

Lawyers' Guide TO SOCIAL MEDIA

Compare social media sites and services to quickly discover optimal tactics for reaching buyers of legal services at the critical stages of the buyer's and seller's process.

BUYER'S NEEDS: [Recognition] [Knowledge] [Consideration] [Selection]

LAWYER'S NEEDS: [Exposure] [Communication] [Connection] [Promotion]

This guide is provided by Law Gravity LLC as an overview and comparison tool. It is not meant to be comprehensive. There are many other fine sites and services that lawyers and law firms might consider. These are just a few of our favorites and have proven their worth to hundreds of legal professionals over the recent past years. We do not endorse nor receive compensation from any site or service mentioned in this guide.

Social media continues to evolve. Please contact us for updates or help with your social media strategy.

Jayne Navarre at jln@lawgravity.com or 786-208-9108.
[@jaynenavarre](https://twitter.com/jaynenavarre) on Twitter or [linkedin.com/in/jaynenavarre](https://www.linkedin.com/in/jaynenavarre)

Please visit our blog at virtualmarketingofficer.com for inspiration and practical tips on social media and more...

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LinkedIn

Social networking site for business professionals

BUYERS' NEED : [Recognition]

SELLERS' NEED: [Exposure]

[Knowledge]

[Communication]

[Consideration]

[Connection]

[Selection]

[Promotion]



-Very high page rank on search engines, almost guaranteed first page results for individual name.
 -Your Profile is a billboard: create a strong professional title and add an attractive business photo/portrait.
 -On-site traffic generation is improving thanks to new features that encourage "sharing," "liking" of content.
 -Significant weight placed on key word optimized title and Profile summary for on-site searches.
 -On-site search provides exposure to thousands of potential prospects.
 -Company pages offer snap shot of services when filled in completely.
 -Network available 24/7
 -Some on-site content is now being indexed by search engines.

*An incomplete Profile or Company Page doesn't help at all.

*Creating a compelling Profile is critical.

*Contributing valuable content to your Network rather than simple self promotion takes time.

-A+ Listening tool.
 -Easy entry to interest Groups.
 -Potential to engage prospects by publishing original content (repurpose blog posts) to sub-groups.
 -Find a quiet corner where your contributions will rise above the noise.
 -Decent contact management system allowing you to message Groups or multiple connections in your network.
 -Add "apps" to Profile page to highlight interests and experience: blog feed, articles, Twitter updates, Trip-it, SlideShare, JDSupra, etc.
 -Premium membership allows extended, targeted reach to more people; organize connections, +inMail, x+tra profile view data.

*Can be high maintenance for serious networkers.

*Rising above noise requires strategy and regular attendance. Find a niche. Share others' content.

*Avoid temptation to tender "legal" advice. Speak generally.

-A personalized Profile summary highlighting benefits of your services can help networkers better understand what you can do for them or will prompt them to refer network suggestions your way; i.e. referrals.
 -Emphasize your niche.
 -Avoid reusing firm website bio.
 -Respond to invitations and inMail promptly.
 -Use as follow up tool: invite people you meet off-line into your Network.
 -Decent warm-calling tool if you take the time to build a quality network and reach out to 2nd degree connections.
 -Join and contribute to niche "Groups" to gain targeted visibility.

*An incomplete Profile or few connections can be a negative.

*Building a quality network takes time.

*Effective follow-up requires more than occasional attendance.

-Twitter, blog and JDSupra article feeds will show up in your Network activity stream: Use these apps to stay top-of-mind.
 -Use custom labels for website links in your Profile.
 -Encourage partners and employees to maintain complete profiles to show off your solid team.
 -Recommend your clients to your network.
 -Request introductions from 1st degree connections to 2nd or 3rd degree connections to create multiple touch points.
 -Easy to send announcements via inMail to 50 or less of your 1st degree connections.

*Decent tool for top-of-mind play but you still need to be present to win.

*Most activity stays onsite.

*Not likely to create significant traffic to off-site links or firm website.

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TWITTER

Micro-blogging site that enables users to send “tweets” of 140 characters or less.

