

Presence Marketing - It Happens Online Anyway

Interesting blog post yesterday by Kevin O'Keefe at LexBlog on the practice of presence marketing. Kevin's post is in response to another on the topic by Technosailor's Aaron Brazell (titled Effective Presence Marketing in Social Media).

The idea (quoting Kevin quoting Aaron):

Presence Marketing is the recognition and exposure that a person or company gets simply by being there. Where is there? It is simply anywhere that people are.

... By being active on blogs, social networks or any other format that places a high dividend on visibility, companies and brands are engaging in Presence Marketing.

Straightforward enough. And as Kevin says: "Lawyers do online presence marketing through effective blogging and the making use of social media."

He cites as an example Francis Pileggi whose blog content (and its subsequent syndication in high profile places like the WSJ) has created for him "a brand name in the area of Delaware corporate litigation."

In other words: be there. **Participate.**

For members of the legal industry this means, among other things, participating on the targeted, destination websites that do a good job of aggregating useful legal information - lots of it - to a wide audience of consumers and colleagues. You participate by sharing your work; that's our model.

The destination websites also influence search results. If for a moment we only consider how people use the search engines - how they find information, services, other people online - we see again why presence marketing is so crucial. To wit:

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- **If people don't know who you are** (don't know your name, your firm's name) the dynamics of online search today are such that **they'll more likely stumble upon your work before they ever find you.**

Search engines like Yahoo! and Google are not directories (although Yahoo! once was). In general terms, they don't catalogue the web, site by site - they index it, page by page. And they match what's been indexed to some pretty darn specific queries. The search engines don't simply deliver website listings; they deliver the most relevant information they can find.

Of course this applies not just to searching the engines but also jumping to those destination sites. The more substantive pages of work you publish online, the more chances you have of being "relevant," of being noticed in the crowd. Someone finds your work; as a consequence they find you. A single website is no longer enough, as if it ever was.

(What if there wasn't any work? People probably wouldn't find you, your website.)

- **If people do know who you are (know your name, your firm's name), you already have an online presence, whether you want one or not.**

This is true even if the search results come up empty (which is, simply, the weakest kind of online presence of all). We've said this already in another context: in the age of Google, you will be Googled.

Do you happen to know what a referral or prospective client will find among the search results, when they inevitably Google you? Whatever the answer, that's your online presence.

Never before have you had so many opportunities to manage what is seen of you online. Publishing work on the Internet is not just presence marketing, it's presence management.

From high-visibility destinations (information portals) to search engine results, the question becomes: *what are you doing to manage your online presence?*

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