

Social Media Success Strategies with a Limited Budget and Resources

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With limited resources and budgets, it's so important for small- and mid-size law firms and the marketers who lead their marketing efforts to strategically approach social media to have a maximum impact and ROI on branding and business development.

I've spent a good chunk of my career figuring out how to make that easier. In my recent Legal Marketing Association Annual Conference presentation, I shared some of the most effective strategies I've learned along the way.

It's about cutting through the noise, genuinely engaging with your audience and carving out a distinctive space to showcase your firm and its work online.

Here's how you can use social media to work harder and smarter for your lawyers, your firm and yourself without breaking the bank or dedicating all of your time to it.

- **Why Small Firms Need to Embrace Social Media:** Today, staying relevant means maintaining a strong presence where your clients and potential clients spend their time: on social media. It's more than just posting updates; it's about creating a dialogue, sharing knowledge that matter and showcasing your firm's and lawyers' unique perspectives on legal issues. This approach ensures that when someone needs legal advice, your firm is the first they think of. For most firms, the place to be is LinkedIn – for other firms it may be a combination of LinkedIn and other platforms such as Twitter and/or Instagram. Also, it's important to remember that whether you use LinkedIn once a day, once a month or once a year, it's still either your number one or number two Google search result, underscoring its importance.
- **Getting the Most Out of Social Media:** Don't spread yourself too thin trying to be everywhere at once. Pick one or two platforms where your audience is active and engaged. At the top of your list should be LinkedIn – it's where your clients, referrals, recruits, alumni and employees are each day looking for content and counsel. The key to being successful on social media is to offer valuable insights, help others, share information in interesting ways and not just repost the news from your firm's website.
- **LinkedIn: The Non-Negotiable for Legal:** Your LinkedIn profile is often the first impression you make on potential clients and colleagues. Make it count by keeping it polished and up-to-

date, highlighting your achievements and regularly engaging with your network. Share your successes, insights into legal trends and firm updates to keep your connections informed and engaged.

- **The Secret Sauce: A Robust Content Strategy:** Content is what draws people in and keeps them coming back to you or your company. Mix it up with videos that explain complex legal concepts, infographics that break down processes and articles that delve into current legal issues. Think of content as an investment; it pays dividends in engagement and leads, all without the hefty price tag of traditional advertising.
- **The Role of AI in Streamlining Content Creation:** Artificial intelligence can significantly enhance how you produce and distribute content, particularly for those firms with a limited budget and resources. From generating ideas to optimizing posts for engagement, AI can take the heavy lifting out of content marketing as long as what you input is clear, concise and detailed. Use it to keep your strategy aligned with the latest trends, repurpose your existing content and ensure your content resonates with clients and others.
- **Putting Your Plan into Action:** Start with a clear objective. What do you want your social media efforts to achieve? Increase client engagement, attract more prospects, obtain more visibility or establish your authority in a specific legal niche? Maybe it's a combination of all of these. Whatever it is, set tangible goals. Plan your content in advance, monitor your progress with analytics and don't shy away from adjusting your approach based on what the data (and your audience) tells you.
- **Building a Community and Empowering Your Team:** Encourage your team to share their professional milestones and insights as well as news from the firm's social media pages. It's a great way to humanize your firm and showcase the breadth of expertise within your team. Plus, it amplifies your reach without extra effort. The best way to do this is to provide internal social media training and best practices for your employees.
- **Keeping Tabs on Your Firm's Online Reputation:** Regularly check what people are saying about you and your firm online using free tools like Google Alerts. Address any feedback and adjust your strategy to keep your online presence positive and engaging. Being proactive here can make all the difference.
- **Harnessing AI for Effective Social Media Marketing:** AI tools can transform how you manage social media, from planning to posting to analyzing. They can help refine your content to ensure it resonates with your audience and help identify the best times to post for maximum impact. Remember, AI is there to augment your efforts, not replace the personal touch that sets your firm apart.
- **Creative Ideas for Engaging Content:** Look for opportunities to connect with your audience through dynamic content and showcase what makes your firm and your people unique (see ideas below).

Ideas to Create Engaging Content

Special Occasions and Thematic Content

- **Cultural and Historical Celebrations:** Leverage months like Women's History Month, Black History Month, etc., to celebrate your people as well as relevant achievements and contributions.
- **Professional Observances:** Utilize days such as National Receptionists Day, National Love Your Lawyer Day, National Coffee Day, etc., to highlight your culture, your team and inject some levity into your brand.
- **Service Honors:** Use Veterans Day and similar occasions to honor service and share stories of employees or community members who have served.

Showcasing Your Organization and Its Work

- **Employee Q&As:** Engage your audience with short Q&As featuring lawyers and administrative professionals. Consider also featuring key clients.
- **Practice Group Spotlights:** Regularly feature different practice areas or industry groups, detailing their contributions and successes.
- **Alumni Profiles:** Share the career paths and success stories of notable alumni to reinforce community and connection.
- **Initiative Highlights:** Spotlight your firm's commitment through pro bono work, diversity efforts and CSR initiatives.
- **Nostalgic Posts:** Utilize Throwback Thursday (TBT) and Flashback Friday (FBF) posts to share past event photos and recaps, firm history, milestone matters on which your firm advised and other important news from the past that you want to highlight again

Enhancing Engagement Through Creativity

- **Behind-the-Scenes (BTS) Content:** Share day-in-the-life features and office tours to showcase the human side and unique aspects of your work environment.
- **Expert Insights:** Publish posts offering professional advice, industry analysis or commentary on trends to establish thought leadership.
- **Webinar/Workshop Invitations:** Promote educational events and share key insights or recordings for broader engagement.
- **Legal Updates and Commentary:** For law firms, providing updates on legal changes with expert commentary can offer significant value to your audience.

Celebrating Success and Partnerships

- **Employee Achievements and Milestones:** Acknowledge and celebrate individual or team successes and professional milestones.
- **Client Success Stories:** Share how your services have made a positive impact on your clients. Use client quotes and other commentary from Chambers and various awards.
- **Partnership Announcements:** Highlight new partnerships – such as a webinar or article series with a major news outlet or trade association, explaining their benefits to your clients.

Adding Lifestyle and Relatability

- **Book Recommendations:** Share insightful book recommendations from your team on industry-related or personal development topics.
- **Team-Building Activities:** Post about team outings or activities, emphasizing teamwork and a positive organizational culture.

Next Steps to Create an Effective Social Media Strategy With Limited Resources and Budget

- **Audit Your Digital Footprint:** Google yourself and your firm to see what others see. This can offer invaluable insights into where you stand and where you need to improve.
- **Craft a Content Calendar:** Planning ahead ensures a balanced mix of content types and topics, keeping your audience engaged and informed.
- **Daily Engagement:** Make it a habit to engage with your network every day. It keeps your relationships strong and your profile active.
- **Try Out AI:** Pick an AI tool to refine a piece of content and see how it changes the response

from your audience. This could be anything from enhancing readability to optimizing for SEO.

- **Dive Into Analytics:** Regularly review your website and social media analytics. Understanding your audience's behavior helps tailor your future strategies for better engagement.

Remember that you don't have to do all of these things to be successful on social media – they're meant to show you the full depth and breadth of the options that you have to build your firm and your lawyers' presence and businesses using the power of social media. Start small, then refine as it makes sense – but start today!

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