# **5 Key Issues to Consider Before Publishing Content on a Law Firm’s Website**

Writing content for law firm websites is unique in many respects. Not only do law firms need to communicate their professionalism and expertise through their online content, but they must also comply with their state bar associations’ Rules of Professional Conduct (RPC). As a result, not only can poorly written or inaccurate content make a law firm look ill-equipped to serve the clients it wants to represent, but it can potentially get the law firm into trouble as well.

With this in mind, there are *several* important issues to consider before publishing new pages or articles on a law firm’s website. Here are five examples of issues that require careful consideration when writing [legal website content](https://smartcontentwriting.com/legal-content-writing/):

## **Key Issue #1: Is the Content Accurate and Up-to-Date?**

Law firm website content needs to be accurate and up-to-date. If it isn’t, not only can this mislead people who are looking for help (and potentially lead them to make the wrong decisions), but it can also lead to issues with the law firm’s bar association. As a result, thorough research is critical, and law firm content writers must look for updates—from authoritative sources—each time they write about a particular topic.

While some changes in the law can be relatively inconsequential from a content writing perspective, others can immediately make content out-of-date. For example, in 2023, Florida reduced its personal injury statute of limitations from four years to two years. When this happened, all of a sudden, law firms across the state had website content that was grossly inaccurate—it told people that they had four years to file a claim when they really only had two. This is a *major* issue; and, if someone relied on this outdated information from a law firm’s website, this could have major consequences.

Notably, this type of change also creates a challenge for inexperienced content writers. Typically content writers will look at competitors’ websites when searching for information to cover on their clients’ sites. If a writer relied on an outdated law firm’s website instead of going to the source, the writer would make an embarrassing—and potentially costly—mistake.

## **Key Issue #2: Does the Content Comply with the Relevant Rules of Professional Conduct?**

This dovetails into our second key issue: Compliance with the Rules of Professional Conduct. All state bar associates have adopted Rules of Professional Conduct—many of which closely resemble the American Bar Association’s [Model Rules](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/professional_responsibility/publications/model_rules_of_professional_conduct/model_rules_of_professional_conduct_table_of_contents/). These rules restrict what law firms can say on their websites—and if law firms violate the rules, they can face reprimands and other consequences. This is true even if their violations are the result of relying on a “professional” content writer who didn’t understand what was (and wasn’t) allowed.

## **Key Issue #3: Does the Content Speak to the Law Firm’s Intended Audience?**

A law firm’s website content should speak to the firm’s intended audience. If the firm primarily represents accident victims or injured workers, the tone and sophistication of its content will be (or should be) very different from the tone and sophistication of the law firm website intended for large corporate clients.

If a firm’s website content is overly sophisticated, prospective clients won’t find it useful—and they will go somewhere else. Conversely, if a law firm caters to corporate executives and in-house lawyers who need deep and specific expertise, content that is written for the average consumer isn’t going to be effective. In fact, it will likely have the opposite of its intended effect.

## **Key Issue #4: Is the Content Compliant with Google’s “People-First” Guidelines**

Organic search engine optimization (SEO) is critical for law firms that are seeking to attract new clients online. When writing with the goal of increasing search rankings, content writers must follow Google’s [new “people-first” guidelines](https://developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/creating-helpful-content).

Among other things, this means that law firm website content should “demonstrate[] aspects of experience, expertise, authoritativeness, and trustworthiness, or what [Google] call[s] E-E-A-T.” This is particularly important for law firms—and it also means that in-depth and well-written law firm website content can be particularly effective.

## **Key Issue #5: Does the Content Steer Clear of Providing Legal Advice?**

While a law firm’s website should be informative, it should also steer clear of providing legal advice. In many instances, this can be a very fine line. Even if a law firm’s website has disclaimers about not creating an attorney-client relationship, providing legal advice online can still have undesirable consequences. Unknowingly crossing the line from providing information to providing advice is a common mistake among inexperienced content writers as well—and the risk of inadvertently providing online advice is one of several reasons why it is critical for law firms to carefully choose an experienced content marketing agency.

In fact, choosing an experienced content marketing agency is not only the best way to avoid these issues, but it is also the best way to ensure that a law firm’s website content is as effective as possible. This is true both with regard to producing compelling content that speaks to the firm’s prospective clientele and with regard to enhancing the firm’s SEO. With the right content marketing agency, law firms can generate substantial ROI from their website content—and they can do so confidently without concerns about publishing unprofessional content or running afoul of the Rules of Professional Conduct.