

Using Video in Law Firm Marketing to Generate New Business

By Larry Bodine, Esq.

Legal marketing hit an inflection point when Pew Internet Research announced that the No. 1 reason people go online is to view a video. The reason is simple: people collect information visually and prefer to watch an explanation rather than to read a manual or article.

This means that an effective way to generate more business is to record short videos and add them to your website. This allows lawyers to gain a competitive edge, because:

- An estimated 100,000 law firms have launched video channels for marketing purposes on YouTube.
- Over 3 billion videos are viewed a day on YouTube, which is the No. 2 most-visited website on the Internet.
- More than 60,000 unique visitors per month view selected videos about business development on the LawMarketing Channel at www.lawmarketing.com.
- Putting video on your law firm website will improve its search engine results.
- Google, which owns YouTube, can detect the code for video online and favors websites with video.

Some firms like Womble Carlyle have created a nine-part video series on business litigation issues for businesses that is currently running at bit.ly/qhQa5n. Others, O'Bryan Law Offices in Louisville, display a series of bankruptcy videos at www.obryanlawoffices.com/CM/Custom/Video.asp. Immigration lawyer Dennis M. Clare of Louisville has videos about immigration law at www.dennisclare.com.

Studies have shown that people will remember:

- 10% of what they read
- 20% of what they hear
- 50% of what they see and hear – which is why online video is so powerful.

One thing is clear: video is the future of law firm marketing. People who watch your videos feel as if they know you personally. Adding video to your website is like getting an audition with a potential client.

A video is less expensive than a TV commercial and is much more likely to be viewed by potential clients. Lawyers can contact *Attorney At Law* magazine to have a two-person crew create your video with professional three-point lighting and multiple graphics and digital effects for \$2,495. Their videos are more interesting than one person standing in front of a muslin backdrop because Anna will interview you like Barbara Walters, and give you an interactive pre-edited video where your clients can fast forward straight to the answers of each question she asks in the video, rather than having them wait minutes before getting the information they need.

Lawyers who have embraced video have built their own studio in a spare office, which can be done for less than \$1,500. For example, lawyer Ken Hardison of Dunn, NC, who is the president of the Personal Injury Lawyers Marketing and Management Association, has recorded dozens of videos at www.youtube.com/user/PILMMA#g/u that have been viewed more than 8,000 times.

Your own studio

I recommend lawyers read *YouTube for Business - Online Video Marketing for Any Business* by Michael Miller, which is available online for \$10. It will teach you

about the equipment you'll need, camera techniques, how to edit your video and upload it to YouTube.

I started a YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/user/LarryBodineMarketing with about 20 legal marketing videos that have attracted nearly 100 subscribers. This was done with no prior video experience.



First, purchase a “prosumer” HD camcorder. HD is important because the picture remains clear when viewed full-size on a computer monitor. I recommend the Sony HDR-PJ10 Camcorder which sells at Best Buy for \$700 (it sells online for under \$600). Other options are the Canon HF S21 or the JVC GZ-HM1.

There is no need to get a Hollywood-style professional camera that costs \$6,000. Check www.camcorderinfo.com for reviews of other video cameras. The essential features to look for are an input jack for a microphone, a high-speed 2.0 USB port to transfer the video to your computer or external hard drive and wireless remote to start and stop the recording.

Do not use a Flip or other cheap pocket cameras because they have no mike jack and produce terrible sound. These cheap cameras are responsible for most of the terrible, inaudible video on YouTube.

The rest of the equipment

Tripod: Pick up a 72” tripod, which is tall enough for stand-up videos. Cost: \$40.

Wireless Lavalier Mike: Get an Audio-Technica PRO88W-R35. Cost: \$140. Do not rely on the camera’s mike, which will pick up background noise and create an echoing sound.

Background: Visit a camera store and get a muslin backdrop with a stand. Cost: \$200.

Lights: Get a pair of Flashpoint SoftBox, 70 watt fluorescent lights units with a nine-foot light stand. Cost: \$60 online per kit.

Editing Software: Software is your friend, because it lets you fix mistakes, add titles, captions, transitions, trim the video and tweak. For a PC, I recommend Sony Vegas Movie Studio HD Platinum 11 for \$99 with “show me how” videos. Mac users should get Final Cut Pro X for \$300. YouTube itself lets you add captions and trim the length of videos online.

Tips for a good video

Most lawyer video online now is very poor quality. Follow these tips to get a good result:

- Move when you speak, because video is designed to capture action. Most lawyer videos show someone sitting at a desk, which is boring. Try standing up and gesturing when you speak, which is how you talk to people in person.
- Mind the background. What is seen behind you makes a big difference. Do not sit in front of your office window or a lamp, which will put your face into a shadow. There should be no distracting cars or people moving in the background. Get rid of the clutter too.
- Don’t talk about yourself. No one is interested. Instead, talk about what problems you solve for clients.
- Look at the camera as you would look someone in the eye. Avoid the quasi-interview style of looking off-camera at an unseen person.
- Keep your video short – 2-3 minutes tops. Any longer and you’ll lose your viewers.
- Get to the point in 8 seconds or viewers will move on.
- The more light the better. Do not rely on sunlight or office light, which will produce unwatchable, dark and off-color videos.



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