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Social Media Marketing

Using Social Media Marketing to Grow Your Practice

By Nora Riva Bergman

What is Social Media Marketing? Social media marketing is the equivalent of good old relationship-based marketing, with one big difference – the interactions occur online rather than face-to-face. Think of developing your online presence in the same way you develop personal relationships with your referral sources and influencers. Be genuine. Be trustworthy. Give more than you take. Be a "connector" – introduce colleagues who have mutual interests or who can assist each other. Be professional, but friendly. If you follow these simple guidelines as you grow your online presence, you'll not only grow your practice, you just might have some fun in the process.

Below is a list of the top social media sites together with reasons to join and resources to help you get started. *And remember, all of these services are free.*

facebook www.Facebook.com

Top Three Reasons to Join:
1. Facebook allows you to create business pages that are separate from your personal account. Your business page can be linked to your website and other social media sites.
2. Facebook social ads are inexpensive and let you target specific demographics and geographic areas.
3. You can join groups that reflect your professional interests and create online events such as virtual seminars and promote them through your network. You can also promote in-person seminars and firm events.

- For the latest on getting the most out of marketing with Facebook check out the Inside Facebook blog at www.insidefacebook.com.

LinkedIn www.LinkedIn.com

Top Three Reasons to Join:
1. LinkedIn is the original social networking site for professionals. Many attorneys and other professionals have profiles on LinkedIn, even though they may not participate in other social networking sites. You should be there, too.
2. Your peers, referral sources, and even clients can recommend your work on LinkedIn.
3. Like Facebook, you can join groups and promote both online and offline events.

- Get started by downloading the LinkedIn Personal Trainer, a free e-Book, at www.linkedinpersonaltrainer.com/get-the-book/.

twitter www.Twitter.com

Top Three Reasons to Join:
1. Twitter is considered a "micro-blogging" site. Your Twitter posts or "Tweets" are limited to 140 characters (Tweets). So, you don't have to commit to writing detailed, lengthy posts. You can share information and stay connected to your colleagues with short messages.
2. You can market your practice by letting your followers know what you're working on.
3. Twitter gives you the ability to create a true online conversation. You can tweet about the things you'd talk with friends and colleagues about over a cup of coffee, but your reach is unlimited.

- Check out these blogs to get started tweeting: www.twitip.com and blog.twitter.com.

Avvo www.Avvo.com

Top Three Reasons to Join:
1. In some states, like Florida, Avvo creates a profile for you, which you must claim in order to edit and update.
2. At Avvo your colleagues can endorse you, and your clients can recommend your work. High Avvo ratings can be a powerful referral tool for people browsing the web for an attorney.
3. You can boost your online visibility and credibility by becoming an Avvo Contributor and publishing online Legal Guides. You can also answer legal questions posted online.

- Visit avvoblog.com to learn more about Avvo.

Two other social media sites you might want to check out are www.LegallyMinded.com, the ABA's professional networking site, and www.LawLink.com. LegallyMinded is still in Beta phase, so you may experience problems with the site. And although, LawLink calls itself "The Attorney Network," it doesn't match Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, or Avvo in terms of attorney participation.

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