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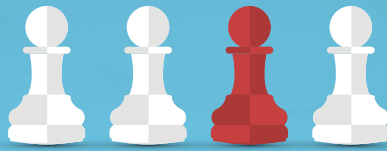


for

Law Firm Websites

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1

Introduction to SEO

In today's digital age, most law firms likely understand how essential it is to have an online presence. Having a website, however, is just the start – ensuring that your website can be found by your target audience is what really matters.

This is where the importance of search engine optimization (SEO) comes in. Whether your firm is looking to get started with an SEO strategy, or has an SEO strategy in place but isn't seeing results it had hoped for, this ebook will give you the information you need to optimize your law firm website for search engines and increase its visibility.

This ebook will help you:

- Understand the basics of SEO and why it is essential to your firm's marketing strategy
- Build and optimize different pages of your website in order to increase search engine visibility and keyword rankings
- Create content that will successfully generate more traffic to your website from your target audience

Search engine optimization (SEO) is an essential part of any effective online marketing strategy. While many marketing methods can bring your law firm traffic and leads in quick bursts, SEO provides a slow and steady stream of potential leads that will grow over time. Without SEO, you will be missing out on a key aspect of digital marketing: the ability for your target audience to find your law firm just by searching for relevant keywords. A website without SEO is similar to having a store without a sign; visitors need to know you exist before they can find you.

The objective of SEO, of course, is to optimize your pages for search engines. The goal of this optimization is to increase your website's search visibility, drive more traffic and achieve higher rankings within search results for the keywords and phrases that are important to your law practice. In general, sites that appear higher in search results will receive more traffic, with the site in first position reaping the biggest benefits.

However, implementing SEO and achieving good results is not always easy – SEO is a complex strategy that includes numerous components. This is why so many companies choose to hire an external SEO firm to take care of this type of digital marketing. Still, your firm should understand what it is hiring an agency to do and what results it can expect. To start with the basics, let's review how SEO works to enhance your search visibility.

SEO and Search Engine Rankings

At its core, SEO generates traffic to your website by allowing visitors to find your firm easily when searching online. The better your website's SEO, the better it will be ranked by search engines, meaning your website will appear higher in search results.

Your SEO ranking will be based on things like the ability of search bots to easily crawl and index your website, meta tags on your pages, your

website's content and how it's structured, the number of incoming as well as outgoing links, the accessibility/usability of your website, and the speed and responsiveness of your site. When determining the ranking of keywords on a website, search engines like Google use bots that crawl webpage content. The bots look for new pages on your website as well as updated content, and then index those pages in their database. When someone searches for a word or phrase, the search engine will look for that phrase or word in the indexed pages of its database and return what it believes to be the most relevant results. Each search engine uses its own algorithms and many different factors to determine which pages are the most relevant to a particular search.

There are numerous benefits to having your website appear in a high position of a search engine results page (SERP). Not only will your firm's site see more traffic, but typically the traffic will be of a higher quality. Additionally, traffic coming from search engines is more likely to convert into leads than any other form of website traffic. Industry estimates put the conversion rate for leads generated through SEO at 15%. Other traffic generation methods, like paid advertisements, typically show a lower 2% to 5% conversion rate.

The natural starting point for most consumers and businesses when trying to find information these days is a search engine. Even if a potential client already knows your firm's name and URL, they are likely to search before they go directly to your site. They will look for news and information on your firm, and the information they find in the results may help them decide if they want to click over and visit your site.

Did you know? —

Industry estimates put the conversion rate for leads generated through SEO at 15%, while other traffic generation methods typically have a much lower conversion rate.

Google and other search engines are very public about the fact that they try to make sure top search results are relevant, trustworthy and author-

itative. Users know that the farther they go down the list of results, the less relevant those results tend to be. When your website's pages appear on the first page of results, users are not only more likely to click through to your site, they're more likely to trust what they see when they get there. This makes a tremendous difference in visitor to lead conversion rates.

Investing in SEO

Unlike online paid advertisements that stop running when you stop paying, SEO results can last weeks, months, or even years. Pages that rank well will continue to bring a return on your investment as long as you continue to write informative content and continually optimize your site.

It's important, however, to remember that results of a strategic SEO effort will take time to materialize. Your firm's website is not going to appear in the number one spot overnight. It's a long-term investment that will ultimately bring long term results and benefits if you stick with it.

In our 2018 Law Firm Digital Marketing Survey we found that a quarter of the firms surveyed said that they have a comprehensive SEO strategy in place. Half of the firms optimize for some keywords, but not the entire site, while nearly 20 percent admitted that they do not optimize. However, SEO for law firms shouldn't be optional. When law firms invest in building a website and creating valuable content, it is imperative that the site and content should be optimized so that it is easily discoverable.

