SOCIAL MEDIA HANDBOOK

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Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Welcome to West LegalEdcenter.

The legal industry has not always been the earliest adopters of new technologies. For better or worse, firms – and by proxy attorneys themselves – are generally very deliberate when it comes to changing practices or processes to adapt to new technological resources that are available.

At West LegalEdcenter, we have built a foundation of not only recognizing the latest innovations, but also thinking about how to best incorporate them into the practice of law. As one of the first providers of online CLE, and the first to provide on-the-go programming through our CLE Mobile app, we pride ourselves on being one of the pioneers of this new technology.

Social media is by no means new, and is continuing to progress quickly. Just five years ago, MySpace was all the rage, few people had ever heard of Facebook, and Twitter didn't even exist. Despite its evolutionary nature, however, social media is a part of our personal and, increasingly, our professional lives.

This handbook is intended to provide an overview of the current social media landscape. This book includes best practices, glossary of terms, industry articles, and a book excerpt from our new book, *Social Lawyers*.

We hope this provides some value in thinking about how technology, and the latest technological advances, can play a role in the legal industry. And if you ever need to find West LegalEdcenter, please… friend us, follow us, email us or, yes, even call us.

Regards,

Lee Ann Enquist

Make time for Social Media

Make time for Social Media

Adrian Dayton

(Originally published in the National Law Journal on November 4, 2010. Reprinted with permission from the author)

One year in college my brother and I decided to unplug the cable and go without television programs for an entire year. It was so liberating, we were able to spend our evenings watching either the movies we chose (as opposed to Law & Order re-runs or Mannequin 2) and we were able to make better use of our time. I'm not saying that TV is all bad, but it is often used to fill the extra time in our lives that could be better used elsewhere. Perhaps the sinister element of TV is that it is a socially acceptable way for Americans to waste their lives. Nobody is going to judge you for being a Glee junkie. Well maybe, but you get the point.

Americans watch an estimated 200 billion hours of TV each year, according to Clay Shirky , co-author of the bestselling book *Cognitive Surplus*. The people who make TV shows are facing a growing threat, according to Shirky — Americans who would prefer engaging in conversation online with Facebook, Twitter and blogs rather than watching TV. TV is starting to get some competition for the spare time of Americans. Shirky refers to this 200 billion hours of time as "cognitive surplus," and it is now being channeled towards global endeavors like Wikipedia, where individuals submit articles and edits to a shared database with no hope of financial remuneration. An estimated 100 million hours have been plugged into Wikipedia articles — and while this may seem like a lot of time, it is still roughly 0.1% of the time Americans spend each year watching television. Who had time to write all those articles? Turns out, everybody.

Lawyers don't have the same amount of free time as the average American, so where do they find time for social media? "I force social media and blogging into my schedule," said David Donaghue, author of the Chicago IP Litigation Blog, recently named one of the top 40 under 40 attorneys in Chicago. With all of the demands on the lives of attorneys, you won't find time for social media unless you make a place for it. It has paid off for Donahue, though, helping him gain significant exposure and close new business.

The most successful bloggers online have created a routine for their participation in the online world. Roy Ginsburg, author of the blog Quirky Employment Questions, spends time every Sunday night creating his blog posts for the coming week; others find early mornings work best. For attorneys who have found success through social media — they make it a priority.
So what does success look like for law bloggers? Success can look very different for different bloggers. According to David Brown, a partner at Alston and Bird and co-leader of the Financial Markets Crisis Blog, "Regulators read our blog from the IMF, World Bank and FSA — we didn't expect that." In addition to the increased exposure, Brown described how the blog has helped he and his colleagues become better lawyers. "[Attorneys] need peripheral vision — you can't get that by being a faithful reader of the *Wall Street Journal*. The blog is helping make our lawyers more credible and more expert." When asked why they started the blog, Brown explained, "We needed a real-time tool, we couldn't keep pace with six-to-eight page alerts." For Alston & Bird, the blog has been deemed a success, but success means different things to different firms.

For some firms social media is a success only if it brings in new business. This is problematic, because social media and business development don't exactly go hand in hand. A huge amount of traffic to a blog can often translate to zero new matters if the attorneys don't have a strategy to convert traffic into contacts and convert the contacts into clients. If attorneys make the time to blog — great. If they can invest the additional time to engage in conversations — even better.

If you think about the sales cycle like a funnel, at the very top of the funnel you have visibility gained by media and possibly your online persona — at the very bottom, you have retained clients who are writing the checks. To get from the top of the funnel to the bottom, there needs to be real engagement and quality touches in between. I often ask my clients, "How many appointments have you set up as a result of your social media efforts?" Phone calls, breakfasts, lunches — these offline appointments are the valuable communications that lead to new matters and referrals.

