

Law Firm Marketing with Effective E-Newsletters

By **Larry Bodine**, a business development advisor based in Tucson and Chicago. For the last 19 years, he has helped law firms nationwide attract new clients and generate new business by using strategy, business development training and individual attorney coaching. See www.LarryBodine.com. He can be reached at 630.942.0977 and Lbodine@LawMarketing.com.



Everyone is talking about online social networking, but e-newsletters still beat this new marketing technology in many respects. E-mail newsletters have survived as one of the most potent electronic marketing weapons in a law firm's arsenal. Twitter, Facebook and Google marketing are the tactics du jour.

E-newsletters still work and often are superior marketing and value-added vehicles because:

- An e-newsletter still is the fastest and most personal way to deliver a marketing message to clients and prospects. I have published the [LawMarketing e-Newsletter](#) for 10 years and get new subscribers every week.
- They are the most cost-effective form of "push" marketing. A newsletter that must be printed and mailed not only is more expensive, but also takes longer to produce and mail.
- They easily show return on investment by measuring the number of messages delivered, opened, what elements the recipient read and whether the destination address was correct. Web sites and blog traffic reports come close, but can't match this detailed measurability.
- Corporate general counsel list e-newsletters as one of the top 10 things they want to see on a law firm Web site, according to TouchPoint Metrics of San Rafael, Calif.
- E-newsletters still take advantage of viral marketing in that they are easy to forward. In some cases, more people read an e-newsletter than actually subscribe to it because it's passed along to others.
- E-newsletters are the best way to find out exactly who visits your Web site. The Web site log will reveal the Internet Protocol addresses of visitors, but a newsletter sign-up form on a firm Web site can capture the person's name, e-mail address and demographic information.
- By following best practices, e-newsletters manage to get through the recipients' firewalls, spam filters and technical roadblocks because they come from a trusted source or have been whitelisted by recipients.

- E-newsletters offer the colorful beauty and design of Web sites and magazines by using HTML coding.

To be sure, the glory days of e-mail newsletters are over. Three years ago, a marketer could blast out a newsletter and be assured of a 90 percent open rate. But spammers, criminal hackers and virus writers abused e-mail as a marketing method. Many people complain about e-mail overload and unwanted messages, which are hurdles that e-newsletters can and do overcome.

A Widely Used and Powerful Tool

“HTML e-mail communication lets law firms efficiently distribute newsletters, alerts, invitations and announcements,” said Joshua Fruchter, president of [eLawMarketing](#) in New York, the leading expert on law firm e-mail communications.

Fruchter cited benefits of HTML e-mail communication such as:

- Reinforcing the firm brand at regular frequencies.
- Driving increased traffic to the firm Web site.
- Delivering qualified new business leads that produce measurable results.
- Capturing feedback about client interests through polling and tracking which articles were most popular with readers.
- Reducing marketing costs. Fruchter said Stroock, a firm with more than 350 attorneys, saved more than \$100,000 on printing and mailing costs by switching to e-mail only for client alerts and the internal firm newsletter.

Starting an E-Newsletter

The easiest way to start an e-newsletter is to convert a print newsletter into electronic form. Start by including a message in the print newsletter asking readers to e-mail the firm all of their contact information with a request to make the switch. Simultaneously, the firm can e-mail all recipients, notifying them of the e-mail option. Finally, be sure to add a link on your home page to a sign-up form so visitors can join the firm’s mailing list.

Elements of a good e-newsletter include:

- Short, punchy synopses of the articles with links to the full text on the firm Web site. The links connect through a Web database. This counts which e-mails were opened and which articles have been read. The brevity keeps the file size small. The links build traffic to the Web site.

- Code that will create a personalized greeting that the sending computer can generate (e.g., “Dear Mr. Smith”).
- Thumbnail photos of the authors with links to their biographies.
- Graphics and logos that match the firm’s branding.
- The firm’s physical address, and the name, e-mail and phone number of a contact person.
- A disclaimer that the e-newsletter is provided for informational purposes and doesn’t create an attorney-client relationship.

It’s important the e-newsletter has a regular and consistent publication schedule. Once the firm starts a newsletter, it must commit to continuing it. Some law firms publish their newsletters sporadically, which hinders readers’ interests.

For more on this topic, call:

Larry Bodine, Esq.

Business Development Advisor

Tel: 630.942.0977

E-mail: Lbodine@LawMarketing.com

Web: <http://www.LarryBodine.com>

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