Finally, when you think of the role of search engine optimization in digital marketing, remember that it is just one piece of the puzzle. SEO strategies focus specifically on building search engine rankings to increase search visibility and drive traffic to a website. What happens after visitors get to your site has to do with how well your site is designed to convert

visitors into leads. Therefore SEO is one of several strategies within the realm of digital marketing, that must be combined to achieve the desired business results and objectives.



2

Doing Your Keyword Research

Success with SEO begins with this fundamental step. Keyword research is the foundation of SEO – all online searches begin with someone typing a keyword (or key phrase) into a search box. Finding out what a client or prospect is typing, what keywords they’re using to find a law firm like yours, is a coveted insight because any successful SEO strategy relies on using the right keywords to attract your target audience to your website.

As previously discussed, placing high in rankings of search engines results pages is crucial to being discovered online by your target audience. Again, the idea is that higher search engine rankings translate into more traffic to your website and ultimately more leads and business for your law firm.

How Law Firms Can Use Keyword Research to Find Their Niche

However, there is another valuable reason why a law firm should undertake keyword research. Finding out which key phrases your target audience is using enables a law firm to find out what topics or issues are important to that audience. It enables the law firm to get on the other side of the table – to step into the shoes of a prospective client and to view the world from that client’s perspective instead of the law firm’s. Keyword research forces the law firm to think about what words or phrases a prospect is likely to use in searching for what he or she needs. Instead of using legal jargon or a practice area such as “personal injury,”

a consumer might be more likely to type in the phrase “car accident lawyer ” or “whiplash attorney.” Instead of searching for “workers compensation,” the prospect may be searching for advice on being “injured at work.”

Keyword research helps law firms discover the interests and concerns of his or her target audience. It provides a path to open dialog with prospects by identifying the language they are using to describe their problems or to find an answer to questions they may have. This insight can prove invaluable in helping a law firm use client centric language to match with the needs of their target audience.

Tapping into the right keywords and phrases will drive more qualified leads to your law firm website. It is critical to think about what sort of phrases your target audience might be using and then you need to look at the frequency with which those words or phrases are being searched within your areas of practice or geographic location.

For example, if you specialize in intellectual property law and have recent experience working on cases involving patent litigation, it’s well worth finding out how many searches were conducted in the last month in your city or region for the phrase “complex patent litigation.” With further research you may discover that there is not much competition for that particular key phrase. With a little bit of keyword research you may find a niche practice area or specialty for your firm.

Tip: _____

By doing a little keyword research, you can find a niche practice area or speciality for your firm.

The more specific the niche, the better. For example, most people are not searching for “corporate law”. In order to find exactly what a visitor is looking for, a law firm has to conduct keyword research and determine

the keywords and phrases that match the searchers intent and have a high enough search volume to be worthwhile. This is known as the “long tail” of a search and queries like this make up 70 percent of all internet searches. We will get into this type of keyword in more detail a bit later.

The process of finding the right keywords may sound complicated, but fortunately there are several tools available that provide insight into meaningful keywords. For example, Google Ads Keyword Planner lets you find keywords most relevant to your practice, how often they are searched, and how much competition there is for them.

Another great option is Google Autocomplete. This feature shows related queries when you type something into the main Google search engine. For example, if you type in “legal marketing,” Google autocomplete will suggest “legal marketing association,” “legal marketing jobs” and “legal issues in marketing.” It’s worth knowing what people are actually searching for so that you can leverage these phrases in your content.

Google Trends can also help a law firm see which keywords are popular at the moment and allows them to track the performance over time. This is particularly useful for seasonal trends, such as tax season or hot political and other topics in the news.

While the Google tools are popular, there are many others, a number of which are also free. Of particular note are SEMrush and SocialMention. Also AHREFS, BrightEdge and Moz are great resources for keyword research and to see which keywords your firm is already ranking for.

Keyword research enables a law firm to think like their clients and to develop an SEO strategy that can generate real business results. It can also help individual lawyers determine what their niche should be and how to create a strategy to position themselves as thought leaders in that area of practice.

What Are Long-Tail Keywords?

Long-tail keywords are more specific and usually contain much longer phrases than standard keywords, which tend to be more general. Standard keywords are often a single word or a short phrase of two or three words, such as “tax” “mergers and acquisitions” or “corporate attorney,” that people might use to start their search for a lawyer.

Long-tail keywords are usually longer and tend to follow natural language structures. “Corporate Law Firm in San Francisco specializing in Privacy Regulations” would be an example of a long-tail keyword. So is a direct question like, “How can I file a lawsuit for employment discrimination?”

What Are The Differences Between These Two Types Of Keywords?

The key difference between these two types of search terms is the searcher’s intent. The first set of keyword typically represent searchers that have decided to hire a lawyer while the second set is geared to an informational versus transactional intent.

Prospects who search using basic one, two or three word keywords and phrases are usually beginning their first research into a subject. They are not yet ready to make a decision. They seek general information that will educate and lead them in the right direction.

People conducting searches using long-tail keywords and phrases tend to be closer to making their final decision to retain a lawyer. They have already discovered general information on the topic; now they are looking for specific details to help them solidify their choice and hire a lawyer.

