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Lawyers, Meet Vendors, Your New Best Friends

Back in the day, when only large law firms used sophisticated network systems to handle enterprise technology, their IT departments were responsible to assess the standards, quality and functionality of the systems they purchased. And once the installation was complete, it was also IT's job to maintain the system at the necessary level of functionality.

But as the development and use of scaled-down software, and now cloud products, infiltrated solo, small and mid-level firms that do not employ an IT staff, lawyers have needed to educate themselves to make the right technology choices. Without guidance from an IT professional, there are plenty of wrong choices and expensive mistakes to be made. And with the use of cloud-based products comes the added element of vendor due diligence for lawyers who are at a loss right now to even know what to ask. (I've included a sample of a vendor due diligence questionnaire in my post [Oh, Data, Where Art Thou?](#))

But people have never lacked ingenuity, and with it the ability to see a new void as an opportunity. The void is the disconnect between the solos/small firm lawyers and the vendors they are now doing business with on a regular basis. And [MyLegal.com](#) is filling it nicely.

MyLegal.com was launched about a year ago. It is an information and marketing hub for both lawyers and vendors, enabling them to showcase their skills and products to a membership market where, through interaction, there is an increasing level of trust. It starts with a profile, of course, and moves on creating discussion groups and uploading blogs, videos, podcasts, product demos and press releases. The site has since gone through a number of upgrades, such as adding the Professional Directory, where you can expand on who you are and what you are offering.

The dynamic principals, [Lisa DiMonte](#) and [Kathy DiLorenzo](#), continually brainstorm with other professionals to develop tools on the website that improve interaction between vendors/service providers and lawyers, and these tools will be increased and enhanced on an on-going basis.

What we do for lawyers and service providers is provide a community where intellectual insights can be exchanged through our groups. We think lawyers want to stay informed of the products, trends and best practices in the industry and who better to provide that information than the vendors who develop solutions for the needs of lawyers.

Within the last several months, MyLegal has ramped-up its value and service in significant ways. MyLegal hosted a live conference, [The Case for Social Media](#). The day-long series of presentations showcased the best minds in the legal marketing/social media marketing business and lawyers regarding cloud security and ethical issues.

<http://lawpracticestrategy.com/>

Two days later, MyLegal.com released its completely upgraded website that includes new and valuable functionality. The new site streamlines the way to take full advantage of the site's marketing and interactive tools. It now enables you to sync with Twitter and LinkedIn, and offers paid services to help members create and syndicate their media.

Soon, each group at MyLegal will use a wiki, which brings a listserv to the next level. It eliminates the need to search through all the posts on a listserv to find the bottom-line best practice or suggestion. When someone poses a question on a wiki, the answer evolves and rises to the top by thoughtful participation from the group.

Another great feature in the wings is that membership content will soon be pushed out to media partners and law-related associations who need information from vendors on legal applications, technology, trends and best practices, and from lawyers who use them. This is a double benefit: it increases the visibility of your service or product, and provides data, intelligence and reports to regulating bodies that need to understand the technology, its value and effects on law practice.

MyLegal also has the legal job market in mind. They cater to new lawyers, solos and small firms by offering the free use of web tools and networks to promote themselves through social media by developing a solid profile, blogging, and uploading press releases, announcements and other marketing materials on their profile page. Creation of or participation in a group is a great entry point into social networking and learning the value of conversation, and gather information necessary to help them make choices on a technology design that will work for them. MyLegal will soon offer paid marketing services such as interviewing members to create a promotional podcast or video that can be linked anywhere. Additionally, the site will syndicate content to its audience of approximately 500,000.

For lawyers, it is the place to gain immediate access to qualified vendors and legal service providers, and to stay current on technology, trends and best practices in their ever-expanding technological world. It is also the perfect opportunity to tell service providers what their needs are, since tech developers are full-steam ahead in responding to your needs and producing solutions that meet them. At the same time, vendors, who are frequently in need of legal services, have the opportunity to engage with lawyers before they hire them – a great resource for business.

For vendors, it is the perfect showplace for their products and services with the added ability to inform and educate their target market. Group interaction among vendors and lawyers creates a synergy where valuable information is exchanged and trusted professionals can be found.

That is no small addition to the world of law practice information. The movement of our profession is toward more and more incorporation of technology and outsourced functions, and there is a whole new realm of information lawyers must acquire in order to integrate this movement into their practices. MyLegal has no smaller vision than to become the only place lawyers need to go to gain knowledge about and find productivity tools that will enable them to streamline their practice.