

What's Wrong With Your Law Firm Bio?

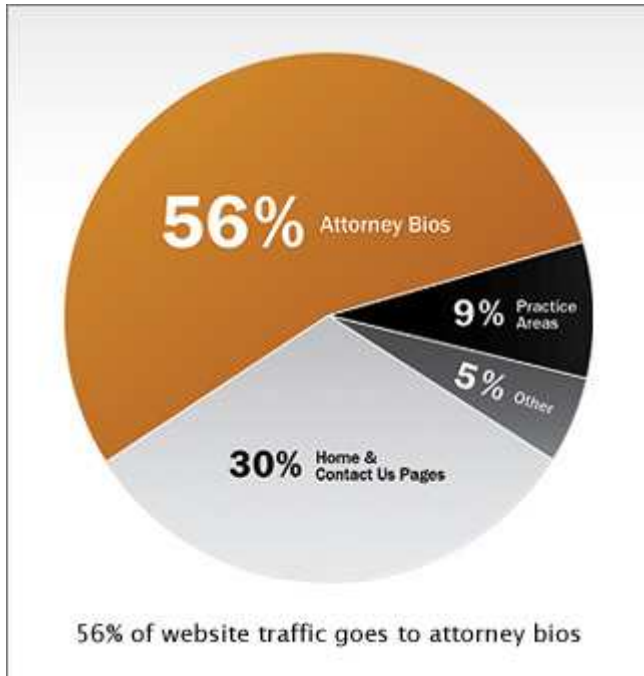
By [Adrian Dayton](#)



Don't take it personally. Nobody is perfect, but unfortunately, when it comes to law firm bios — well, most of them stink. They tout the vast accomplishments of the lawyer: where they went to law school, if they graduated with honors, whether they were on law review. Then they often include a laundry list of each and every type of legal matter the attorney has ever dealt with in their life. The main problem is, attorney bios are often created with very little thought into strategy. This is unfortunate, especially considering how important bios are.

Your bio matters to decision makers. Ninety percent of general counsel claim the attorney bios are the most important part of a law firm's website (2009 Wicker Park Group). Studies have also shown that bios are the most viewed pages on law firm websites, generating over 50% of the page views. If a good bio can help you land one more client this next year, what would that be worth to you? What about five new clients? Perhaps your bio deserves a little more attention than you are giving it.

There are three major problems that plague the bios of law firms, and some of them are pretty easy to fix....



1. The Cardboard Lawyer

Most law firm bios are completely static. They haven't been updated in a year or more. In this new era, with CNN and Twitter breaking news every minute, static bios are unacceptable. Potential clients want to know: what have you done lately? Are you on top of the latest trends? Are you even still alive? How do I know that from your bio?

According to Anthony Green, President of [Concep](#) (which has created web strategies for global law firms like Clifford Chance), bios should include "any recent articles or presentations the attorney has made . . . and a short video of the attorney discussing their expertise in their practice area." Look for video bios on websites as an emerging trend in the coming year.

Another tool that helps display the dynamic nature of the attorney's practice are icons helping website visitors connect on LinkedIn, Twitter and even Martindale-Hubble Connected. This gives visitors the chance to begin a conversation with attorneys even if they aren't quite ready to engage them.



2. Trying to be Everything to Everyone

Most lawyer bios, especially for more experienced lawyers, include a laundry list of accomplishments. "This is the most common problem with law firm bios," according to Dion Algeri, Founder of the NYC website development company [Great Jakes](#), which works with

midsize law firms. “They try to do too much. Now that we are moving towards a more global economy, attorneys can focus on a micro-niche in their bio, and people will hire them.”

So how do you choose where your focus should be? The key is in identifying your ideal client. The Pareto principle says that 80% of our business comes from 20% of our clients. The attorney’s focus (and hence the attorney’s bio) should be targeted on that highly profitable 20%. Most attorneys are so worried about losing business from the less-profitable 80% of their clients that they forget the rule of online marketing:

Market specifically, practice broadly.

The online marketing world is terribly competitive — and if you don’t have a clear and specific focus, it will almost be impossible to get attention online.

3. Don’t be a robot

Whenever someone joins Twitter, there is a little box that asks “Are you human?”, and you must punch in a few hard-to-read letters to verify your sentient status. Twitter does this to keep automated computer programs from creating fake Twitter accounts. Just as Twitter doesn’t want robots joining their social network, clients don’t like hiring robots for their legal work. Does your bio show you are a likable human being?

Surveys have shown that customers buy from people:

1. They like.
 2. They trust.
 3. They think know a lot.
- (in that order)

So why are law firm websites so focused on proving their attorneys know a lot? Because creating bios that make people **like you** and **trust you** are far more difficult to create. These bios require strategy. So what about the lawyer’s bio will make them likeable? This is not an easy question, but it is a crucially important one in drafting effective bios. One of the keys lies in understanding the strengths of an individual attorney.

“Pictures are also extremely important in the bio,” says [Dion Algeri](#) of [Great Jakes](#). “You go to [Cravath’s website](#), and they don’t have pictures of the associates, but look at the profile pictures of the partners — they are really engaging. These are obviously the work of a professional photographer. They are all smiling. Check [this one](#) out, this looks like a guy I want to talk to.”



When lawyers share their strengths with me, I commonly hear things like: passion for a certain area of law, extremely loyal, well connected or very charismatic. These elements are essential to making them such great lawyers and making them so likable, yet there often isn't a hint of these qualities in their law firm bios. This needs to change.

What are *your* greatest strengths as an attorney? If your law firm bio isn't highlighting these strengths, then you have some work to do. Potential clients are reading your bio, so it's time to start taking it a little more seriously.