Another important distinction between these two types of search terms is the traffic they bring to a law firm website. Standard keywords made up of just a few words tend to bring more traffic into a site, but as we said, this traffic tends to be people looking for information, not people ready

to make a decision. On the other hand, long-tail keywords will often bring less traffic, but that traffic will be comprised of people who are on the verge of making a final choice. As a result, long-tail keyword traffic often convert into leads and clients at a much higher rate.

Tip: _____

By using long-tail keywords, you can drive traffic to your site comprised of people who are ready to make the decision to hire you as a lawyer.

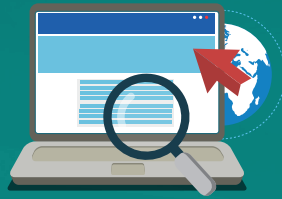
Why Long-Tail Keywords Are Important For SEO

The point here is not that one type of optimization is better than the other, but that both are important for increasing traffic and converting leads. By optimizing for shorter, standard keywords that are relevant to your law practice, you attract web visitors at the start of their decision making process. You have the opportunity to educate these people, instill trust, and form a relationship with them. By making optimizations for long-tail search terms, you give yourself the opportunity to present the final facts that will convert a web visitor into a new client right at the moment when they are most ready to make a decision.

But optimization cannot be effective unless your website actually contains suitable content to satisfy the needs of a visitor searching for those long-tail keywords. If this highly specified type of content is not available on your site, the prospective client will likely find it somewhere else, and consequently make their decision to go with another lawyer or law firm who better satisfied their detailed query.

The bottom line is that optimizing for long-tail keywords is about converting leads into clients and new business. If done correctly, long-tail keywords will not only help you convert more of your own leads, but will help pull more leads away from your competition.

If your law firm's site is getting respectable traffic but having trouble converting that traffic into new clients, creating more content designed around long-tail keywords could be the piece of the puzzle you're missing.



3

Optimizing Your Homepage

Once you understand the basics of SEO and its underlying processes, it is time to optimize your website accordingly. Building a website for your law firm is a large undertaking – considering SEO best practices to increase your search engine visibility can make the task even more complex. To make the process more manageable, it can be helpful to break your SEO strategy down according to each portion of your website.

While your homepage is an important lead-in to your firm and the rest of your website, it's not always the highest ranking page. Still, a well-optimized homepage can help attract and engage an audience, greatly benefiting your firm's online reach. Following are several items your firm should ensure it includes on the homepage of its website.

Keyword Focus

If your firm is focused on one particular area of the law, you should use keyword phrases that relate to your core topic. For example, if you run a patent litigation firm, keywords relating to patent litigation should be the focus of your homepage, with other pages detailing the subtopics of this practice area. For larger, more general practice firms that do not have a single focus, they can rank for their firm name, brand, or even location.

Keywords are integral to any SEO strategy, but it is important to keep in mind not to overdo it. Your homepage keywords should be weaved into your content so that it reads naturally, and not be repeated so much that it sounds forced.

Title Tag and Meta Description

Related to your homepage keywords are two more on-page aspects that need to be thoughtfully developed in order for your page to be easily searchable. The title tag of your homepage should include your firm's name and a 4-5 word phrase that describes your practice and perhaps the location you serve. Again, if you are a large firm with no one specific practice area or focus, the title tag can include your brand name.

Along with a relevant title tag, your homepage needs a clear and succinct meta description that accurately describes what the page, or in this case, your firm, is about. This description along with your title tag is what viewers first see when searching for your firm online, so it should be written in a way as to entice people to click on your page. Be sure to keep your meta description under the allotted space limit of 156 characters.

Tip: _____

Keep meta descriptions under the allotted space limit of 156 characters.

Video Content

On-page SEO is obviously important for Google search rankings, but video content and other multimedia elements are a great way to engage viewers and keep them interested in your site. By including videos on your homepage, viewers will remain on your site for a longer amount of time, which will help improve rankings on Google as it has several ways to track user engagement on a website. In addition, the nature of video content allows you to optimize for long-tail keywords that might not make sense in written content.

Clear Navigation

Navigation is especially important to your homepage, and a good navigation bar on the homepage can be used as the header for every page of your website. It should contain links to each practice area, testimonials, FAQs, and other important information your audience might be looking for when first landing on your website in their search for an attorney.

Having clear links on your homepage to information a potential client might be looking for will increase the likelihood that viewers will explore the rest of your site, thus increasing search rankings. If your homepage navigation is unorganized or unclear, viewers will quickly leave your site to search for information elsewhere.

Calls to Action

While each page of your website should have more than one way to contact your law firm, a well-designed call to action is integral to an effective homepage. A CTA button or form should be easily viewable and accessible on the homepage of your firm's website. Again, a main goal of the homepage is to engage an audience with preliminary content so as to entice them to do further research on your site, and hopefully become a client. An effective call to action can get viewers to take the next step as early as when they land on your homepage. Additionally, when viewers respond to CTAs, Google knows that users are engaged on your site, which will improve its search rankings.

