

Should Law Firms Accept Guest Blog Posts?

Steve Matthews | November 2013

If your law firm maintains a blog, or if you blog personally, there's a reasonably good chance that you've received one of these emails:

Hi Steve!

My name is Joe Schmo and I am a writer at somewebsite.com, a relatively new social media agency.

I was just wondering if you would be interested in us contributing a guest post for your site?

We've done many before, and can provide examples of published work if desired. Looking forward to hearing from you! :)

Joe

My advice? Don't do it. Don't publish guest post content on firm-owned blogs, and don't let marketing agencies solicit other publishers to post your content.

As I write this, I've received 22 such offers over the past 48 hours, almost all of which bear a remarkable similarity to spam email. These "requests" are:

- frequently delivered in bunches within an hour or two;
- make the identical offer, regardless of the blog;
- display the same sender name & email (across each batch); and
- show almost no indication that the sender has even read the blog in question.

You must understand this important point: No matter what these messages say, your blog is **not** being targeted because of "your quality writing" or some other special quality. Guest-blogging offers are sent out on a massive scale, and will accept any website that says "yes".

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Why should firms care?

When it comes to links — both outbound and inbound — search engines will judge your blog (or website) by the company it keeps. Links from universities, for example, have traditionally had a positive impact on the recipient website's search rankings. On the opposite end of the spectrum, links from more questionable online neighbourhoods — link spam [<https://support.google.com/webmasters/answer/66356>], viruses, and such — have been known to create a negative effect on rankings, or an outright penalty. The guest post is quickly becoming the modern-day link exchange, and the inbound links generated from such posts to your firm's website are already being identified by Google [<http://searchengineland.com/google-adds-large-scale-guest-posting-advertorials-optimized-anchor-text-to-list-of-link-schemes-168082>] as potential link spam.

If you are taking “free” content from a guest blogger, these writers almost always require an outbound link to be embedded within their contributed post. Because, of course, that's the *quid pro quo* — they give you content, you publish their link.

If law firms aren't already turned off by the concept of being associated with a cold-calling, mass-mailing stranger, then they really should fear the negative signal created by that new outbound link. The best-case scenario is that there will be no impact at all on your website's rankings. The worst case? Your website will be linking to one of these known “questionable neighbourhoods,” and will end up triggering a spam warning from Google.

Why would any law firms do this? Honestly, I'm not sure what would compel you to do so. Your blog is your firm's voice, its ambassador online. Whether your blog is a firm endeavour, or is written by a single lawyer, the integrity of its message must be guarded and protected.

Bringing an outside author into your publishing process is rarely a good idea, but bringing in a cold-calling stranger? A mind-boggling mistake. Don't make it.

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