Is it worth the time and effort? Why not spend the time doing traditional marketing or making phone calls? Why not spend the time relaxing and watching TV? Engaging in social media in your free time is not yet as socially acceptable as watching TV — it requires you to leave your comfort zone and learn new habits and new ways of communication. Social media can open your eyes to untapped sources of information and relationships that would have been impossible to build otherwise — and those are things you will never gain from watching the nightly news.

Adrian Dayton – www.adriandayton.com

Social Media Best Practices

START WITH STRATEGY

Objectives: What are the goals of your social media presence? Are you trying to learn more about your customers? Expose your firm to a new market? Offer an alternative means of communication to your clients? Whatever it is, this needs to lead your social media strategy, not become an afterthought.

Content: How do you plan to keep your content relevant and fresh? Will you write original content or filter and post content from other sources? How often will you post? Brainstorm some ideas and develop an editorial calendar.

Platform: Finally, determine which social network(s) offers the best opportunity for sharing your content and achieving your goals. Just because Facebook is popular doesn't mean it's the right choice for your particular firm. Find out what social networks your market is using and go there.

Measurement: How do you plan to measure the success of your social media presence against your objectives? For example, you could track how many sales leads per month you generate from your blog, or how much traffic your website receives from your twitter account.

GIVE TO GET

The most important thing to remember is that you MUST provide members of your social networks with value. They need to benefit; not just you. Social networks should be used primarily for discussion and information sharing, and secondarily for promotion.

Generally, social networks are not the place for hard selling. Try to use a 6-1 ratio of information/news and discussion to promotion. This is a rule of thumb and may not fit all circumstances. Start with this and adapt your strategy as you learn more about your audience and what frequency and mix of messages work for them. With social media you will get out what you put in – so dedicate time to building relationships and providing value.

BE TRANSPARENT AND CLEARLY STATE VALUE

Be upfront about who you and be genuine in your comments. Take the first possible opportunity to tell your social followers what value you provide to them. Is it news and thoughtful analysis of pressing topics in your practice area? Will you facilitate discussion and network building between members? Are you hosting events and offering discount passes via social media? Whatever value you provide, by being forthcoming you will build trust and aid in creating an engaged social media audience.

ENGAGE AND ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION

Engagement is a key indicator of social media success. Are you followers commenting, re-tweeting, etc. Are you engaging in meaningful and personal conversations via social media? Encourage participation by asking for comments and feedback. When you get a comment, respond to it, act on it if necessary.

Strive to develop relationships not only between your brand and the community members, but also amongst the community members themselves. Get them talking with you and others.

Where possible, demonstrate your expertise on a topic. It takes time to build an engaged audience, but the benefits can be enormous.

UNDERSTAND YOU CAN ONLY GUIDE THE MESSAGE, NOT CONTROL IT
Avoid treating social network interaction like advertising. We can guide the message, but due to the nature of social media, we do not have ultimate control of it. Once information is available on a social network, members will inevitably re-shape it. Think of the telephone game you probably played as a kid. One person starts with a message and as it gets passed from one person to the next, certain components of that message are lost or changed. By the time it reaches the last person, it is often drastically different than the original.

Message distortion like this is most likely to happen through "re-tweets" on twitter as tweets are limited in length so it's up to the re-tweeter to determine what part of the message gets cut or altered.

AVOID EXTREMES OF ACTIVITY OR INACTIVITY
A social network with irregular or very little activity is practically worthless. Community members will only engage if they know someone is listening, so post regularly. The opposite can be even more detrimental. Make sure the level of activity is not intrusive. People are not on Facebook to interact with your firm or brand, they're there to interact with friends and family. So if you're posts dominate their news feed you're likely going to get a lot of "un-likes" and worse, negative sentiment.

Monitor your "likes" and "follows," if you begin to see large numbers of people leaving the community, try reducing the frequency of your posts.

Book Excerpt: Chapter 9 of *Social Lawyers*
by Jayne Navarre

social.lawyers: Transforming Business Development

2010-2011 Edition

Jayne L. Navarre

Chapter 9

The Role of the Organization

§ 9:1   You need a champion

Those who have been around long enough can remember a time when e-mail was not a standard form of communication in law firms and committees were formed to "study" it. The gravity that technological advances present to risk-adverse organizations such as law firms can sometimes feel like a dead weight.

Over the years, committees have vetted decisions on whether to allow cell phones, fax, and voice mail; electronic documents, signatures, and wiring of funds; video conferencing, blogging, and Tweeting, creating a lot of work and slowing down adoption. The fact is, they eventually accept and completely integrate such new technologies, though often not on "their terms." So, if you are reading this book and want to help your firm to move forward quickly, it is probably a good idea to get started now and form a committee or task force to study or develop your law firm's social-Web strategy.

No matter how sharp the e-mail committee members were, there were things that they could not have foreseen. Did they have a gut feeling about the role of electronic discovery in litigation? Maybe. Modern trial practice has already introduced evidence from social-networking activity for both plaintiffs and defendants, so there is no question on that. Still, it is difficult to project what landmines lay ahead for social media. (Two that are now just hitting the wire are intellectual-property disputes in works being converted to electronic readers and net neutrality for telecommunications companies delivering high-speed Internet to heavy users.)[1] To drive your in-house social-media studies, strategies, guidelines, and procedures, choose for committee members

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[Section 9:1]

[1]Illustrators sue Google for royalties related to published works. Comcast fights the FCC for its right to restrict bandwidth to hogs.

