

What is all the Hoopla over Avvo reviews?

In 2007 John Henry Browne, a criminal defense attorney, claimed that his Avvo.com rating of 3.7 was damaging his practice. He filed a lawsuit against Avvo, but it was dismissed on pre-trial motion. In 2008 attorney Charles Krugel wanted to cancel his membership and un-claim his Avvo profile, on the grounds that Avvo was biased against small firms and solos. Avvo responded to his request by saying, "Now that you have claimed your profile it cannot be un-claimed." A post by Jay Fleischman says that many attorneys live in fear of a bad review on Avvo.

In my opinion the hoopla over Avvo is unwarranted. There is a more popular review system that is being overlooked, and that is the [Google Local Business](#) review. Sure Avvo received 600,000 unique visitors in December 2009. But 600,000 pales in comparison to Google's stats. According to Google's keyword tool, the December 2009 search volume for the word lawyer was 11,100,000. And when people run a Google search query on the word "lawyer" combined with a geographic region like "Chicago" they come face to face with Google local business results. The results include a map, firm names, and firm reviews.

It takes 10 minutes for a firm to set up a free profile in the Google Local Business Center. It takes even less time for a satisfied customer to post a review on Google. Your satisfied client just has to click on "write a review." They don't even have to set up an account, as they do on Avvo, to submit a review.

The bottom line is that lay people are not likely to go straight to Avvo.com to find a lawyer, and it does not come up on the first page when you search with a phrase like "New York employment lawyer." What does come up, when you search for "New York employment lawyer" is a map and some firm names. Try it for yourself and you will see that point B on the map is for the Blanch Law Firm, and they have 10 glowing reviews.

I'm not advocating that lawyers ditch Avvo.com. I am all for tools that allow consumers to rate products and services. I am simply suggesting that a free, extremely visible review tool should not be ignored.

By: Kelly Spradley, VP of Marketing and Sales at Impirus

For more tips on how to improve your web presence, read the Impirus [Internet Marketing Action Plan](#).