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The Law Firm's Guide to Marketing

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Introduction

The legal industry is rapidly evolving, and law firms face a unique set of challenges when it comes to standing out and attracting the right clients. The days of relying solely on traditional advertising methods like billboards and print ads are fading, and digital marketing has emerged as the most effective way for law firms to connect with potential clients.

This guide is designed to help you navigate this shift and the common challenges firms like yours are facing, offering actionable strategies and insights to build your firm's online presence, as well as establish credibility, reach your ideal clients, and grow your practice. Whether you're new to digital marketing or looking to refine your approach, this guide provides a helpful roadmap to marketing success in a competitive legal landscape.

Why Digital Marketing Matters for Law Firms

Law firm marketing is transitioning from traditional methods to digital platforms. While having a Yellow Pages listing or billboards on busy roads can be effective, digital platforms provide far more opportunities to connect with your audience.

Two key components are creating a viable opportunity right now for small and mid-sized law firms to embrace digital marketing: consumer behavior, and the state of marketing in the legal industry.

- 1 **The influence of consumer behavior:** The majority of people begin their search for services online, and legal services are no exception. It's critical, then, that your firm appears when potential clients are searching for the expertise you offer. Consumers now anticipate that you will be visible across all online channels, including "near me" searches, websites, social media, apps, reviews, and voice assistants. The more effectively you establish your presence on these digital platforms, the wider your reach will be in attracting potential clients.
- 2 **The state of legal marketing:** A 2023 survey from the **State of U.S. Small Law Firms** showed that 93% of law firms are conducting marketing or advertising campaigns, yet 45% are not confident that their marketing is effective in driving new business.¹ This creates an opportunity for firms like yours to improve your marketing and capture more of the market.

But these opportunities also present challenges for law firms. How do you find and engage with prospective clients you want to serve? How do you stand out from your competitors? And how do you execute marketing efficiently and effectively?

We'll address these challenges and provide foundational approaches to solve them in this guide. And remember, you don't have to be a marketing expert to implement all the marketing strategies and tactics available to you. Leave that to us.

Law Firm Marketing Challenges

You're not alone in feeling the pressure to figure out how to market your firm effectively, from finding the right prospects to managing multiple marketing channels. The firms we talk to and consult with about their marketing programs experience four common challenges that you likely can relate to, so let's explore them.

Challenge 1

Finding the Right Prospects

Your time is valuable, and you want to spend it serving clients who are the best possible fit for your firm. It's worth targeting these prospects because they're more likely to become long-term clients and to refer others to you. However, finding these prospects can be a challenge.

A common source of this challenge is that many lawyers are not trained in traditional marketing techniques, and they don't know where to start looking for potential clients. You may feel overwhelmed by the plethora of marketing options available, from traditional methods like print ads and billboards to digital strategies like social media and paid advertising.

Or perhaps you have done some marketing that has generated leads for your firm. However, instead of most of these leads becoming clients, you find yourself sifting through leads that aren't a good fit for your services, whether because of the wrong practice area, they're outside your local service area, or your values and communication preferences simply don't align. Let's look at some possible solutions.

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Define your ideal client

To make the most of your marketing budget, efforts, and time, it's essential to clearly define your ideal client — your target audience. This will allow you to tailor your marketing strategies to attract and engage with the right people who are more likely to become clients with whom you want to work.

By focusing on clients that align with your services, you can apply your expertise more effectively, leading to greater client satisfaction, better outcomes, and stronger relationships. Moreover, working with the right clients enhances your job satisfaction.

So, who is your ideal client? Start with your existing client base and identify those you've enjoyed working with the most. Create a profile based on their common characteristics such as:

- Demographics
- Legal needs
- Challenges related to those needs
- Location
- Communication preferences
- Alignment with your firm's values.

You now have a solid understanding of who you are trying to attract through your marketing efforts.

Target your marketing

Targeted marketing takes many forms, but essentially it's about taking characteristics of your ideal client into account when developing and deploying marketing initiatives. Below are a few options for targeted marketing.

Precise messaging

- Have your ideal client in mind every time you create and publish information, so you're always speaking to their needs and preferences
- Be clear about your services and the way you provide them
- Convey what kind of experience clients have working with you
- Apply this core brand messaging across your digital presence (website, social channels, content marketing) to build trust

Pay-per-click advertising

- Customizable strategies based on your practice area, location, and goals to help you show up when prospective clients use a search engine
- Build campaigns around your ideal client, selecting strategic keyword, long-tail, and local search terms based on their characteristics

Paid social media advertising

- Focus on social platforms where ideal clients are most active, like Facebook and Instagram
- Target ads to your ideal client's demographics to generate more and better-qualified leads

Challenge 2

Following Up with Prospects

Once you've attracted your ideal client, you need to follow up and engage with them. Prompt and efficient follow-up is crucial for converting leads into clients, especially in an era where consumers are accustomed to 24/7 customer support.

But many law firms struggle with **timely** follow-up, and it's easy to understand why — practicing law is demanding, and client intake can feel like an afterthought. Plus, many firms lack a system for managing their leads.

However, if you don't prioritize following up with prospects soon after they connect with you, you risk losing their interest and referrals to a competitor who does. The following tactics can help.