Reputable Awards

Creating a homepage that reflects your firm's reputation can have positive impacts on SEO. Applying for certain awards such as Super Lawyers, Rising Stars, and awards from the American Bar Association can be a worthwhile investment for your firm – you can improve your website's search ranking results by having reputable backlinks to your firm's website. Additionally, potential clients may be more inclined to contact your firm if there is evidence of your firm's trustworthiness and past success in the form of awards on your homepage.

There are many parts involved in building a successful SEO strategy for your law firm's website, but homepage SEO should not be overlooked. These are just some of the ways to get started, and you should not stop here – any SEO strategy requires continuous updating and review in order to ensure your firm can be easily found online.



4

Tips for Well Written and Optimized Attorney Bio Pages

Your homepage may feature introductions to your firm's attorneys, or link to a separate biography page. Having a well written and search engine optimized biography online is an essential part of a lawyer's success. When people are looking for your firm, it is not only crucial that you're easy to find, but also that the information they find shows you in a positive light.

Attorney biography pages can be goldmines when it comes to search engine optimization and generating free traffic back to your firm's website. In fact, in the case of lawyers, up to 80% of the traffic coming from search engines can be attributed to bio pages. So while putting together a professional bio can be time consuming, in the end, it is well worth the effort.

Did you know? —

For law firm websites, up to 80% of the traffic coming from search engines can be attributed to bio pages.

For your firm's website, your attorneys should write a full length biography that goes over education, experience and personal attributes. It doesn't stop there though. Using the original bio as a starting point, you can create shorter, custom bio entries that can be used in a number of different ways. For example, firms can use some form of attorneys' original bios on social media pages, professional forums and directories,

event information pages, and web or print content contributions. All of these different channels provide an opportunity for you to highlight your lawyers' professional qualifications and encourage visitors to come back to your firm's website. In the cases where you can include direct links, those links will also help a bit with SEO.

An attorney biography page is also a great way to get all kinds of keywords relevant to your services and the problems you help to solve into a single web page. As a lawyer is talking about him or herself, they are naturally going to mention the services they provide, their education, and notable past cases. Even a short bio is going to be rich with the keywords that your target audience will enter in a web search. When it comes to SEO, these pages have a very good chance of ranking well for large numbers of different keywords and phrases.

Finally, bio pages help to instill trust. In many cases, when someone sees content from your firm that they like, their next step will be to look over the author's bio to glean a bit more information about the person who wrote it. A well written bio will make that person feel like they've gotten to know your attorneys better. If the reader likes what they see, they'll often go looking for more content written by the same person as they move along the path from anonymous visitor to bonafide lead.

Now that it is clear that your attorney biography pages are some of the most important pages to appear on your website, here are some suggestions to help you put together a page that will give your audience the information they are looking for as well as help you to stand out in the search engines as your own personal brand.

Be Ready To Write Multiple Biographies

As mentioned, you can modify original bios to create custom bios that are appropriate to use in places other than your own website, but there are a couple things to keep in mind when doing this.

First, other websites will surely have their own restrictions on exactly what you can include in your biography. Some might allow links while others won't. You'll run into varying restrictions based on character or word counts. Others, still, might have very specific formatting guidelines. The bottom line is that you'll need to be prepared to create different versions of your biography depending on where you want to post it.

Also, from a strictly SEO perspective, the search engines feed on original content. Even if you can post your entire biography on two or three sites, it's a good idea to mix things up and rewrite it in order to avoid the appearance of duplicate content. Posting the exact same thing on multiple sites will drag all of those pages down in search results. (This goes for posting your biography on two or more sites that you own yourself, too.)

Write From The Third Person Perspective

Writing your biography from the third person perspective is not just about sounding professional – it also provides some very good SEO benefits. When you write in the third person, it gives you the opportunity to use your name instead of saying “I.” This obviously helps greatly with getting your bio to rank well for your own name. It also attaches your name to your work and accomplishments. This can help your name to pop up in search results when people are searching for terms related to your work.

Writing in the third person also makes the information in your biography more shareable. If someone needs to talk about you for a publication, a news story, or something else, it's much easier for them to pull information they can use if it's already written from the third person perspective.

Write A Story, Not A Resume

It's important to keep in mind that your biography is meant to tell the story of you, not just present a list of what you've done. It may be difficult at first, but try to structure your bio like a story that will help you engage with your readers.

The opening paragraph of your bio should establish who you are right now. In many cases, your name should be the first words on the page. Putting this information up front, again, helps associate your name with your current position. This gives the search engines more information about you and also sets up some good SEO clues to tell the engines what this page is going to be about.

Word Count Matters

As far as the technical side of SEO, the same goes for your biography page as any other page on your website. Search engines tend to take pages more seriously if they contain at least 500 to 600 words. You should consider this the minimum for your biography.