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those visionaries, entrepreneurs, and champions among you who understand and actually use the tools in their own strategy. It is hard to coach the ball game from the nosebleed seats.

The composition of the committee is very important. While it is tempting to want to put the loudest skeptics (or complainers) on marketing-focused committees, this is a case where that strategy will not work in your favor. The social-Web committee is a place for open-minded leaders. It is not nearly as one-dimensional as fax, e-mail, or electronic signatures; there are many moving parts, the least of which is individuals who are seeking to take back their voices. How that plays out will be determined by whether the committee members see the glass half empty or half full. Select committee members who are:

1. Naturally social people.
2. Experienced in developing business.
3. Not afraid to put others first.
4. Currently using a mix of tactics in their business development strategy, for example, networking, writing articles, entertaining, and speaking.
5. Familiar with of the Model Rules and Codes of advertising.
6. Stakeholders in the organization (this does not exclude associates).
7. Learning, listening, and doing people.

Consider broadening the committee, at least for some discussions, to include the perspectives of a paralegal, an administrator, or a receptionist in addition to lawyers, marketing staff, and human resource professionals. This will help you in many ways—the least of which is in communicating to the entire law firm the importance it is placing on the new medium and accompanying responsibilities.

Choosing the right leader of the committee, likewise, is crucial. Again, avoid selecting anyone who will hinder the committee with stubborn thinking, i.e., someone who is overly and unreasonably risk-averse, lacking in vision, resistant to change, or not social by nature. Chose a leader who has true leadership qualities, who can facilitate discussion, tune into human nature, and fairly represent the firm's values and brand.

Engaging an outside consultant who is intimately familiar with marketing and business-development strategies for lawyers as well as what is working and what is possible can be a smart move. Nothing is worse than navel gazing when it comes to the social Web. A consultant can bring the outside world into the law firm, provide vision, and really work to your advantage. Bonus points if the consultant is a skilled facilitator and can act as a co-leader.

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Finally, arm your committee with specific objectives, the most important being to study how firm clients are using the social Web. They should also look at how the new medium might extend client relationships, not only new business development communications. They should be charged with developing workable strategies to protect the entity, the owners, their clients, and employees.

§ 9:2 Designing the law firm model

At first glance, online social networks and social media present an appealing opportunity for law firms simply based on their scale and low cost of entry when compared to traditional media such as advertising, direct mail, radio, broadcast, or public relations. However, while the social Web is attractive on those two counts (it is inhabited by lots of potential clients—at the very least, many warm bodies), it still has to support objectives and have deft operators at the helm. So, while it may be cheap, it is not free.

Just like any business development activity, results take time. Since most law firms are in the business of selling time, and time is finite (and time is money), where and how an attorney (or those who support them) invests time is an important consideration. Pressing the flesh, face time, conference attendance, and never dining alone can be very expensive in both dollars and attorney time. Using the social Web will make some of these "costs" disappear, but do not be deceived: the social Web can be a time-intensive activity for both attorneys and marketers. To address this, the strategic firm will transfer dollars to support increased social-Web activity. While it may seem cheap at first glance, to do it right carries a price.

Law firms that seek proficiency and return on their investment will find that, like most business initiatives, a dedicated budget for training, experimentation, monitoring, measurement, and management personnel is necessary in order to grow strategically. One of the more misunderstood costs of social media is the immediate and continuous need for content creation. As efforts mature, many law firms will find themselves unable to generate the bulk of content required to run a successful social-Web business-development program. They may quickly discover that they need to assign appropriate resources, financial as well as talent-based, to content creation. It takes bodies to develop promotions, announcements, conversation, questionnaires, and other elements of engagement.

Social Web purists will argue against any content other than

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that which the immediate user, the individual attorney, creates. On one hand, they are absolutely right. Building a relationship is not a third-party endeavor. However, on the other hand, leveraging social media for the organization can benefit from creative people beyond the immediate user who can focus on the intent of the content. Simply broadcasting press releases and Super Lawyer announcements may look like activity, but is it reasonable to expect that anyone would care enough to engage with such inward-focused content? Not likely. Therefore, dedicated marketing staff or outsourced consultants, writers, and technicians hired to strategically generate, edit, or direct content that inspires engagement should not be ruled out. Likewise, costs associated with developing blogs or firm branded mobile applications must be considered.

Certainly, in most cases user-generated content is critical. But in other cases, as long as the participant or organization is transparent, there should be no problem with a business model that includes a team effort, with one caveat: real people need to seek out opportunities to engage directly with others.

