

# A Cheap Website Could Cost Your Firm Millions of Dollars

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Lawyers know the value of hiring an experienced, successful lawyer for representation. An inexpensive lawyer that has a small, inexperienced staff and lack of resources may cost less initially, but the long-term results could be disastrous.

Web marketing is the same. While cheap websites are plentiful, the ***return on investment (ROI)*** will be minimal since the cheap website will not compete favorably with the large number of Internet competitors.

Is low-cost Web design really a bargain when the Internet is outpacing every advertising medium in growth? Below are some examples and considerations.

## The Cheap Website Looked Like a Pretty Good Choice

Consider a typical, small Personal Injury practice we talk to on a daily basis. Let's call it "Sample Law Firm." The marketing director at Sample Law Firm researched website developers and selected what he thought was a good deal. The contract terms probably appeared to offer quite a bargain: maybe the low-bid vendor waived a few "standard" fees and set up the website for low or no cost, based on an annual contract of \$2,000 per month for maintenance and SEO services.

A year or two later, Sample Law Firm has seen a \$6,000 monthly return from the new, inexpensive website. The budget-minded marketing director celebrates his success, feeling like he made a rather smart investment.

And it would be hard to argue, right?

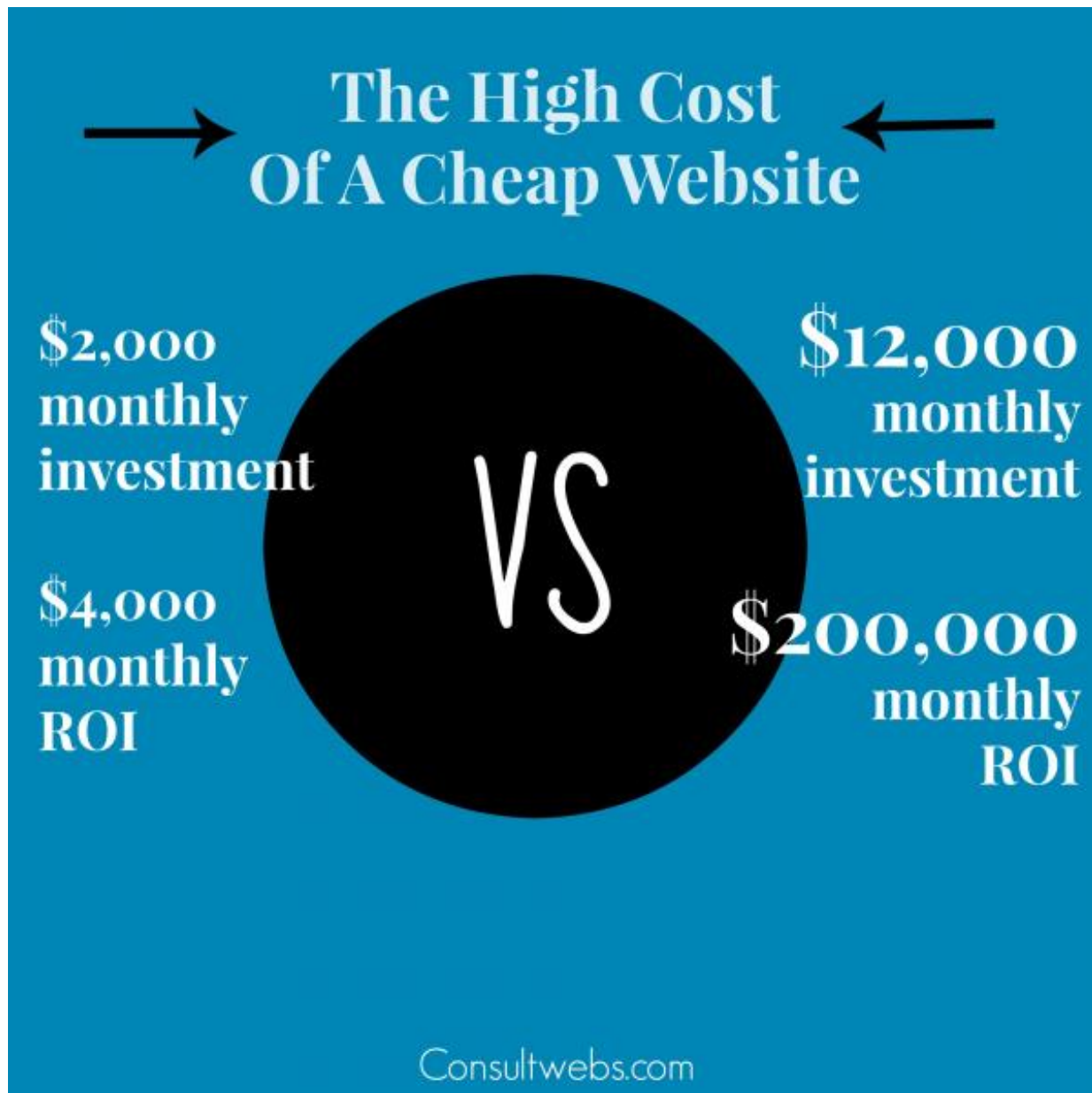
## ROI Matters When Considering Your Firm's Website

Let's consider how Sample Law Firm might look today if its decision-makers had considered investment ROI when deciding on a Web vendor.

