



Play to Win

Positioning Yourself for Online Opportunities

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Tips for taking control of your online presence because it truly does matter what you do (or don't do) in the places people look for a good lawyer.

Think about the last time you had to find a service provider — a dentist, an architect, a consultant, a painter. At some point in your vetting process, an online search was probably involved. For some people, their research is used to develop a short list of professionals to consider; others use their research to confirm credentials or check reviews.

Despite their own experiences, a lot of lawyers (of all ages) are still skeptical about the value of an online presence for their personal business development purposes.

Do People Really Find Lawyers Through Online Searches?

The answer is yes.

Even for higher margin work?

The answer is also yes.

Prospects do their own research and due diligence.

According to a recent survey by [Hinge Marketing](#), 90% of buyers rule out a professional services firm before even speaking with someone there because they are unable to understand how the firm can help them after looking at the website or social media. Do you have credentials that support the expertise you tout? Can prospects find representative matters that show you have relevant experience? Have you posted thought leadership pieces that demonstrate your knowledge of the subject matter?

What You Say and Post Online Does Make a Difference

In the past two months, I've heard the following stories from lawyers:

- A major manufacturer contacted a management-side labor lawyer for a large union-related issue after looking at his bio.
- A prospect ran across a 10-year-old article online that had been written by someone at a lawyer's firm; the prospect remembered having met a lawyer from that firm at an event and called her with a matter.
- A corporate and tax lawyer got a new client after a European prospect read an article he had published on pre-immigration tax planning.
- A trusts and estates litigator received a call after the prospect did a simple Google search.

All of these examples show the value of a robust online presence that includes articles that support your [thought leadership](#).

Staying Visible

Through your online activities, your goals are to position yourself top of mind with expertise in selected practice areas or industries of interest. Here are a few simple things you can do to help your odds of being found without having to hire an SEO pro.

Update Your Bio Frequently

Add new content to keep your website bio and online profiles fresh and to showcase your recent relevant experience.

- Add articles you've written, presentations you've given, new memberships and outside activities, etc.
- Add descriptions of new representative experience, highlighting the nature of the matter, dollars or issues at stake and the type of client or industry involved.
- Add new credentials you've obtained, such as certifications, classes or degrees.
- Provide links to reported cases on which you've worked.
- Use substantive or industry acronyms or terms on which people will search.

Leverage Your Content and Materials

To improve your online presence, share your work product anytime you speak or write.

- Post or link to articles you've written on LinkedIn, the firm website, your bio page, Twitter and the like.
- Post slides from presentations you've given.
- Post videos or podcasts in which you're featured.
- Break your content into a series of shorter posts, using a slide a week or creating a four-part post, for example.

Be Engaged on Social Media

Maintain a regular presence online using your activities and other people's posts.

- Post about your activities at least three times. For example, if you're planning to attend a conference, you can indicate in advance that you're going, post some nuggets while you're there and then share some takeaways after.
- It doesn't need to be your work product to reinforce the perception of your expertise. Comment on others' posts or share articles you have read to show you're active in the space.

Take Control of Your Online Presence

People spend, on average, almost seven hours a day online. Your job is to make it easy for them to find you and check you out. In addition, the good news and bad news about online activity is that it can live forever.

Take control of your online presence and use it to your best advantage. If you are not getting inquiries or opportunities, I'd venture a guess it's you, not them.