A perfect example of this is when a politician uses Twitter, Facebook, or other social sites for campaigning. They may enlist armies of writers and strategists to hone the messages and even put them in front of the right people, but the candidate must also be available for personal engagement whenever possible in order to be effective.

There are three models to consider for your social Web program.

1. A centralized model will have a dedicated social-media person, functioning at a senior level, reporting to the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) or Chairman. This person will be responsible for all social-media activation for the law firm. This person puts the human face on the organization's social-media presence, being the public face both internally and externally. One drawback to this model is that departments outside that person's scope, for example, client service, recruiting and human resources, might not benefit from the efforts. It is more difficult to take into consideration social media's influence on the entire law firm when the interaction is centralized in marketing. Another danger in this model is that it may become more about the individual who is the voice firm, rather than the firm itself.

2. A distributed model, seen in corporations like JetBlue, Best Buy, IBM, and Kodak, is one in which no one person technically owns social media. All employees from client service to marketing, public relations to human resources represent

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the brand and work social media into their roles. This is often implemented through training and encouraging social media use across the enterprise. The dangers of this model include that no standardized practice exists, and therefore social engagement can lead to off-brand messaging. Additionally, without a leader, learning about new social technology or sites then falls on the individuals and may result in a scattershot effort. As a result, this model works best only when senior leadership champions social media. Frequent training and internal communications around a social-media policy are critical to this model.

3. The third model involves a combination of centralized best practices and decentralized execution. The entity will maintain a committee of social-media stakeholders to guide positioning and voice. Those stakeholders disseminate the guidance to everyone in the organization. Each department is then left to incorporate social media into its individual purpose and execute. The drawback here is in finding a way to hold departments accountable to a committee. When a social-media initiative goes sour, someone will end up being the fall guy, but it is not always clear who that would be: those who built the strategy or those who implemented it? Clearly this model will require that a social-media savvy individual represent each department on the committee. Where a culture of collaboration is already established, this model can succeed. Tools like wikis to collectively crowd-source guidelines and feedback will be very useful for keeping everyone focused.[1]

You may not currently have enough information or even a need to build a model for your social Web program. But if you do, these preceding models can serve as a good starting point.

§ 9:3 The maturation process

Chaos is not a strategy. Law firms, like many of the businesses they serve, are relatively new to applying social-Web tools to their business activities. However, it is reasonable to project that the maturation process of the social Web in law firms will follow a fairly defined path similar to the maturation path of the general marketing-efforts in law firms.

Each phase in the maturation process has merit, and no one

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[1]Kunur Patel, "Three Marketing Models for Social Media," Advertising Age, February 22, 2010.

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phase is exclusively determinant. Transitions will have overlap as the law firm or individual attorney matures in their use of the social Web. The following outline may be useful for benchmarking your current level of participation and for mapping your future strategy. The four phases consist of:

- Phase 1. Trial: No process, platform centric.
- Phase 2. Transition: Informal process, randomly performed.
- Phase 3. Strategic: Formal process, routinely performed.
- Phase 4. Corporate: Embedded in culture, fully integrated.

The Trial Phase is characterized by task-oriented efforts that are platform-centric and unfocused. At this phase there is no little or no thought to why participation is necessary beyond experimentation. If there is any thought to measuring success, it is measured by the simple completion of the task. In this phase, attorneys will focus on the tools and independently join a business-oriented or peer-to-peer social network. Alternately, marketers will create accounts and add profiles for all attorneys on select social-networking sites. The firm will introduce a social media and networking policy via a written memo with no training component offered to put the policy in context.

There is no coordination among participants to share what they are learning. A majority of firm partners are still skeptical, or even fearful, of participation and may conclude that it is not for lawyers.

Objections to using the social Web might include:

"It's a waste of my time. I don't have time."
"I don't understand all the networks."
"It's too difficult to control content and track responses."
"I don't understand the language."
"It seems like kid stuff."
"My audience doesn't use that stuff."

In the Transitional Phase, marketers will become more proactive by adding social-Web tools on behalf of the organization to push out press releases and announcements. Numbers such as how many attorney bloggers in the firm, participants on each network, Tweets, e-newsletters sent, videos on the firm website, or Web seminars offered by the firm will measure success. Management still does not yet see the value of social media and social networking to the enterprise strategy.

Lawyers catch on to the value of growing their LinkedIn network via introductions to second-degree contacts, adding applications to their profiles, and requesting recommendations. They dig deeper into discussion forums and groups as they begin to realize the value of greater participation. However, there is

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little or no coordinated emphasis on using the tools strategically to meet business-development goals. The driver at this phase is internal motivation that places an emphasis on exposure among peers and staying ahead of the competition. A few lawyers may be able to track new business to their efforts, and marketers are relieved to have a champion. However, during this phase a renegade lawyer or staff member will surface and cause the firm to rethink their involvement. They will recognize that they not only need a policy, but that lawyers and staff need to be trained in best practices, appropriate use, and ethical considerations to truly protect firm interests.