BUYERS' NEED : [Recognition]

SELLERS' NEED: [Exposure]

[Knowledge]

[Communication]

[Consideration]

[Connection]

[Selection]

[Promotion]



-Twitter ranks high for individual name in public search results.
 -Tweets can appear in social search results.
 -ReTweeting others will quickly establish your interests and build niche Following.
 -Tweeting insights re: trending topics can gain attention from journalists.
 -International reach.
 -Use consistent, topic specific keywords and hashtags in Tweets to return high in on-site searches and gain exposure.
 -Add your Twitter stream to blogs, LinkedIn, and Facebook to effortlessly increase your reach.
 -Easy to get started.

*Links embedded in Tweets are no-follow, but the social contribution is strong and expected to become more prominent as Twitter evolves.

*Noisy. Must have strategy.

*Think before you Tweet. Your reputation, your clients' well-being, and your law firm are “on-the-line.”

- A+ Listening tool.
 -Considerable outbound messaging tool.
 -Posts can become viral quickly, increasing the credibility of the messenger.
 -Adding links to articles, videos, blog posts, and interesting content attracts followers and reTweets.
 -Enables spontaneous engagement with prospects, stakeholders, media, and others in one broad stroke that cannot be achieved with email or chat.
 -Great source for finding new topics to blog about.

*Requires professional responsibility and discipline (not for everyone).

*Demands frequent, but short-term, attention.

*Volume of in-coming Tweets can be overwhelming: Noisy.

*Requires some work to edit thoughts to 140 characters effectively.

-It isn't what you're saying on Twitter that best connects you and your services with others: *it's what you can get others to say about you that has the most impact.*
 -Getting reTweets can do more for you at the “handshake” level than any other social site.
 -Focus on top 20% of followers as they are your most valuable conduit.
 -Show up often. Repetition matters.

*Getting others to say something about you is easier said than done.

*Building a quality network takes time.

*Ample opportunity for missteps.

*Not for long form writing, but a link to a longer exposition on your blog can be useful.

-Efficient distribution tool for staying top of mind.
 -Friendly links in Tweets can lead people to your website content, articles and blog posts.
 -ReTweeting others' content demonstrates that you're listening.
 -Adding a comment to a reTweet can quickly build your reputation as a knowledgeable thought leader.
 -Lists and saved searches allow you to quickly tune into what others in your top 20% are talking about.
 -Put something interesting in your Twitter profile: use keywords, show personality.
 -Be a person (photo) not an icon.

*Scalability is challenging: the sheer size of some users' Followers reduces ability to cut through the noise.

*Too much self-promotion is a turn-off: Too little is not enough.

Lawyers' Guide TO SOCIAL MEDIA FACEBOOK

Social networking site where users can add friends, send messages, post updates, videos, links, photos and build their own profile.

BUYERS' NEED : [Recognition]

SELLERS' NEED: [Exposure]

[Knowledge]

[Communication]

[Consideration]

[Connection]

[Selection]

[Promotion]



-Adds another imprint to public search results on an individual's name or a law firm named Company Page.
-Best exposure comes through "re-connection" with past colleagues, classmates, neighbors, etc., all of whom are potential referral sources.
-Make sure "Friends" know what you do professionally!
-Facebook ads for Company Pages can drive significant traffic; potentially producing new leads.
-Follow up via Facebook is easy.
-Mobile apps for FB are plentiful.

*Not a big factor. Limited to people you probably already know off-line.

*Typical Facebook users want games, contests, coupons from Company Pages - uneasy territory for law firms.

* FB Friend associations may come back to haunt you. Choose carefully.

-Efficient tool for "mass" communication.
-Effective for drawing attention to what matters most to you.
-Effective channel for "sharing" content.
-Cross post content from your blog, Tweets or press coverage via status updates.
-Easy to link to videos or articles.
-Useful for recruiting.
-Easy to "like" and promote others' content.

*Requires professional responsibility and personal discipline. (Make sure your firm policy is updated regularly to address changes to FB).

*Demands frequent, but short-term, attention.

*Company Pages are less effective for B2B practices, more effective for B2C.

*Requires detailed attention to privacy settings and terms of use.