Many SEO experts will argue that pages with word counts even higher, like 1000 to 2000 words, command much higher authority and better results with the search engines. So if you have a lot that you can write about, don't be afraid to go long. Just don't go overboard. You don't want to fill the page with useless fluff just to reach a certain word count.

Tip: _____

Your bio should at minimum contain 500 to 600 words, but higher word counts tend to do better with search engines.

Edit And Update

One of the things that the search engine crawlers love most is to see a page that is updated regularly. A page that has a history of regular updates is considered more relevant because it obviously has fresh information. When you've got new bits of information about yourself, go back to your biography page and work those updates in. All you'll have to do is add a few new sentences or paragraphs and the result will be a good SEO boost for your bio page.

Link To Your Work

It can help your bio as well as other pages in the search engines if you include links to your work. You can link out to things like the main page of your law firm, published papers that you've written, or articles about one of your cases, for example. You don't want to go overboard and turn things into a thinly veiled advertisement, but you shouldn't be afraid to highlight and give examples of your accomplishments either.

Following these suggestions can help you achieve great SEO results for your personal biography page. Not only will it make it easier for people to find information about you and the work that you've done, but by taking steps to properly optimize your bio, you increase the chance that the first information people find will be information that you have complete control over. That ultimately gives you a much higher likelihood of turning those people into new contacts and clients.



5

SEO for Practice Area Pages

Due to the fact that there is less competition when it comes to someone's name, law firm attorney bio pages are usually the top-ranking pages. While having your attorney pages rank high is a good thing, in most instances you will want your practice area pages to rank high as well so that people who don't know the attorneys at your firm can nonetheless find your website when doing searches for substantive keywords. This is not always easy since the desired search results are highly competitive. Using some of the below tips can help ensure your practice area pages rank well for specific keywords and terms.

Keyword Optimization

First, you need to make sure that your law firm practice area pages are properly keyword optimized. Your pages need to be optimized in specific locations, including the title tag, meta description, header tags, and content. Remember to avoid duplicates, especially in the title tags and content.

Content Creation

Regardless of how much changes online, one thing remains the same. Content still rules. For search engines to be able to find and rank practice area pages for law firm websites, those pages must have great content that is optimized with the right keywords. To do this, it is important to conduct keyword research in order to determine keyword variations as well as to learn which keywords have the highest search volume. We have discussed several keyword research tools available that can help you.

As mentioned previously, it's also important to make sure your content is the correct length. Your goal should be to produce a minimum of 700 words of high-quality content that is well researched and relevant to the keywords you wish to target for your practice.

Internal Linking

Many law firm websites are ranking for the right keywords, but the pages associated with those keywords are not the practice area pages. In order to get your practice area pages to rank, it is important to conduct internal linking from those pages that do rank. Whether it's a blog post, a news item or an attorney bio, you should always try to link to your practice area pages that are related to the pages your keywords are ranking for. For example, if one of your blog posts is ranking for the keyword "securities litigation" make sure you create a link from your blog post to the securities litigation practice area page on your site. This will enable your high ranking pages to provide "SEO juice" to your practice area pages to help them boost their ranking.

Tip: _____
Link to your practice area pages in blog posts, news updates, and attorney bios.

Visual Optimization

You also need to consider the visual optimization of your website. This refers to those elements that will make your law firm's website more visually engaging to visitors. The more visually attractive your website is, the better the user experience will be and the better your engagement.

Multimedia elements such as diagrams, images, infographics, and videos are great options to make your site more visually engaging. However, if you choose to include multimedia, make sure alt attributes for images are optimized with the correct keywords and that transcripts with your keywords are available for videos.

Calls to Action

One last important point to consider in trying to optimize your firm's practice area pages is to make sure you always have a call to action. Having a call to action that is in context with the practice area page will not help with your search engine ranking results. However, it will help you generate leads and acquire clients. We frequently see law firm websites that do not have calls to action and therefore are not generating the types of leads they could generate if proper calls to action were in place. The call to action does not have to be a form, but it should enable the visitor to easily contact the firm if they have a specific need or are looking for help in your areas of practice.

Practice area pages are a highly competitive area for search results rankings. By following these best practices, can better position your firm among the competition when potential clients are searching for answers to their legal questions.



6

SEO for Your Law Firm's Blog

It is likely clear by now that it is important for your firm to highly prioritize search engine optimization so it can appear as high as possible in search results for specific keywords or phrases that are relevant to the legal services it provides. We have discussed the ways in which different types of pages on your website should be optimized, because when more pages are indexed and appear in good positions within search results, you have more control over what potential clients will see as they search.

There's nothing that consistently adds more valuable pages to a site than blog posts. Every one of your pages that appears in the results is another opportunity to convince someone that your law practice is the one they are looking for. In addition to helping your firm appear higher in search results, blog posts can help to instill trust in your firm by showcasing your attorneys' expertise and understanding of the prospects' issues. And, comments and shares on posts provide social proof.