The marketing department will begin to access free social-Web monitoring tools, and early attempts at benchmarking and measurement will appear but miss the mark on sharing actionable data with participants. Marketers will be called upon more frequently to help an attorney understand blogging or coach them in using social media. At this stage, if there is a blog, it will be buried in the law firm website, essentially repurposing newsletter content. The tone will be overly formal, often reading like a law review article. Open commenting is probably not allowed. An increase in Web seminars for clients will appear, however the measurement of success will be the number of seminars or participants rather than the impact on the client and their buying habits. Subscription services for distributing articles may be used but quickly abandoned by the disappointed attorney when their one article or presentation does not bear fruit.

The managing partner will realize that his clients frequently show up on the social Web.

The Strategic Phase is a turning point where sophistication starts. Firms begin to understand that goals, objectives, and tactics can guide their social Web efforts. The activities become more specific, with measurements attached. These law firms track leads and are more likely to be able to measure the impact of social media initiatives to revenue. They assign measurements such as the ratio between activities to engagement as well as activities to brand impact. Research from three fronts informs strategies: client surveys, audience research, and internal audits. Audiences (current and potential) are systematically profiled using external intelligence: behaviors, content preferences, sharing, media types, etc.

Lawyers begin to understand that they can use the social Web to inform and educate, motivate and guide, call to action, connect, and win new business. Community and civic activities are integrated into their social Web dialogue and are targeted, lever-

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aged, and supported by the firm. Speaking engagements and conference attendance is integrated into blog posts, both before and after the event. Applications such as TripIt, Slide Share, and Twitter streams are added to social network profiles to extend visibility and inspire further contact. Some may experiment with geo-tracking their networks on Twitter, Foursquare, or other services.

Firms in this phase begin to treat their online engagement as a firm asset. They attempt to align internal culture with the external interaction, by educating lawyers and staff alike in tactics and best practices. Champions are ubiquitous and given internal and external visibility.

Management knows where their clients and prospects are engaging on the social Web and join them there.

In phase four, Embedded Integration, a firm will be well on their way to defining its marketing and business-development program equally through engagement on the social Web and traditional tools. Strong vision and leadership is in place and Internet technologies become an integral part of the business, not only for marketing but also for client-facing activity.

The business development focus is no longer simply on publishing content, but on building relationships and engaging with qualified leads. Networks are formed around the social use cases of audiences and client engagement. Dedicated staff is added and integrated into all firm departments and functions. Resources are devoted to process, creativity, and content development, deploying new tools, both public and private, that facilitate engagement with prospects and clients. They have a fully integrated firm website. The firm understands how to activate partners and employees to engage on the social Web in a way that builds relationships, streamlines business processes such as client service and dissemination of knowledge, drives traffic back to their sites—blogs and firm home site—and ultimately influences actions that lead to client development, stronger referral networks, and new business.

Their measurements are sophisticated—results are measured as a ratio of activity to time to new relationships formed, online conversations taken to off-line conversations, media mentions, sentiment, and relationships converted to new business. Benchmarking, value analysis, and strategic placement among communities and services are given ample budget and planning. The firm regularly gathers intelligence about audiences, social use, and competition. The social-marketing strategy has a well-defined tactical plan of action, and everyone executes on it with

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deliberation. The firm subsidizes educational opportunities. It reinforces the well-established principles of sales and marketing and assists them in assimilation. Data is translated into actionable knowledge, shared with attorneys, and has an impact on future innovations.

Firm leaders and marketers know and actively promote champions, internally acknowledging their contributions at every opportunity. They practice what they preach and consistently demonstrate thought leadership. All firm members recognize that the social Web is an extension of their business development and sales activity. They can readily predict the path of their activity from published content, exposure to audiences, and viable leads to new business.

Whatever phase your law firm may be in at this particular point in time there is a need to have a road map for improvement such as this. Although you may be in the early phase, taking the first step in the next direction is better than no step at all. As Wayne Gretzky, former National Hockey League superstar, once said, "You miss 100 percent of the shots you never take." Be strategic. Stay informed. Take a shot!

For a comprehensive list of corporate social media marketing examples, I recommend a visit to the Social Media Wiki being compiled by former Forrester analyst Peter Kim.[1]

[Section 9:3]

[1]Peter Kim, "A Wiki of Social Media Marketing Examples," Being Peter Kim Blog, http://wiki.beingpeterkim.com/(Accessed April 2010).

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Which Firm Owns the Most Digital Real Estate?

Which Firm Owns the Most Digital Real Estate?

By Adrian Dayton

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> "*The two most important requirements for major success are: first, being in the right place at the right time, and second, doing something about it.*"
> *— Ray Kroc, builder of McDonald's, the most successful fast food operation in the world.*

Why are the firms of Big Law so successful?

They have powerful relationships with old and very large institutional clients, they have name recognition and good will that has been built up over more than a century and they have impressive real estate, with offices in prime locations in the major cities of the world.