-Adjust post settings for personal and professional "Friends." Keep separate.
-Opportunity for closed, private networking groups.
-Great listening tool.
-Well liked law firm brands can attract "Friends" for Company pages. Include firm news, announcements and links to show up in News Feed.
-Adding "like" and "send" buttons to the firm website can drive traffic to FB page and creates community.

*Requires devoted resources to maintain Company Page effectively.

*Optional location based networking feature may pose risks.

*Associations with others may be a liability if you are not careful with settings and sharing.

*Plenty opportunity for missteps without proper business/ethics training.

-Efficient means for developing more frequent touch-points with distant "Friends."
-Share and Like buttons create viral content.
-Emerging as one of the top traffic sources to other websites.
-It's okay to toot your own horn: share your off-site content, show off the family, talk sports, show personality with restraint.
-Privacy settings are critical.

*Access to personal posting on individual profiles should be limited to only people in your trusted circle.

*Must devote resources to reputation management training. Younger associates may need to clean up their pages.

*Social media content is discoverable and lawyers should never talk about cases, competitors, the judiciary, or offer professional advice online.

Lawyers' Guide TO SOCIAL MEDIA BLOGS

Type of website with regular entries of commentary or other material presented in reverse chronological order.

BUYERS' NEED : **[Recognition]**

SELLERS' NEED: **[Exposure]**

[Knowledge]

[Communication]

[Consideration]

[Connection]

[Selection]

[Promotion]



- Unsurpassed for exposure to new audiences.
- Statistically, more readers arrive on a blog post via a general web search on specific terms than the supposed repeat reader fan base.
- Excellent addition to your online footprint.
- Exceptional performance in search results for author name, blog title, content keywords, and categories.
- Links within content will drive traffic to law firm site or author bio pages.
- Hot topic posts can attract significant attention from journalists scouring the web for background content or sources for comment.
- Valuable blog content can virally build your reputation.

*For conscientious individuals only.

*Launching a blog can be troublesome for extremely risk-averse partnerships.

*Most effective when the blogger (s) is active in other social media.

*High maintenance.

- Excellent tool for “mass” communication of topical expertise.
- Effective for educating prospects about your knowledge base and/or accomplishments.
- Creates an evergreen archive of your topics by categories and tags that can be readily found in search results.
- Gives prospects an opportunity to hear their lawyer “think out loud.”
- Potentially viral exposure gives your content longer shelf life than print.

*Expert knowledge of ethics and professional responsibility are essential.

*Demands frequent attention to drive meaningful results.

*May require outside resources for development and maintenance.

- Blog content can demonstrate certain mastery.
- Content speaks louder than words on the law firm attorney bio.
- Multi-dimensional profile of demonstrated understanding.
- Great supplement to brochure ware sites.
- Content is accessible without boundaries of time, geography and industry focus.
- 24/7 marketing visibility.
- Opportunity to build regular readership.
- Easy to connect content to social media profiles and build a bigger network.

*Must like to write and monitor related web-based content.

*Poses serious potential for missteps regarding confidentiality, ethics, advertising rules, liability and more.

- Blog content is easily subscribed to by RSS or eNewsletters essentially keeping you top of mind.
- Promoting blog content on other social media sites increases visibility.
- Adding multi-media content often gets “linked” to by other bloggers.
- Easy to re purpose media mentions, event announcements, firm newsletter content, presentations, podcasts, videos.
- Source to drive traffic to the firm website.
- Build relationships with other bloggers to increase reputation.
- Linking to others’ blog content in your posts may result in a ping-back to your content, helping to expand your reach.

*No downside.

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Multi-Media

BUYERS' NEED : [Recognition]

[Knowledge]

[Consideration]

[Selection]

SELLERS' NEED: [Exposure]

[Communication]

[Connection]

[Promotion]

YouTube : Video sharing site where users upload videos to branded channels, vote favorites.



-Videos rank high in search results. (Google owns YouTube!)

- Add tags to videos for topic, names, and place.
- Embed links to YouTube videos on firm website, blogs, and networking profiles to expand exposure.
- Very easy to start your own channel.

*Video quality reflects on your brand.