Blog posts can also help boost your firm's SEO if you are writing about trending topics, or content you know people are already searching for. For example, when a new tax law goes into effect, people will want to know how it will impact them, so take the opportunity to create content that answers common questions and provides solutions. This will again help position your law firm as an expert, but will also boost your site's traffic as a high volume of people are already searching for content around the topic.

If you continue to optimize your blog posts, your SEO results will grow as your firm's site grows. The long-term return on investment you get with good search engine optimization outperforms all other digital marketing methods.

Tips for Effective Blog Post SEO

In order to see SEO results as your firm's site grows, it is important to optimize each individual blog post. With each post added to the blog, there is a chance to reach more people and grow your audience. Each blog post provides an opportunity to talk about topics of interest and value for your clients and prospects, and be discovered via the keywords and phrases they're entering in search engines. Here are some tips to help you maximize the reach of your blog posts.

Focus On 1 Or 2 Keywords

Before you do anything at all, you should have a clear focal point for your post. You should choose one or two long tail keywords that align with something your target audience would be searching for and formulate a topic around that. The idea is to keep the post focused on a specific topic and provide as much useful information as possible. If your post includes too many different topics it will be confusing for readers and lose clout with search engines.

We previously discussed some tools for identifying keywords, which are useful for blog post SEO as well. Google Keyword Planner can help you identify a target keyword to use 3-10 times throughout your blog content. You could also do some Google research of your own, using a plugin such as Keywords Everywhere. Additionally, as mentioned trending topics make for great blog

Tip: _____

For every blog post, choose one or two relevant keywords that align with things your target audience would be searching for.

post content. The tool Buzzsumo will help you identify topics currently trending on social media.

Include Keywords In Strategic Post Areas

Using your keywords naturally in a few spots throughout your post should be obvious, but you also need to make sure that they appear in some strategic spots as well. There are several specific places the search engines will look to help determine what the main focus of the post is.

- Title Tag

On most blogging platforms, like WordPress, the headline of your post will be used for the title tag of the post. To reiterate, the title tag is also the first line of the search result listing that Google will show in their results. Only about the first 60 characters of the title will show, so you should try to get your keyword(s) into the title within those first 60 characters. Also, keep in mind the title should make sense as a headline or sentence, and not just be a jumble of keywords.

- Headers And Body

Where it makes sense, you should include your keywords in headings and throughout the body of the post. You should not try to work keywords in as often as possible, but just try to use them where they naturally fit. In most cases, if you're concentrating on answering the question that would have brought the reader to your post in the first place, you're going to be optimizing your blog post almost automatically as you go.

- Post URL

The URL of your blog post is another key point for optimizing. Search engines give more importance to keywords that appear in the URL as well as the page text. With WordPress, you can set the system to automatically create URLs using words in the post title, but that shouldn't stop you from optimizing it yourself if you think of something that makes more sense.

- Meta Description

As mentioned previously, the meta description is the short description that appears in search engine listings under the page title and URL.

Keywords that appear in the meta description carry a bit more weight with the search engines. It is important, though, that the description be logical and human-readable because it is shown as part of the search results. If you just stuff the meta description with keywords, you're likely to push readers away instead of luring them in.

Make Your Blog Mobile-Friendly

Search engines have taken notice that more people are conducting searches from mobile devices than from desktop computers these days. In response, they're giving priority in search results to sites that look good and are easy to read on smaller mobile screens.

It's very easy to check and see what Google thinks of your site. Just enter your site's URL into their mobile-friendly testing tool and it will let you know if it finds any problems.

Tip: _____

Use Google's mobile-friendly testing tool to ensure your site is easily accessible from a mobile device.

If you do find problems, you'll need to speak to your site developer or WordPress theme creator. In most cases, updating or changing the theme will solve any issues. Look for themes that are listed as "responsive." This means that they will automatically adjust to display correctly on different screen sizes.

Optimize Image Alt Text

An often overlooked area where you can further optimize your blog post is in the image alt tags. The alt text can help to improve the page's rank as well as improve the image's results in image searches.

Like the other areas we've already mentioned, the alt tags should include the keywords in a way that makes sense. Don't just stuff the keywords in there thinking it doesn't matter because most people won't see them.

For example, let's say you were optimizing your blog post for the term "legal services" and you placed a picture of yourself within the post. Don't use an alt tag that simply says "legal services." Try something such as "John Q. Lawyer provides affordable legal services," that describes the picture and uses your keyword naturally.

Optimize For Google's Featured Snippets

Featured snippets are the boxes that you see at the top of certain Google search results pages that provide a brief answer to a user's search query without having to click through. While featured snippets make search easier for users, they can be frustrating for firms trying to get a click back to the content on their website, which is why it's important to get your law firm's page to rank first.

To make the best use of your time and resources, strategically choose which featured snippets you will optimize for. Ideally, you will choose to optimize for a snippet involving terms that you already appear on the first page of search results for, or that currently feature your competitor.

