tools like Google Alerts ([www.Google.com/alerts](http://www.Google.com/alerts)) and Twilert ([www.Twilert.com](http://www.Twilert.com)) to track online mentions of your firm, clients, and prospective clients. You should also use these tools to monitor online mentions of hot topics in your target market, key trends in your practice areas, and mentions of your name.
3. Leverage “content sharing” social networks like SlideShare ([www.SlideShare.net](http://www.SlideShare.net)) and Scribed ([www.Scribd.com](http://www.Scribd.com)) to increase the exposure of your slideshow presentations, articles, and press releases. This not only extends the life of your content, but also helps build and expand your credibility as an authority and subject matter expert. Tag your content with strategically selected keywords to increase search engine placement and visibility of your personal brand.
4. Connect with classmates, colleagues, clients, and prospective clients to accelerate the “*know, like, and trust factor*” by establishing and actively using a social network that caters to professionals, such as LinkedIn ([www.LinkedIn.com](http://www.LinkedIn.com)). Increase your visibility among decision makers by optimizing your LinkedIn profile to include your:
5. Full name
6. Professional photo
7. Summary description of your practice
8. Core benefits *(not features)* of working with you and engaging your firm
9. Awards and recognitions
10. An auto-feed for your blog *(using one of the LinkedIn blogging applications)*
11. A keyword rich summary of your past places of employment
12. Become a valuable resource for your community by actively participating in LinkedIn groups ([www.LinkedIn.com/groups](http://www.LinkedIn.com/groups)) related to your practice areas, client industries, and institutions of higher learning.   You can do this by sharing links to your original content or relevant third-party articles with your groups at least once a week.
13. If the technology industry is a part of your target market, use a micro-blogging “question and answer” platform, like Quora ([www.Quora.com](http://www.Quora.com)), to build relationships and add value by asking and answering questions.
14. Help members of your online community increase the impact of their digital brands by forwarding questions you find on LinkedIn Answers or Quora that are within a person's area of expertise.  This is an easy way to create value for members of your online community in a way that strengthens your reputation as a resource and increases your visibility.
15. Drive targeted traffic to your website by establishing a public profile on a high-traffic social network like Google Plus ([www.Google.com/Plus](http://www.Google.com/Plus)), which includes a keyword rich description of your practice areas, past work experiences, and interests.
16. Create a Google Plus profile for your law firm to increase visibility and drive traffic to your website and blog.
17. Strengthen your reputation as a thought leader in your practice areas by creating a YouTube channel ([www.YouTube.com](http://www.YouTube.com)) to serve as a portal for video content your ideal clients are likely to find valuable. You can develop a relevant and useful YouTube channel without any of your original content by becoming a curator of video content your target audience will likely find valuable. Click the "Favorite" link for interesting videos you want your YouTube channel to be associated with and you instantly have a YouTube channel with valuable content created by others and managed by you.
18. Use social networks like JD Supra ([www.jdsupra.com](http://www.jdsupra.com)), Martindale Connected ([www.martindale.com](http://www.martindale.com)), and Legal OnRamp ([www.legalonramp.com](http://www.legalonramp.com)) to raise your visibility among colleagues and your target audience by sharing legal forms, checklists, case alerts, articles, and presentations.
19. Use Twitter ([www.Twitter.com](http://www.Twitter.com)) to connect and share information with your target audience. Twitter is also a great tool for driving traffic to your website, blog, Facebook firm page, or LinkedIn profile.
20. Use Social Bookmarking sites like StumbleUpon ([www.StumbleUpon.com](http://www.StumbleUpon.com)) and Delicious ([www.Delicious.com](http://www.Delicious.com)) to aggregate your favorite websites and online articles. Share links to them in mass with your colleagues, clients, and target audience.
21. Use an optimized profile on online legal directories like Avvo ([www.Avoo.com](http://www.Avoo.com)) and FindLaw ([www.FindLaw.com](http://www.FindLaw.com)) to (i) increase your visibility; (ii) attract colleagues and prospective clients interested in your practice area; and (iii) build credibility.
22. HootSuite ([www.HootSuite.com](http://www.HootSuite.com)), TweetDeck ([www.TweetDec.com](http://www.TweetDec.com)), and Timely.Is ([www.Timely.Is](http://www.Timely.Is)) are great tools for scheduling and automating the delivery of your social media updates. Use them to maximize your time.

The power of social media and social networks makes it possible to deliver real value to your target audience in a way that keeps you “top of mind” and leads to profitable conversations when a prospective client has a need – the ultimate goal of personal marketing. Online technology makes it possible to automate the process of delivering content in a way that simultaneously minimizes your time and maximizes your impact. There is no better time than right now to put these tools to work in your law practice and start experiencing results.