*Script it and keep it short.

-Powerful channel for giving prospects (and clients) educational content that demonstrates your knowledge base.

- Create branded videos to entertain, inform, or do both.
- Make it easy for viewers to share your video with others.

*More is better.

*Can be time consuming or expensive.

-Keep your brand high-profile on video images and in keyword tags.

- Add links to videos in eNewsletters or email blasts.
- Direct people to your educational videos when they inquire on a topic within your practice area. Show your savvy.

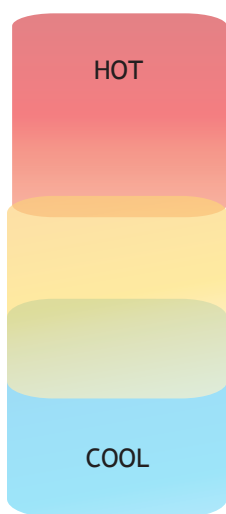
*No downside here.

-YouTube channels can be easily subscribed to by RSS.

- Videos work best when they are short - no more than 2-4 minutes.
- Promote videos across all social channels.

*Most activity stays on site, but you can increase chances of driving traffic to firm website when you add links to your pages in the post description or channel profile.

SlideShare : Users upload presentation slides, PDFs and documents. "Like" and "share."



-Can rank high in search results when titles, keywords and tags are strong.

- Ranks high for author's name in search results.
- Can connect you to entirely new audiences.
- Professional business tool, easy to get started.
- Get involved: "like" others' content.
- Greatest influence comes when your content is shared by others.
- Include author photo and short bio, link to other author content on all decks.

*No downside here.

-Educational content can spread virally.

- Add links to additional information to add value.
- Include contact information on slides.
- Load up PDFs, outlines, documents in addition to slides.
- Timely topics do well, but also good for ever-green issues.

*Some users may need assistance in the beginning.

*Content should be visually interesting: avoid too much text/bullets.

-Individuals and organizations go here for ideas, research, and to connect to services.

- Inform your prospects and clients of new uploads via other social media channels; Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, or eNews blasts.

*Presentation notes should not be made visible, so have adequate content for readers to get the gist but don't give away the punch-line; encourage them to pick up the phone and hire you!

-Links within content can drive traffic to firm website.

- Easy to share. Add SlideShare app to your LinkedIn profile page.
- Great way to stay in touch: follow up a presentation with an email and link to your slide on SlideShare.
- Let people who could not attend your live presentation know about your posting.
- Tag, categorize and promote by adding link back to your law firm website.

*All good.

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DISTRIBUTION NETWORKS

BUYERS' NEED : [Recognition]

[Knowledge]

[Consideration]

[Selection]

SELLERS' NEED: [Exposure]

[Communication]

[Connection]

[Promotion]

JDSupra

User-generated, legal centric content that is widely distributed. Free access for readers.



- Almost immediate indexing on all major public web engines.
- Shows up early in author name results.
- Substantive addition to lawyer's online footprint.
- Significant exposure via LinkedIn application.
- Easy to use.
- Broad social media promotion. 24/7 visibility.

- Clearly the purpose of this site.
- Knowledge base easily communicated via posts.
- JDSupra blog and digest features contributors for additional impressions.
- Overall, establishes credentials in an online portfolio perceived as authoritative.
- Add tags to postings to align with your niche.

- Great for B2B or B2C.
- Connect via content to prospects, referrals, and journalists.
- Connects your posts to a professional profile.
- Content is featured on LinkedIn's *Legal Updates* App.
- Complete your author profile, add links to home page.

- No-effort cross posting via JDSupra managed LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook Page accounts organized by industries.
- Efficient method for staying top of mind.
- Content easily accessed by RSS feeds.
- Allows you to track activity for each document you post.

- *Absolutely no downside to the amount of exposure JDSupra delivers.
- *Pay to play.

- *Will auto-upload your blog and/or website original content for an additional fee.

- *Must like writing. Can be time consuming to create original content.

- *Things really begin to happen only when you combine distribution with follow up on leads.

Lexology

User-generated legal content distributed via newsfeed, targeting in-house counsel bar members.