To optimize, consider how your audience searches and develop content around these queries. For example, instead of a page titled "The Personal Injury Litigation Process" consider a topic and header like, "What do you do when you're injured at work?" Start by repeating the question you want to appear for on your page in a clear, prominent manner. Then, include a direct, short answer that is as complete as possible. If necessary, include images, diagrams, and/or a list of instructions. Don't forget to make sure that your page is structured in a manner that ensures search engines and users alike can easily skim it to find the information they want.

Altogether, this may seem like a lot of things to remember, but if you use these tips as a sort of checklist as you put your next two or three blog posts together, all of it will quickly become habit. And once it's a habit, it won't take much extra time to truly optimize your blog posts for the best results.

The SEO Benefits of Guest Blogging

In addition to optimizing your own posts in order to boost search engine rankings, your law firm should consider the frequently overlooked strategy of guest blogging. When done correctly, guest blogging for law firms can provide SEO benefits by helping you build links in a manner that search engines view as organic.

Why Guest Blogging Is Helpful

Guest blogging can help with SEO in several ways. The most obvious is the ability to generate more backlinks to your website, which in turn improves the search engine rankings. Additionally, high-quality guest blogs encourage Google to view you as an authority source, which also boosts your rankings. This latter point is frequently considered more important since Google decides you are more authoritative if your name and content appears on a longer list of websites, but not in a spammy manner.

If your goal with guest blogging is to actually drive traffic from those posts, you will be disappointed. Informal surveys have shown that guest blogs do not actually drive traffic. Instead, their benefits are more focused on SEO.

Guest Blogging Is Not Dead, Just Spam-Filled Versions

In 2014, Matt Cutts circulated a post saying that guest blogging for SEO purposes was decaying. If you take a closer look at the article, however, it becomes clear that Cutts did not mean all guest blogging was over, just a

specific type of it. The type of guest blogging that is no longer useful, and has not been for several years, is content of a low-quality without insight or associations with an actual author. In fact, Google specifically outlines tactics related to guest blogging that can reduce your search engine ranking. These include overuse of keyword-rich links in the article, hiring writers without real knowledge, and using similar (or worse, identical) content across articles.

How to Make Guest Blogging for Law Firms Work

Based on the information from Google and the clear indication that guest blogs written by uninformed authors create low-quality work, there is still a way to successfully use guest blogging to promote your law firm. The trick is to actually create the blogs as a way to share information and knowledge, not just for a link. Let the post show that you know what you are writing about by including methods that have worked for you, results you have seen, and/or case studies.

The problem may arise when you run out of unique topics that lead to hundreds of different guest posts. To overcome the issue, take advantage of copywriting strategies, such as the Robin Hood technique where you borrow topics from top blogs, fill them with your experience, and offer them as guest blogs to less popular blogs. You can also divide up a complex topic into many smaller guest blog topics or adjust a subject to appeal to a different target demographic each time.

What to Avoid with Guest Blogging

It is important to remember a few simple rules as you create your guest blogs so you do not fall victim to the type of guest blogging that is indeed dead. Do not create mass blogs with similar topics that are clearly just for backlinks. Similarly, do not outsource the content to writers who are cheap, but unfamiliar with the information or rewrite the content in different ways for multiple websites. Finally, avoid overstuffing guest posts with anchor links that are filled with keywords.

When implemented in an effective manner, guest blogging will provide SEO benefits to your law firm by helping you build links organically. It will also help you form relationships with industry influencers, increasing your firm's own thought leadership prowess.

It should be clear by now that SEO for your law firm blog is not just a good investment, but a crucial investment in your law firm's online presence. It's important, however, to remember that results of a strategic SEO effort will take time to materialize. Your firm's blog is not going to appear in the number one spot overnight. It's a long-term investment that will ultimately bring long term results and benefits if you stick with it.



Using Video to Enhance SEO

Optimizing written content is not the only way to generate leads to your firm's website through search engines. Video content on the web is more popular than ever, and its prevalence is only expected to rise as time goes on. As connection speeds and processors get faster, more and more brands are choosing video as their preferred method for getting their message out to the masses. Audiences, too, choose video as their favorite way of consuming content.

When it comes to SEO, video content has some interesting effects. It can blend in with the rest of the content on your site, making it richer and more attractive to search engines. Video, however, also stands on its own as a complete content package. It can exist separately and rank in search results on its own, providing new sources of traffic to your law firm's site. There are several ways your law firm can use video content to enhance SEO and attract more visitors.

Host Your Videos On YouTube

It may seem counterintuitive, but it's generally better to host your videos on YouTube instead of your own domain. There are a few reasons for this.

Google counts page load speed when calculating search results. Video content can add significant load to your server and slow down page loading times. If your sites slows too much, your search rankings will drop. This, of course, would be exactly the opposite of what you want to happen.

A second benefit of using YouTube is that the video service is also the world's second most used search engine, behind Google. Your videos will show up in both YouTube and Google's indexes.

