

Are you reading these posts? January 2011 Resources

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Looking for practical guidance on law firm business development, marketing and practice management? Sorting through the thousands of posts and articles across the web can be a time-consuming task. That's where I come in. This document contains my reading recommendations for the month of January 2011. *Are you reading these posts?*

Networking 101.

"[Five Tips for Smarter Social Networking](#)" from John Hagel III and John Seely Brown in the *Harvard Business Review*. Raise your hand if you're tired of reading lessons on online social networking. Me too. So why did I recommend this post? Because the five tips don't apply just to online networking, but to networking full stop, and in doing so hammer home the *real* lesson of social networking: it's networking. Do it right. Here's some good tips.

If your client doesn't know, you didn't really do it.

Holden Oliver's "[Rule 5: Bombarding the client in real time](#)" from *What About Clients?* Over-communicating is rarely a bad thing, especially when you're being paid for the work you do on someone else's behalf. Not the "man, I had to work so hard for you today, stayed up all night" variety, but the kind that sounds like "this is what I did today, who I talked to, what I wrote. And here's your copy." If your client doesn't know you did it, you didn't. Make sense? It makes even more when Oliver says it. Read this post.

Good at something particular? Then do that.

Kevin Houchin's "[4 Questions: Finding Your Authentic Marketing Niche](#)" at *Lawyerist*. What do you like to do and are really good at? For most of us, questions like this are not particularly easy to answer, but if you're embarking on a law practice, you can't ignore them. Read the post. Answer the questions. The bonus? You get advice like this:

Following the money first is the wrong move because if you don't have a passion for the work and the people you will NEVER stick with the niche long enough for the investment of energy, time, and money to pay off.

Got strategy? Get on it.

Bruce MacEwen's "[First in a Series on Strategy in the New Normal](#)" at *Adam Smith, Esq.* When MacEwen writes about strategy, I sit up and listen. Read this piece and you will too. Especially if you're looking for the "next new thing in strategy." When you're done, read part two: "[Second in Our Series on Strategy: Strategic Planning 101](#)." It will energize you:

Strategic planning is nothing less than carefully and unblinkingly assessing what your firm's actual capabilities are and, accordingly, specifying what your firm can actually do better than anyone else. With that premise in hand, you can then decide which markets you most want to reach.

And go after them with a vengeance.

Want to communicate well? Work at it.

Erin Casey's "[1-on-1: How to Communicate More Effectively](#)" in *Success Magazine*. Effective communication is hard. There are no shortcuts. The great communicators, the ones we admire, who engage and amuse us, who make it look so easy, work



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tremendously hard at crafting and delivering a message that will move you and motivate you to act. This post, an interview with speaker and trainer Terri Sjodin, will has some good advice on how to articulate a message that will be heard.

Free is good. Value is better. Are you offering both?

Stacy West Clark's "[20 Free Services Lawyers May Want to Offer to Clients](#)" from *The Legal Intelligencer* (posted on the [lawjobs.com](#) site). There may be 20 suggestions on this site, but they all boil down to one: "add value." Find ways to make sure your client gets more from having you as her lawyer than good solid legal work. She can get that from any number of lawyers. Help her be more successful. Reading this post is a great start.

Legal outsourcing and the global law practice: a primer for the future.

Russell Smith's "[12 Ways Offshore Legal Outsourcing Could Shake Up the Law World in the New Decade](#)" from his blog, *Law Without Borders*. This post presents a thoughtful and insightful analysis of not just the issues surrounding outsourcing, but of the global practice of law in the 21st century. This is important stuff, and Smith articulates the challenges facing lawyers and firms -- and the solutions that will shape the profession -- better than most. Put it on your list of required reading.

What's your alternative to hourly fees?

Jim Hassett's "[Why alternative fee revenues will keep going up](#)" on his blog *Legal Business Development*. This post is a nice shout-out for Cleveland-based Tucker Ellis & West, which continues to lead the pack in alternative fee arrangements: 60% of their 2010 revenues came from AFAs. Read it for valuable insight into Tucker's methods and why they continue to push for non-hourly fee arrangements. Shouldn't you be doing the same?

Straight from the buyer's mouth.

Legal Bizzle's "[It's not about the biscuits](#)" on his blog *The Bizzle*. Legal Bizzle is an in-house lawyer who tells it like it is. In this post, he answers the question "Do you buy law firms, or lawyers?":

For me, the answer is clear: I buy lawyers. The most important thing for me is having an adviser that understands my business, and in particular its commercial drivers and its appetite for risk.

But that's not the half of it. Read the post to learn why he hires the lawyers he does. Then start doing what those lawyers do.

Delivering legal services the accessibility way.

Richard Granat's "[Will LegalZoom Become the Largest Law Firm in the US?](#)" on the *eLawyering Blog*. LegalZoom is challenging traditional methods of legal service delivery -- and the ABA Model Rules of Professional Responsibility -- and in doing so just might make law more accessible to consumers. Whatever you think of LegalZoom, these developments are important. This post (and [this one](#) from Scott Greenfield) explains why.

Price is the new black.