A competing legal Web marketing company with a strong reputation in the industry counseled Sample Law Firm to devote a larger budget to develop a more robust, more compelling Web platform that included many additional methods of obtaining clients. The catch was, "doing it right" required a

\$5,000- to \$12,000-per-month additional investment for search marketing and audience development initiatives via social media, strategic paid advertising, public relations, outreach, and community involvement.

After the first year, as Sample Law Firm invested \$5,000 to \$12,000 per month, their average monthly return was \$60,000 to \$200,000 above their investment.



Choosing the cheap website, Sample Law Firm garnered about \$4,000 per month profit on its \$2,000 outlay. In contrast, had the firm's leadership taken into account the ROI potential of a tightly targeted but higher monthly expenditure, the firm would have netted \$127,500 each month on its \$8,500 investment, depending upon the competitiveness of the market, aggressiveness of the campaign, and other factors.

The "inexpensive" website cost the firm \$123,500 per month, or \$1,530,000 over the course of a year.

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Consultwebs.com

Law firms achieve a strong investment return on their websites when they give Web visitors an immediate sense of trust in the firm. A well-designed website establishes trust by revealing that the firm is professional, credible and experienced, and has a human touch. Highly talented legal marketing vendors have the experience to make sure a site delivers this experience and converts visitors by immediately earning their website visitors' trust.

### **What Does a Bigger Website Investment Buy Me?**

Many Web vendors “sell” their service but do not back the sale up with support. They provide template reports and periodic brief meetings, but do not provide the proactive marketing assistance that is needed to be successful; there is no long-term plan in mind.

Most people researching legal issues online—your potential clients—will visit more than three or four law firm websites before they select one to contact. A strong site engages its visitors through great design, high-quality videos and photography, and overall user experience. Ideally, the site's users will

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be greeted by a knowledgeable, compassionate receptionist in the form of a chat operator.

Reputable Web vendors excel at search marketing, making sure that your firm is represented on the first page of search results, which is a time-consuming and ongoing investment. Investing enough and investing it wisely will earn visibility in organic, local, and even pay-per-click (PPC) campaigns.

Let's not forget the mobile experience. In some market areas, 30 to 50 percent of Web visitors use a mobile device. Good Web development incorporates responsive design to convert clients on mobile devices, just as they do for desktop users. Prominent legal marketing companies will include mobile development, which is lacking in cheaper alternatives.

The Internet is rife with competing lawyers. A firm needs not only to invest enough to build a high-quality website, but to invest marketing funds wisely. As mentioned above, the best campaigns incorporate creative search marketing solutions with long term growth in mind by developing great assets for content marketing, scholarships, webinars, podcasts, and special campaigns that give the firm a quality "unique value proposition" (UVP). A low investment simply cannot fund the type of marketing efforts needed to rise above the competition.

An experienced law firm Web marketing company will tie together all the requirements for a successful legal website. Good keyword rankings, backlink profiles, local presence, citations, and strong technical SEO will increase search visibility. Compelling listings—good titles and meta descriptions—are fundamental.

A well-designed site connects with prospects when they land on the page, conveying trustworthiness, professionalism, ability, care, and concern. The successful website offers a good experience to the user, flowing smoothly between subjects and providing helpful information that instills trust in the knowledge, expertise, and abilities of the attorneys at the firm.

## **The Importance of Conversions**

After all that, a page must move the client to contact the firm, and then the intake process must be handled smoothly, quickly, and efficiently so that the prospect feels cared for and well served from the beginning of the relationship.

Finally, a successful Web presence will foster loyalty and renewed business from clients and will include social interaction and [positive online reviews—the word-of-mouth of the 21st century](#).

Every step in the process, from connecting with prospects to the ongoing relationship with clients whose cases have been resolved, requires technical expertise. The best legal Web marketers have a talent pool of expert staffers and vast resources to ensure that each step is handled professionally. Web development is a complex process that requires a team of specialists.

A single high-dollar case justifies a considerable investment in a high-quality online marketing strategy, which is relatively inexpensive compared to many traditional marketing vehicles. If your firm does not land that lucrative case, your competitor (who is doing everything right on the Web) will.

Successful law firms know the difference between a \$4,000 and \$200,000 ROI and they make marketing decisions accordingly. You do not want to leave millions of dollars on the table because of a "bargain" that looked too good to pass up.

National Law Review, Volume V, Number 57

Source URL: <https://natlawreview.com/article/cheap-website-could-cost-your-firm-millions-dollars>