YouTube also makes it ridiculously easy for people to share and embed your videos. If you're providing content with real value, it will be much easier for people to share your videos if they're on YouTube rather than your own site.

Tip: _____

Host video content on YouTube, so people can easily search for and share your videos.

Pay Attention To Metadata

Just as you would do for web pages or images, make sure to name and describe your videos using relevant keywords. Google has stated that the title, description and thumbnail are the three most important pieces of information when it comes to videos.

Create A Video Sitemap

If you're using videos on your site, whether they are hosted on your domain or embedded from YouTube, you should have a video sitemap. A video sitemap works as an extension of the site's existing sitemap. It allows for easier indexing of videos by the search engines and gives you the chance to fully describe all of your videos, taking full advantage of the meta data mentioned above. If you're using a content management system like WordPress or Joomla, just search their plugins for "video sitemap" and you should find several that will do the job for you.

Include Video Transcripts

Creating transcripts of the audio contained in your videos is beneficial in two ways. First, a portion of your audience will prefer to skim over a transcript to see if the video contains information they are looking for. Second, all of that text gives the search engines more content on your site to index. It's a win/win situation.

Create Short Clips From Long Videos

You can repurpose and reuse the same content by creating shorter clips from long videos. For example, you can upload short previews to Facebook or Twitter to attract people back to your law firm's web site to watch the full content.

Short preview clips give you the opportunity to capture people's attention with compelling content they wouldn't otherwise see right away because it's deeper within the original video. They also create perfectly sized content that is easy for people to share and reshare across their own social media network.

Focus On Value Not SEO

Above all, no matter what type of content you are creating, the focus should be on value to your audience. People share what they find valuable. Webmasters link to content they find valuable. This builds the authority of your firm's website. When that happens, the search engines pay attention and good results become inevitable.



8

Conclusion

The purpose of this ebook is to give legal marketers an in-depth understanding of what makes for a successful SEO strategy. There are many components to SEO and a significant amount of information available online – we hope this ebook provided a manageable way to view this information as well as concrete steps a law firm can take to build an effective SEO strategy.

To recap, here is a checklist your firm can use to make sure you have all the necessary components for a successful SEO strategy.

- ✓ **Do your keyword research.** This is the first step in any of your SEO efforts. It is essential to determine keywords that are relevant to your law practice and will drive traffic to your site. Keyword research can help lawyers find their niche and gain more knowledge about their target audience. Remember, optimizing your website for long-tail keywords is important for generating new business as well.
- ✓ **Optimize your homepage.** Your homepage is the starting point of many of your clients' research into your firm. Your homepage should be optimized for keywords, with these phrases appearing in the title tag and meta description, feature engaging content such as video, and offer a call to action.

- ✓ **Craft well-written attorney biographies.** Attorney bios help with search engine ranking directly through keywords and indirectly by helping to build trust in your firm. Write bios that can be reworked and adapted for other contexts, that tell your attorneys' stories, and include links to their works.
- ✓ **SEO content on practice area pages.** In order for your practice area pages to be discovered and rank in search engines, you need to feature great content that is optimized properly for keywords. Also, keep in mind the power of internal linking when it comes to building your practice area pages.
- ✓ **Add value to your site with blog posts.** Each post needs to be optimized for keywords, but remember to work these in as naturally as possible. Don't forget to put keywords in all strategic areas of a post, including the title tag, headers, URL, and meta description.
- ✓ **Make your pages mobile-friendly.** Search engines today are definitely factoring in mobile device user experience when ranking websites. With all the effort you are putting into building the perfect website for your law firm, if your site isn't viewable on mobile devices you are sure to lose many potential leads.
- ✓ **Don't neglect video content.** Written content is obviously the first way to optimize your site for search, but video can add to the attractiveness of written content, as well as enhance SEO on its own.

Overall, one of the most important takeaways from this book is to remember that SEO is a long-term, yet essential, investment for a firm. It may take a little time to see the results you want if you are just getting started, but in the long-run, the investment will be worth it.

You are now ready to take what you learned from this ebook and put it to use. We are here to help get you started and we look forward to working with you.

About



At Good2bSocial, we work with leading law firms and companies in the legal industry who are **serious about growth** but are often frustrated that they've spent time, money, and effort on their website and on digital marketing, yet they still don't produce the results they had hoped for.

Good2bSocial is a growth marketing agency that uses a methodology that focuses on attracting clients by offering valuable content at each step of their customer journey. First, we develop a creative and engaging digital marketing strategy that aligns with your overarching business strategy and enables you to attract, convert, close, and delight clients.

We attract web visitors by creating remarkable content such as videos and blog posts that serve as the foundation of every effective inbound strategy. We convert visitors into qualified leads by creating lead magnets such as webinars, white papers and case studies that segment prospects by their level of interest in your services and their propensity to make a hiring decision. Then, we implement strategic nurturing campaigns that help our clients close deals and secure new clients for their business.

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for more information