

10 Things Lawyers Can Do Today In Web 2.0 Need to grow new business today? Here's How!

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In this economy, your personal and business networks – and your reputation – are more important than ever. And there is no better, and far more efficient, way to build yours and your firm's online profile than via the Web. And yet, an ABA Legal Technology Survey Report, released in September 2008, found that lawyers are still not using the Internet to market themselves.

Only 2% of all lawyers in this country maintain professional blogs. 8% of law firms maintain firm blogs. And, while 15% of lawyers have joined social networks like Facebook and LinkedIn, only 4% of firms are using them to their best advantage.

The dearth of penetration in social media by members of the legal profession indicates that there is a huge opportunity for lawyers today if they can get into the 2.0 game as quickly as possible. It has become clear already that the lawyers who are actively online are reaping the benefits daily and this is only the beginning. Here are 10 things that you can do today:

Get smart. Learn about RSS (Real Simple Syndication) readers and set up one on your computer and your smartphone. You can quickly track information that is of interest to you, your clients and prospects and stay abreast of new developments in real time. Google reader is free and easy to use.

Own a Web site. According to a recent post in Lawyerist, that's how your future clients are going to find you. Forget about the phone book...that's old news. So, if you're not easily Google-able (findable on Internet search engines), you're off the short list.

Build your online network. Create your online profile on LinkedIn and Legal OnRamp today and update it every few weeks to keep the content fresh. Make sure that you use the key words that people searching for you or your services would use to find you. Join the group "Legal Blogging" on LinkedIn. There are currently over 1300 members, and it's growing daily.

Start a blog. Blogs aren't just about gaining readers, they are a great tool for online networking, enhancing your reputation and growing your business. Help your blog go viral by offering it as an e-mail newsletter, as well as providing RSS feeds of new content.

Join the conversation. Once you start blogging, get your name out there as a thought leader. Actively join in the conversation. Get into the habit of regularly adding content across the Web, and start commenting on the blogs that you regularly read. Be strategic:

target 10 blogs that you already read and start consistently contributing to them. Then, target 10 more and keep commenting.

Build your blog roll. Once you're known as a contributor, get the word out about your blog and ask the bloggers you admire to include you on their blog roll, and you include them on yours.

Share a paper you just delivered or an article you recently wrote by embedding a video of it on your blog or Web site. Use Slideshare for PowerPoints, and add audio to create a webinar. The technology is easy and either free or cheap. You may already own it and don't know that you have it.

Microblog with colleagues on Twitter. Yes, Twitter! Find out who's saying what by searching for relevant conversations on Twitter Search, and then sign up to join the conversations on everything from global legal issues of the day to legal marketing.

Attend a conference. In person. Using social media is all about the social piece. Expanding your network in person is critical to success. But, after the conference is over, use your new contacts, and old ones as well, to start an Internet conversation about the subject you all found important. Turn the conversation into a blog or put together a group on a social network to keep the conversation going. Be the thought leader on that subject.

Be passionate. In professional circles, enthusiasm, smarts and passion play well to any audience. Use the Internet to spread that passion more efficiently and less expensively. It makes you human.

I know that all of these things take time to do and the new technology may be a little daunting. But, AARP found me so I guess I'm considered a senior and as busy as any of you are. And, I do it. I mean, you are reading this, aren't you?

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