Published on *The National Law Review* https://natlawreview.com

# A Simplified Law Firm Content Strategy

Article By:

MIchael Mellor

It’s common knowledge that everybody should have a content strategy tied to the needs of your prospects and clients (and aligned with your overall marketing plan), yet most attorneys are stressed for time or just don’t know where to begin. At the risk of oversimplification, here are five steps to develop a roadmap for (mostly) evergreen content that can move you up in Google rankings through Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and provide immediate value for your clients- no matter where they sit in their business lifecycle. While every law firm client or prospect is obviously different and requires a customized approach, developing a rough outline for each persona is a great first step in creating a more systemic approach to adding value. From there, it’s easy to provide content of value in a more methodical way, when one can easily create automated or manual decision/lead scoring trees to add additional value on a bigger scale.

## I. Understand Your Niche’s Business Maturation Lifecycle

In order to develop a plan of action that is fully aligned with client and prospect need, it’s mission critical to understand both client personas and then what the key pain points are within their typical journey. For a corporate client, a company may first be formed, then need capital, go public, then have shareholder litigation; an inventor may seek patent protection needs, form a company, then would seek to monetize, etc. Ask questions such as:

* What are all of the steps in each specific segment?
* What is the timeframe for these client/prospect key events?
* What would clients/prospects need to make more informed decisions before each of these phases?
* How can value and insights be delivered to them in a scalable yet customized manner?

## II. Uncover What Questions They Ask the Most

Once you have this roadmap sketched out for each of your potential clients/buyers, it is important to test it with trusted individuals or groups. Garner feedback to see if the stages and the pain points are correct, and why. Ask questions such as:

* What are the pain points associated with each phase?
* What exists in the marketplace now?

* What are the areas that I can own from an SEO/Google rankings perspective?
* In what medium is the content best delivered? Webinar? Podcast? 2 pager? Checklist?

## III. Slot and Develop Timeframes

The only thing worse than not providing insight to your client is providing it at the wrong time. Now that a more holistic picture of the client journey has crystallized, it's important to understand when a typical client encounters particular issues in their lifecycle. Going back through longtime clients to see when matters have opened, the sequence and in what timeframe can be helpful in developing a rough outline- but include your clients in the process. It's a business development exercise in itself to demonstrate that you care enough to try to bring insights to them before they need it, and they will obviously benefit from the "crystal ball" view that you are bringing, learning a lot about what hurdles and pitfalls may be in front of them. In this phase, ask questions such as:

* In what order did my current clients in the industry experience these phases?
* What were hurdles or challenges we didn't see coming?
* How can I help future clients and prospects avoid previous issues that I encountered?
* How can I aggregate my insights into a shareable and value-added format?

## IV. Assign and Develop Accountability

From here, it is easy to assign tasks/articles/checklists to those who are in the trenches. Whether best drafted by an associate, paralegal, or a partner, it is important to create a schedule to ensure that each phase is project managed and moves forward on time. Questions should now surround:

* Who is best suited to create this content?
* Who will keep it up to date with recent legal and industry developments?
* Do we create customized versions for different clients, or send this as more of a wider mailing?
* Who will followup and how do we bake feedback back into the document for the future?

## V. Measure, Track and A/B Test Your Hypotheses

Of course, it's important to know what success looks like before you begin the process. Make sure you have a baseline measured so you can gauge success- but be prepared to deviate from your script based off the client feedback you receive. We are constantly tweaking our processes based off key data points, and we let the numbers guide and alter our original hypotheses. This stage should answer the following questions:

* Did we deliver the right insights to our clients at the right time?
* What else did they want?
* Have any new developments occurred that change the original content?
* How much time can we spend in the customization phase?

While the above roadmap is oversimplified and by no means perfect, don't let perfection be the enemy of good in creating a content structure for your organization. It's always easier to tweak something than to fall prey to paralysis. Get out there and put one foot in front of the other!

For those who have started- what do you think? What ideas are out there for those with limited resources?

National Law Review, Volume VII, Number 331