- Terrific exposure to new and/or regular readers who subscribe to free or paid newsfeeds.
- Article titles and author's name often return early in public search results.
- In partnership with the Association of Corporate Counsel.
- International reach.
- 24/7 visibility.
- Archives a plus.

- Knowledge base is easily followed by readers via subscription by practice area, firm or author.
- Write strong profile page for firm/attorney/author for greatest impact.
- Must include keyword rich titles to return high in onsite search results to highlight your area of expertise.

- Useful if primary focus is in-house counsel.
- Contact information for subscribers is available.
- Enables you to position yourself favorably among your competitors for specific areas of practice.
- Well organized website, easy to use.
- The more you publish, the better you look.

- Ample opportunity to attract regular readers for your practice specific content.
- Offers authors detailed analytics about subscribers who are reading, printing, downloading or emailing your content.
- Useful tool for contentious attorneys who will follow up on leads.

- *Contributors pay-to-play.
- *Narrow target to in-house counsel.

- *Must be prolific publishers of content to have meaningful presence here.

- *Will auto-upload your content for a fee.

- *No downside here if your target audience in corporate counsel.
- *Some integration with social media, but limited at this time.

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Lawyer Networks

BUYERS' NEED : [Recognition]

[Knowledge]

[Consideration]

[Selection]

SELLERS' NEED: [Exposure]

[Communication]

[Connection]

[Promotion]

Martindale Connected

Peer-to-peer, managed, private networking site with member profiles, forums, groups and Q&A.



-Virtual bar association meeting. Be seen.
-Access to in-house counsel members.
-Integrated with Martindale directory and other Martindale tools.
-Good network for the risk-averse.

*Limited exposure; mainly on-site.
*Filled with your competitors.
*Free basic membership; advanced features are pay to play.

-Channel for exchanging substantive knowledge that could be ethically unacceptable on a more general social network.
-Good for those whose work originates from other lawyer referrals.
-Decent for Q&A discussions. Educate and be educated.
-Narrow focus wins.

*Requires regular attention and attendance to be effective.
*Will feed off-site blog content for a fee.

-A lot of "Groups."
-Enables relationships with in-house counsel and lawyers you might not know otherwise.
-Decent international cross-section of members.
-Frequent posting required for top of mind positioning.

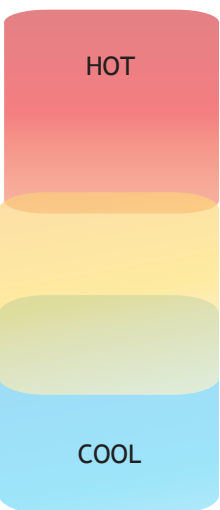
*Not well-integrated with other social channels except LinkedIn.
*Cumbersome; requires extra steps.

-Access to dozens of high-level discussions among peers.
-On-site blogging.
-Helpful for staying top of mind with those who might refer business.
-Reconnect with law school alum, former co-workers.

*No real advantage here outside of the comfort in knowing you're among colleagues.
*Discussion content does not appear in public search results.

LegalOnRamp

Collaboration system for in-house counsel, invited private practice lawyers and service providers.



-Invitation only network delivers benefits related to exclusivity; i.e., whom is exposed to whom.
-11,742 total registered members. 6,104 are in-house counsel
-Easy to use.
-Safe haven.

*No apparent public search engine benefit or liability.
*Exposure limited to in-house counsel bar and select law firms.

-Clearly the purpose of this network as, "members are expected to contribute to the community as a whole."
-The attorney profile is the center-piece of activity.
-Fairly easy to rise to the top as on site activity is only moderate.
-Easy to post documents that highlight your area of expertise.

*Private workgroups are pay to play.

-Useful if primary focus is in-house counsel or referrals from other lawyers.
-Enables you to position yourself favorably among your competitors.
-Private groups and sponsored pages help to distinguish law firm brand.

*Sponsored pages and groups are pay to play.
*Time consuming. Pages and Groups require a commitment to develop content and contribute to discussions.

-Offers fairly detailed discussions in a controlled environment.
-Frequent posting enables you to stay top of mind in the network activity stream.

*Limited.