

Don't be Content with Subpar Content: Five Content Marketing Best Practices

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In the past, we have outlined eMarketing best practices, [integrating your eMarketing system with other marketing technology](#), and even discussed using [artificial intelligence in your email marketing strategy](#). However, if you've got all the elements in place and your email marketing metrics are still disappointing, what else can you improve? Well, let's address the 10,000-pound elephant in the room – your content.

For many law firms, content is typically written by lawyers. This can be a challenge because lawyers by trade, are legal writers – favoring a particular writing style that often is not favorable for eMarketing purposes. This leaves the marketing department to attempt to shape the content to make it as effective as possible.

So what is a marketer to do when faced with a partner who is convinced that posting 5,000 words (1,000 of which are footnotes) on the latest regulation change is the best way to communicate with clients and prospective clients? Here are five suggestions and talking points to help build consensus and buy-in for improving your firm's publications and content marketing.

1. Best of the Bunch

Take a look at some of your firm's recent publications by practice area. Are there one or two groups that consistently provide concise, well-written content that is not drowning in legalese? Next, it can be a good idea to look at their metrics. If their mailing list is in good shape, they should also have some of the best open and click-through rates at the firm.

These are the folks to hold up as examples of how to correctly write marketing content. Anyone who has been a marketer in a professional service firm knows that capitalizing on the competitive nature of professionals can be a powerful tool for changing behavior. If you can find one or two practices with superior metrics and can tie it to their content, then you have something to hold up as an example to the rest of the firm.

2. Train 'em Young

Today, associates have grown up with unparalleled access to the internet, email, Twitter (now X) and

LinkedIn, so they get it. Firms should capitalize on the technology-savvy and sponge-like nature of the younger members and utilize them by creating content that resonates with their clients. They will likely already understand the importance of concise messaging as the key to effective communication.

3. Break Down Their Mailing Metrics

Lawyers tend to write for other lawyers. As marketers, we need them to write for people from all walks of life. Remember, many CEOs probably don't have a JD. A quick [analysis of their mailing lists](#) may help persuade them that they are not just sending to other lawyers. It is important for lawyers who write to understand that well-written and relevant pieces are often the ones that are most likely to be circulated throughout companies.

Human resources and marketing, for example, are the two departments that are often the 'beneficiaries' of law firm alerts. Writing in heavy legalese can be counterproductive for these groups. For attorneys who are still hesitant to alter their writing style, remind them that lawyers also read newspapers, magazines, and even novels. Some of the most important and complex issues of our time, involving matters such as foreign policy, terrorism, taxes, the economy, and healthcare, are communicated every day in these publications—without the use of footnotes.

4. First Is Not Always Best

While it is important your clients know your firm is on top of recent developments, simply sending out a regurgitation of the new regulation doesn't necessarily convey that your firm understands the impact of the law on the client's business. Yes, you want your email on the topic to be among the first received, but there's more to it. You need to demonstrate an understanding of the implications of the law by addressing questions like, "What does this mean for me? Do I need to be concerned? What can I do to prepare or minimize the risk for the company?"

Both speed and depth are important when it comes to content marketing. Get the alert out quickly and explain why it is important to your readers. Later, your lawyers can write a longer, in-depth piece for an outside publication which can also be forwarded to their mailing list.

5. Size Matters

[65% of digital media consumption](#) occurs on mobile devices. No one, including your own lawyers, would be inclined to read a 3,000-word piece on their iPhones, no matter how much time they have. The fact is, today's professionals use their phones to consume quick-hit content – get in, get the gist, and get out, onto the next. This means we need to meet them where they are and produce similarly easy-to-digest content.

An excellent way to help dissuade your lawyers from writing lengthy, dense alerts, is to appeal to their billable hour. Long pieces take longer to write – when a piece half the size will not only take them half the time but ultimately increase readership by twice as much.

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