Leigh Dance's "[How low can you go - clients continue to flex their muscles on costs](#)" in *Legal Week*. Whether or not you believe that, as Dance argues, price is now "the undisputed heavyweight champion in legal services today," this article should make it

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clear that client concerns about cost are not going away merely because you want them to. Get out in front of your clients. You know what keeps them awake at night. Work with them to find solutions that will help them sleep better. Reading this article is a good start.

Are your clients talking about you? In a good way?

Heather Morse's "[A lawyer is like an iPhone](#)" at [The Legal Watercooler](#). No, this post isn't about technology. Or about lawyers adopting Apple's marketing techniques or innovation or creativity. It's about relationships and fidelity. It's about aligning your service interests with the business interests of your clients. It's about listening to your clients, hearing what they want, and changing the way you provide services to satisfy those objectives. Read it, then take a hard look at what your clients need from their lawyers. Any changes you should make?

What good are relationships, anyway?

Beth Flynn's "[A Relational Rule of Life](#)," written as a guest post on [Thoughtful Legal Management](#). When was the last time you really focused on the relationships that drive your success? Not just the who and the what and the where, but the why and the how? This post lists ten guidelines for "developing leadership by cultivating relationships." They're really ten steps for improving the value of your relationships by improving your relationship skills. Read them, and get to work.

Storytelling is an art. Even when describing a deal.

Gary Godsey's "[The lost art of storytelling](#)" in [Smart Business](#). A great story is a great marketing technique, whatever you're selling. Don't think your client representations can be described as tales of passion and heroes and antagonists and transformation? Sure they can. It won't be easy, of course, but all the elements are already there: you represent people with problems to resolve and obstacles in their way. This post will help you articulate your work as stories, the kind that engage clients and give them a reason to hire you.

New Year's resolutions. For keeps.

Dennis Kennedy's "[Happy New Tech Year: 4 First Steps for the Next 365 Days](#)" at the [ABA Journal](#). Looking for some simple resolutions, the kind that actually help you change, that you won't break mid-January? You can stop looking. You don't need to lose 20 pounds or start going to the gym every day to improve your relationship with technology, just read this post and follow this advice.

LinkedIn for lawyers, or do I really need to say where I went to school?

Heather Colman's "[A Strategic Staged Approach to LinkedIn](#)" at [S/law.ca](#). [LinkedIn](#) is a great networking tool, but only if you use it. This post describes how -- and why -- one mid-sized firm is helping its lawyers do just that. It's a good primer for anyone not yet on LinkedIn, as well as those with "place-holder profiles." Think you're past that point? There's something here for you, too (see "second phase").

Real lawyers write marketing plans.

Lee Rosen's "[SmallLaw: Here Is the 2011 Marketing Plan for Your Law Firm You Were Going to Prepare](#)" in the [TechnoLawyer Blog](#). Need help writing your marketing plan? Read this post. It's full of practical suggestions that will get you from "I need to write a plan" to

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"what am I doing today?" in no time flat. Remember, you don't have to change the world, just make some plans and execute them.

Just being there isn't enough. Not by a long shot.

Robert Algeri's "[2011: The year that content marketing becomes king](#)" from [The Great Jakes Blog](#). Think merely being online and engaged is enough? Think again. Unless you have good content, the kind that clients read, that they print out and share with their colleagues, that they turn to when they need solutions, they're not going to your website, Twitter feed or Facebook page. This post tells you why.

While you're at it, check out Algeri's companion piece, "[2011 – The year that law firm websites become 'publishing platforms'](#)" for more good ideas re content marketing.

Tell me a story. A good one, the kind that will make me hire you.

Ilana Rabinowitz's "[Three Marketing Trends for 2011](#)" from [Social Media Explorer](#). The trends discussed in this post -- storytelling, emotion, and purpose and meaning -- are neither novel nor earthshaking. But they're no less important for it. People like stories, especially ones told with emotion and purpose. This post reminds us of that, and gives some useful insight into how to do it right.

The people have spoken. Are you listening?

Adrian Lurssen's "[What Surprised You In 2010? Perspectives from Legal Professionals](#)" in JD Supra's [The Scoop](#). It may not be right to recommend a post that features yours truly, but I'll do it anyway. This post provides great insight into the issues and trends currently on the minds of a wide range of lawyers and legal professionals. It's a good read for anyone in the profession. Want more? Read the [full article](#), which includes their answers to the question: "What should lawyers expect to see in the new year?"

Think you know your clients?

Jim Durham's "[Ten Things You Should Know About Every Client](#)" from [The Hubbard Perspective](#). Durham is the chief marketing and business development officer for McGuireWoods, so he brings a decidedly BigLaw focus to this post, but that shouldn't keep you from reading it. There's something here for everyone, from AmLaw 100 partners trying to land new *Fortune* 100 clients to solos building on relationships they've established with individual prospects. "There is no such thing as too much information," writes Durham, and this post will help you figure out what info you need.

Lance Godard founded [The Godard Group](#) to help lawyers and law firms identify and execute solutions for a wide range of international business development and marketing needs. He is available for hire on short-term and long-term projects.