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Customized web forms

Web forms connect website visitors to website owners. They allow visitors to share information that you'll use to follow up with them.

Use what you know about your ideal client's needs and expectations to customize your web forms, asking for relevant information. This will also help to capture information that's most useful to you and initiate a personalized follow-up.

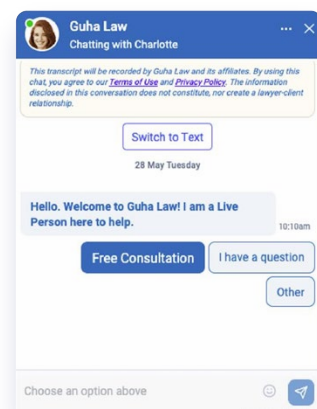
As clients enter their data into your custom forms, it populates into your customer relationship management (CRM) system for easy and organized potential new client tracking and analyzing.

Optimized client intake

Customized web forms are integral to your overall client intake process. An initial form can capture leads and the nature of their legal needs. Once you've decided a lead should move forward, the next step in your client intake process can send them a follow-up questionnaire with more specific questions to help you dive deeper into their needs and better understand how to help them.

Live chat

With consumers expecting 24/7 support and access to information, enabling a live chat feature on your website allows for fast responses to prospects' questions. This level of immediate engagement helps prospective clients feel heard and builds their trust in your firm.



Challenge 3

Outpacing Competitors

The competition for ideal clients is fierce, and consumers' ability to compare legal services online has raised the stakes even higher. With many options for legal services available, potential clients have a hard time distinguishing between law firms. This makes it essential for firms to find ways to set themselves apart, whether through branding, niche expertise, or superior client service.

Assessing your competition is a first step in understanding who you're up against in attracting your ideal clients to your firm, and it will help you identify areas where you can excel over competitors.

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Analyze the competition

Examine other firms for their practice areas, services, and locations. Evaluate their marketing strategies, websites, messaging, content, social media presence, and the engagement they receive online, including client reviews, to find ways to differentiate your firm. What do you do differently and better? The goal is to pinpoint where your firm excels and leverage those competitive advantages.

Prioritize your website

Your law firm's website is one of the most crucial elements of your online presence and opportunities to establish a competitive advantage. It serves as your digital storefront and often forms the first impression potential clients will have of your firm. A high-performance website will be:

- Designed and built for SEO
- ADA compliant
- High speed
- User friendly

Establish your credibility

Most clients are not well-versed in legal matters, making it hard for them to evaluate which law firm is best for them. You can stand out by sharing helpful content regularly on your website and social channels, which builds your reputation as a credible and trustworthy firm.

Build your brand

Develop a strong visual brand to further establish your firm's values, expertise, and credibility. Elements including your logo, colors, website design, and professional photography, used consistently across all touchpoints, help differentiate your firm.



Optimize for local SEO

Invest in local SEO strategies to improve your visibility for ideal clients searching for your services in their local area. Google's Local Service Ads help you reach prospective clients by placing your firm at the top of search results pages.

Tie it all together

No single marketing initiative will be enough to distinguish your firm from competitors. But strategically deploying a combination of strategies and tactics from all of the solutions we've presented, tracking their results, and doing more of what works best, will position you far and above your competitors so you can attract, engage, and retain your ideal clients.

Challenge 4

Managing Multiple Marketing Platforms

From website builders to social media profiles to paid advertising, law firms commonly are overwhelmed as they juggle using multiple marketing platforms — and staying on top of technological advancements within each of them. Not to mention, digital marketing is constantly evolving, and staying ahead of trends requires investment in time and resources for law firms that are focused on practicing law.

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Leverage expertise

A digital marketing platform specializing in the legal market can provide the expertise and resources your firm needs. They can help develop, execute, monitor, and refine your marketing strategies, as well as make it easier to manage your online presence in one place, allowing you to focus on practicing law.

Utilize tailored services

These platforms are purpose-built for the legal market and offer various services, including website design, content creation, SEO, paid search campaigns, social media management, and many more. Choose a marketing platform that understands your firm's specific needs and goals to get the most out of your investment.

Succeed for the long term

Partnering with a marketing services platform can lead to sustained growth and success for your firm. Regular communication and collaboration with the platform's customer success team will ensure your marketing efforts align with your firm's objectives.

You Don't Have To Be a Marketing Expert

Mastering the art of digital marketing is no longer an option but a necessity for law firms that want to thrive in today's competitive environment. By tackling the common challenges head-on and implementing the proven strategies outlined in this guide, you can build a strong brand presence, connect with your ideal clients, and outpace your competition.

Remember, the journey to effective marketing is not about overnight success but about creating a sustainable approach that resonates with your ideal client and sets your firm apart. Now is the time to take control of your marketing efforts, embrace the opportunities that digital platforms offer, and position your law firm for long-term growth and success. You don't have to be a marketing expert to achieve this. If you're ready to get started, contact our team of legal marketing experts and take the first step toward building, executing, and maintaining a marketing program that's tailored for you and your firm.

Legalfit can help.

We're a comprehensive digital marketing platform specifically for law practices.
Contact us today to learn how we can fuel your firm's success.

legalfit.com/contact

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