Smaller firms aren't likely to steal the institutional clients or spend the money to gain the same type of name recognition. They certainly can't afford the real estate prices of New York City or Tokyo. But there is one type of real estate that smaller firms are gobbling up at an impressive rate, with most of the larger firms lagging behind.

I call this "digital real estate." Not to be confused with intellectual property, digital real estate refers instead to online positioning and the online presence or digital footprint of law firms. Let me give you an example.

Run a Google search for "class action defense" and you will notice that most of the top results are law blogs. The number one result is not an AmLaw 200 firm; in fact it is a blog produced by the law firm of Jeffer Mangels Butler & Mitchell. It is a comparatively small firm, with three offices and 138 attorneys, according to its Web site. Yet here it is dominating the Google search results and owning the best digital real estate for its practice area with its blog.

You can try the same exercise for numerous search topics, and you will see a trend — the top 50 law firms in America rarely show up at the top of Google rankings. So you are probably asking two questions right now: (1) Why aren't they showing up in the results? and (2) Does it matter that they aren't showing up?

The biggest firms in America aren't showing up in the search results in large part because they don't blog — or, more specifically, they don't create anywhere near the quantity of articles and posts that blogging attorneys do. There are more than 23,000 lawyers in the top 10 firms of the AmLaw 100, and how many blogs in total would you guess are being created by these 23,000-plus lawyers?

The answer is two. That's right — one, two. The top 10 firms just aren't blogging. Blogs are such an effective way to get high search rankings because Google loves fresh content. In the time it takes an AmLaw 100 firms to hire a PR firm, draft copy, have it approved, send it to the Web

people to publish on the site, the more agile law firms have created five new blog articles on relevant topics that are generating substantial traffic from both the search engines and peer sharing through social networks. (An example of peer sharing would be when I share an article on Twitter, and my friend and GC of Leprino Foods, Richard Russeth, forwards or "retweets" my article to his network on Twitter or shares it as an update on LinkedIn.)

When it comes to digital real estate, the firms of the AmLaw 100, especially the top 10, are being left in the dust. Consider the fact that in the entire AmLaw 100 there are more than 84,000 lawyers and only 130 law blogs. More than 50% of these blogs come from just six firms. (Sheppard Mullin Richter & Hampton; Reed Smith; Hunton & Williams; Alston & Bird; Littler Mendelson and Dorsey & Whitney).

In a recent survey of the AmLaw 101-200, we uncovered that these firms have fewer than 30,000 total attorneys creating 182 Law blogs. To put this in perspective, take a firm like Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice that has 40 attorneys blogging and 15 law blogs. Forty attorneys blogging represents approximately 9% of the firm's total number of attorneys. If 9% of the attorneys at Baker & McKenzie had their own law blogs, that firm would have more law blogs than the entire AmLaw 200 put together.

So why is it that AmLaw 101-200 firms are investing time and resources so heavily in law blogs? Because blogging generally is ignored by the biggest firms, and its a great way to get attention. Marketing 101 — go where your competitors aren't.

Now for the second question: Does it matter that the biggest firms aren't ranking in Google searches? Studies have shown that more than 56% of people running a Google search click on the very first result, 13% on the second, and down from there. If you aren't on the first page, you might as well not exist online.

But what about in-house counsel? Do they follow the same behavior as average consumers, or do they act differently? In March, Greentarget and ALM completed a survey that revealed that 35% of in-house counsel had visited a law blog within the past 24 hours. Forty-three percent of in-house counsel cited law blogs among their top "go-to" sources for news and information. I can't imagine too many in-house counsel are reading the blogs of the top 10 firms, however — after all, they don't have much of a selection with only two blogs to choose from.

The white shoe firms of Big Law will continue to have an advantage over the smaller firms because of their relationships, name recognition and high-priced physical real estate. But the overlooked digital real estate provides an opportunity for the truly entrepreneurial firms to get exposure that might not have been possible even 10 years ago. Blogs provide firms with a chance to be in the right place at the right time online; now they just need to follow the advice of Ray Kroc and do something about it.

If your firm is in the AmLaw 200 and has blogs that aren't listed, please e-mail the names and links from the blogs to info@adriandayton.com.

Recommended Reading

social.lawyers: Transforming Business Development, 2010 ed.
By Jayne Navarre

This book presents information about social technologies, how they impact your practice and affect client interests. Practical tips and use cases regarding online networking, blogging, podcasting, video-casting and social networks are set forth in an objective format, and a business development approach is offered for leveraging these emerging technologies. Conflicting information and opinion about social technologies from Web sites and blogs is sorted and analyzed. The author understands what is involved in the process of going to market and has guided attorneys and firms through technology adoption from fax machines to email, typewriters to laptops, and now to social technologies.

