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Paula Black has advised law firms around the globe on everything from powerful and innovative design to marketing strategy and business growth. She is an award-winning, Amazon-bestselling author and the force behind **In Black & White** (inblackandwhiteblog.com), a blog dedicated to clear, straightforward advice and open discussion of legal marketing issues. For more information on Paula Black, her books and her company please visit paulablacklegalmarketing.com.

8 Tips to Make the Most of Your Web Presence: Online Article Strategies for Attorneys

SEO, article placement, blogs... Far from the IT world, these words are being thrown around in almost every office these days. For attorneys, however, navigating a web presence can be tricky, especially when it comes to article placement and directories.

While you want to build a brand for yourself, attorneys need to remember that expanding their reach should be done with a strategic plan in mind. Throwing articles out into the blogosphere won't draw in clients; the key lies in carefully thought out moves that position your knowledge and experience and add to your credibility. Here are 8 things to remember:

Write what you know. Practice real estate law? Write about issues affecting buyers and sellers. Have 20 years experience in medical malpractice? Give readers tips on what to do at the scene of an accident. Don't explore new territory, stick to your expertise-that's where you have the ability to shine. Remember that you are the brand.

Give advice...but not too much. You want to give readers key pieces of information but leave them wanting a bit more. Cover some basics of the issues you're tackling but don't delve too deeply. If you share everything you know they won't have a reason to come looking for you.

Plan it out. We can't stress enough how important it is to have a plan of attack as you begin an article campaign. Take 10-15 minutes and map out 8-10 ideas (if not full articles!) so that you have a clear idea of what you want to cover and how it fits together. Don't be afraid to do a series of articles on one topic.

Have a cohesive message. As we mentioned above, stick to what you know. Remember that these articles will help connect your name to certain topics. Consider what you want those topics to be and focus your attention on sticking to them. 50 articles on 50 topics makes you a prolific writer, 50 articles on immigration law make you an expert.

Write to your audience. That means simple, clear language and no legalese. Remember who will see these... potential clients, clients, reporters looking for experts, and even attorneys in other specialties and practice areas. Make your ideas as clear and concise as possible and try to keep articles in the 600-800 word range.

Choose your placement carefully. There are plenty of article directories online, but not all of them will fit the needs of an attorney. Be sure to do your research and look into sites that have a clear section for law-related articles. Some directories cater exclusively to lawyers. You can also check Alexa.com to make sure your directories are ranked high enough to ensure true SEO benefits.

Timing is everything. Plan to post one article a week in 5 to 7 different directories. Too few and you risk not being effective, too many and Google may tag your byline and blackball your efforts.

Keep track of everything. Articles aren't just for online. Make the most of the time and energy spent writing these pieces by tracking where they go. A simple Google Alert set up in your name will help you see just who picks up your postings. Additionally, print them out, e-mail them to clients who may be interested and use them as part of your law firm marketing materials.