The Marketer's Handbook of Tips & Checklists, 2010-2011 ed.
By Phyllis Weiss Haserot

This book is a practical guide for marketing your firm and is a useful resource for both the marketer and the rainmaker. It includes several new checklists for 2010–2011 on human performance skills. It also provides more than 100 checklists that can be used daily in every phase of marketing planning, client service, business development, the professional selling process, management related to business development, and relationships with inside and outside professionals. The author, a highly respected business development consultant and coach, reveals the tips and techniques she has provided to clients for more than 20 years.

Law Firm Marketing—Be Effective and Avoid Jumping the Shark, 2009–2010 ed.
By Keith McLemore

This volume is part of a series that focuses on the business side of the profession of law, concentrating on how to maximize law firm efficiency and effectiveness through the application of sound business practices. This volume helps lead attorneys realize what effective marketing techniques are and helps legal marketers successfully implement those techniques.

Social Media Tools/Resources

iGoogle

iGoogle lets you create a personalized homepage that contains a Google search box at the top, and your choice of any number of gadgets below. Gadgets come in lots of different forms and provide access to activities and information from all across the web, without ever having to leave your iGoogle page. Here are some things you can do with gadgets:

☐ Add RSS feeds for your favorite websites or blogs (this saves a lot of time!)
☐ View your latest Gmail messages
☐ Read headlines from Google News and other top news sources
☐ Check out weather forecasts, stock quotes, and movie showtimes
☐ Store bookmarks for quick access to your favorite sites from any computer

HootSuite

Hootsuite is a social media management tool that allows you to post to your twitter, Facebook, Wordpress, linkedin, and other accounts, all from one dashboard. You can even schedule tweets or posts into the future, track links and other stats, and post to multiple accounts with one click. hootsuite.com

WeFollow

We follow is a categorized directory of Twitter users. Find top influencers by location, industry, or interests. Add yourself to WeFollow to help others find and follow you. wefollow.com

SocialMention

Socialmention.com scans all or specific social networks for mentions of keywords or brands – rates tone of mentions. Helps you see what others are saying about your firm or organization. SocialMention.com

Technorati

Similar to socialmention.com, technorati.com helps you see what's being said about your firm or organization and measures sentiment. Technorati.com

To see what we're doing with social media please join our networks.

@HotLawTopics – Join real-time discussion on hot legal topics. Get news, useful information and relevant CLE programming.

@CLEGina - Gina specializes in the accreditation of continuing legal education.Her twitter feed aggregates and relays essential CLE information for anyone administering CLE credit.

@AttorneyJobs - The premier resource for attorney career development. Job postings, articles and tips, news, and more! Follow @AttorneyJobs

@Beyond_The_Bar - Helping new lawyers gain the skills necessary to successfully transition to practicing law. Learn the increasingly important practical knowledge not taught in law school.Follow @Beyond_The_Bar

Find us on Facebook to receive exclusive offers, stay up-to-date on the law, discuss hot legal topics, and more! Search "West LegalEdcenter"

Beyond The Bar Faculty Blog - Expert faculty members provide insight into increasingly important topics such as pre-trial advocacy, legal negotiation, client relations, and more. Beyondthebar.westlegaledcenter.com/blog

Gina's CLE Blog - Gina specializes in the accreditation of continuing legal education. Her blog conveys detailed CLE information to promote the understanding of CLE in the legal industry. ginascleblog.com

AttorneyJobs.com Group - Join the discussion and network with other legal professionals. Find career related news, articles, discussions, and job postings for attorneys. Search "Attorney Jobs"

Twitter Glossary

Do you ever feel like people are speaking another language when talking about Twitter? Well...they are. Twitter has its own terms to describe different interactions and features, many of which were created by users. Here is a glossary of some of the most common terms.

@

The @ sign is used to call out usernames on Twitter (e.g. How are you @JoeJohnson?) When a username is preceded by the @ sign, it becomes a link to the corresponding twitter profile. Also see mentions and replies.

Direct Message (DM)

These are private messages between only the sender and recipient. Adding "d @username" to a tweet will specify who the message is for and only that person will be able to view it.

Follow Friday (FF)

On Fridays, Twitter users often suggest who others should follow. By adding the hashtag #FF and @username(s) to your tweet, you're basically saying "These twitter users are interesting, you should follow them too."

Geolocation / Geotagging

Location data can be used in tweets to tell people where you are tweeting from. This can also be called "Tweet with Your Location."

Handle

A "Twitter handle" is a twitter username and the accompanying URL. (e.g. http://twitter.com/JoeJohnson)

Hashtag (#)

The # symbol is used to mark keywords or topics in a Tweet. This was created organically by Twitter users to help users find related content. Try clicking on a hashtag to see a list of tweets related to that topic. For example, if you're tweeting a tip for passing law school, include #lawstudent and/or #lawschool to help law students find your tweet.

Lists

Used to group specific twitter users by topic or category. (e.g. Law, Sports, Music)

Mention
To mention a Twitter user add @ followed directly by their username in your tweet. This also refers to a Twitter user including your @username in their Tweet.

Promoted Tweets

Tweets that show up at the top of search results on Twitter and have been paid for by selected businesses.

Reply

You can reply to another user's Tweet by clicking the "reply" button next to their Tweet in your timeline. A reply always begins with @username.

Retweet (noun)

A Tweet by another user, forwarded to you by someone you follow. Often used to spread news or share valuable findings on Twitter.

Retweet (verb)

To retweet, retweeting, retweeted. The act of forwarding another user's Tweet to all of your followers.

RT

Abbreviated version of "retweet." Placed before the retweeted text when users manually retweet a message. Also see Retweet.

Tweet (verb)

Tweet, Tweeting, Tweeted. The act of posting a message, often called a "Tweet", on Twitter.

Tweet (noun)

A message posted via Twitter containing 140 characters or fewer.

Twitterview
An interview conducted via Twitter in real time.

Unfollow

To cease following another Twitter user. Their Tweets no longer show up in your home timeline.

Byte-Sized Learning: Technology Makes CLE Easier and More Effective

This article was first published in the December 2010 issue of Peer to Peer, the quarterly magazine of ILTA, as is reprinted here with permission. For information about ILTA, visit www.iltanet.org.

BEST PRACTICES

Byte-Sized Learning:

Technology Makes CLE Easier and More Effective

Think back to law school and the dozens, if not hundreds, of pages you had to read each night to prepare for the next day's classes. Now ask yourself, "How much of that material is still with me today?"

Studies have shown that with learning at all levels, it is harder to retain information when we try to take in a massive amount of information at once. In fact, our cognitive functions operate something like a bottleneck — if too much material is presented to us all at once, only a small amount manages to break though and is remembered.

By receiving and processing information in bite-sized chunks, a learner is more likely to absorb it, retain it and actually learn something. This is more effective than relying on short-term memorization in order to regurgitate content. Increasingly, psychologists, educators and content providers are changing practices to accommodate the way people learn best. More and more, educational materials are offered online, or in on-demand formats that allow learners to absorb the material in a place, time and at a rate that is comfortable for them.

This idea of "chunking" information into smaller, more easily digestible lessons is nothing new; it dates back to an oft-quoted paper from 1956 by cognitive psychologist George A. Miller titled "The Magical Number Seven, Plus or Minus Two." The paper posits that the typical person can hold only seven (plus or minus two) pieces of data at once, a theory that has been generally accepted since. By breaking up a large amount of content into smaller pieces, the brain can process and sort the information into more easily remembered segments, allowing it to be stored in one's long term memory, rather than quickly passing into — and out of — the short-term memory.

So it seems counterproductive that legal professionals — from the first days of law school through continuing legal education (CLE) curricula — would attempt to learn in an "all-at-once" format, cramming too much information into too little time. This is an outdated learning model, especially with the training resources available today.

Advances in technology have impacted the educational process, both formal and informal, in myriad ways. But perhaps one of the most beneficial aspects of technology is the ability to take educational material and easily break it down into bite-sized, or in this case "byte-sized," pieces that are more easily learned and retained in one's long-term memory bank.

THE BENEFITS OF MOBILE LEARNING

This is a powerful argument for technology-driven CLE, and particularly for CLE content that can be acquired through mobile devices such as the iPhone. "Mobile learning" allows

> "No two individuals learn in precisely the same way, so offering legal education in a one-size-fits-all model no longer makes sense."

students to retain maximum control over where, when and how much of a program they digest at any given time. This choice and flexibility contribute to a deeper, richer and more meaningful educational experience, and ultimately ensure that students learn and retain more of the material.

In addition, mobile CLE saves law firms valuable time by making the ongoing training and education of attorneys

more efficient. Associates are no longer required to give up large portions of their days (or in some instances entire days) to attend a training or CLE courses that would likely pack too much information into one session. Rather, an attorney can learn during down time, a commute or some other unbillable period and reduce the disruption to an already busy day.

Using a mobile device to deliver CLE courses on-demand, and to segment the content into smaller, on-the-go lessons, allows attorneys to not only learn and retain the information better, but also to take less time away from their workloads and their teams. And that can have a positive impact on an organization's bottom line.

No two individuals learn in precisely the same way, so offering legal education in a one-size-fits-all model no longer makes sense. Legal education must take a blended approach, incorporating mobile, online and in-person learning and training to meet the constantly evolving

and highly individualized needs of today's attorneys. Technological advances have streamlined so much of what we do as legal professionals. Now, thanks to online and mobile learning tools, these high-tech advances extend beyond filings, forms and timesheets to the ways we learn to do our jobs. **ILTA**

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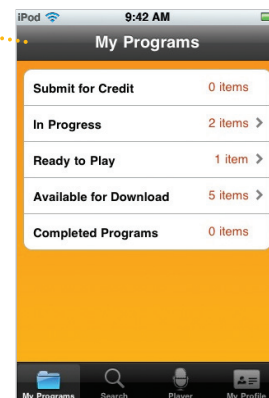
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