

# Law Firm Marketing Study 2011

## Internet - Law Firm Marketing - Law Search - online - client recovery

### Imprint

From consumer to clients

On the role of the Internet in search of Lawyers

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## Introduction

Markets and technologies have always subject to change. In recent years it has become increasingly global in combination with an extremely high level of technological change is a rapid change for those markets and give products which have at first a purely regional or national reference. These rapid developments do not stop at the profession of lawyers.

The strong increase in the distribution, use and importance of the Internet is reflected by many examples. Consumers today are very open to other information sources. Thus, the Internet also for the "masses" is no longer a pure information medium more, but also a medium of interaction. The Internet is evolving rapidly and with it the users. The new options for consumers with a quick decision and action to see much more. This trend can not ignore lawyers.

Another indicator of the rapid time changes in the law market is so far only very rudimentary existing scientific literature that deals with client acquisition on the Internet.

In addition to the dramatic changes on the demand side, the steady rise of lawyers to major shifts in the market for legal services attorney. The customer and client acquisition comes a whole new meaning. The recommendation used in the past, like marketing through word-of-mouth advertising is no longer sufficient today. This was recognized by many lawyers and this paradigm shift times and follow with their present firm on the Internet. But not only for its own sake, but also because their potential customers they are looking for.

Therefore, a website for a lawyer is now a must dar. If a company in this day and age does not have a website, it works fast frivolous. This fits the hypothesis that a lawyer loses to a bad website sales. Because Web users are impatient. For resistance and poor usability (usability), you simply leave the site and go to the next. Because the competitor's only a click away.

In today's time, firms must understand as a service company and the lawyers themselves as entrepreneurs and managers who lead their firm based on market rules. These include, among other things, a good law firm management, properly trained staff, a customer or client-oriented service and in particular a solid Internet presence. This study therefore deals mainly with the spectrum of issues of client acquisition via the Internet. She wants to give answers to the questions presented below, provide orientation, which is at a website by an attorney or law firm to respect from clients point of view and especially raises the status quo from a sample of attorney websites nationwide.

## Questions

If people behave, opt for this or that product, this web site or give that attention, feel the atmosphere in a pleasant or unpleasant, or the law firm contact with the staff to be competent or less competent judge: there are always psychological issues which can behavior is based. Therefore, we will point out, from our point of view relevant to psychological processes, both in terms of decision making in law and in relation to search behavior on the Internet.

Furthermore, this study is to provide answers to the following topics:

As lawyers are looking for? Which way is a consumer media and what he uses?

Which search paths have the lawyer search the Internet meaning and relevance?

What are the criteria on the assessment of attorneys' websites for potential clients a role?

What impact have attorney review and references in the opinion of the searcher?

Are there specific criteria that can guide the lawyer search?

What meaning and what impact price statements from lawyers for consumers?

How relevant is the physical experience of the firm's first contact?

## **Executive Summary**

The steady increase in lawyers leads to strong shifts in the market for legal services lawyer, so the clients production has much more meaning. Since word-of-mouth advertising alone no longer suffices, many lawyers will present her office on the Internet. For a modern law firm, this is a must today.

The client is almost always about minimizing risks and solve problems occurred. The consultation can take place only in interaction with the client. Therefore, the so-called "integration of the external factor" in the service marketing of enormous importance.

Another feature of the marketing of a service is the information asymmetry between buyers and suppliers, the lawyer must overcome in part. A firm can and must propagate signaling activities, such repetitive media coverage, credible information about the capabilities of the firm and its employees, thus contributing to confidence building.

## **Decision making and confidence**

Since the client is co-producer of the service outcome, need psychological processes that lead to decisions that are considered in more detail. Especially since spoken with legal services of trust assets and the client has to take up the business relationship to build a relationship of trust must.

The decision for or against a law is complex, it is based on many characteristics. On the nature of their cognitive effort, it is a "decision reflected" the need to think of the potential client exactly once his or her preference for an option (A lawyer or attorney B). But he looks around him and his memory for information, help him. Emotional factors play a prominent role.

Decisions are guided by a variety of factors. The halo effect is an important psychological perception error. It means that persons or things people evaluate the performance of a single positive or negative property generally positive or negative. Thus, the first impression of a webpage superimpose the performance of all other factors or.

Credibility is an important element of the trust relationship between client and lawyer. For legal services is therefore of the image of the lawyer or the firm of a major role in the "buy" decision. Gradually, during the service production quality of the relationship to a kind of "verification factor". This is the client used for the evaluation of results and has a direct impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty from. In addition, confidence in the Internet or on-line trust influenced by: Graphic design, structural design, content design and the design of social cues.

## Marketing for Attorneys

Marketing is strategic work that adds value to a firm and secure their future. Integrative services marketing for law firms, the consistent focus on the needs of the client to the target. Simply put, marketing efforts should trigger at (potential) customers positive feelings.

The marketing affects all processes within the firm, the impact on the clients have. Through marketing efforts to win clients and their needs in the process of service are included. If this is a law firm, a client may be tied to the firm.

Fizzle out without a precise definition of corporate and marketing communications objectives measures are ineffective because they are not on the needs of the firm or where the clients are based. Only 30% of the lawyers see themselves as entrepreneurs and managers who lead their firm based on market rules. This includes the law firm management, properly trained staff, good internet presence and a consistent customer or client orientation. All this will only lead to the same output quality throughout the processes of a firm to success.

It is of enormous importance, not only those processes can be made that directly affect the clients, but also those that run invisibly in the background, so to speak. These have indirectly by the office staff influence on the perception of clients and thus on its assessment of service quality. A good air service is crucial prerequisite for good service quality.

The expectations of the clients to the occurrence and the service of the firm, for example, by the impression or recommendations arising from the website must be filled in later personal interaction. The environment plays a law firm, especially in the early relationship between client and lawyer is not to be underestimated, role. Because the demand for legal services Vertrauensgut line takes the potential client back on the atmosphere as a proxy for credibility and competence.

## Ways and means of information and lawyer search

Today, more than 14 German 49 million years, the Internet, most using search engines, with Google's search engine is primarily used in Germany. Web users rely on their information seeking increasingly to the individual listed by search engines pages. Therefore it is important for a law firm website to get the best possible placement results. Possible need for a lot of outside links point to the relevant website.

Through online legal advice moves the classic consultant's lawyer not to the internet from. Legal forums on the Internet can help to reduce their fear of contacting a lawyer and to facilitate the classification of the case law in an area of law. Legal advice forums are a marketing tool especially for young lawyers. Discussions on Internet forums can affect confidence forming, because the contributions are not usually deleted and contributions can be evaluated in part. This leads to more transparency for prospective clients.

## The website as a tool for obtaining client

The Internet community is for all the companies have become a serious target audience, their needs must be addressed. Internet users expect more from companies that they are present on the Internet. In order not to give away potential sales, the site must meet certain standards. You must be convincing from the start, because an Internet user, usually within ten seconds, decides to get out of hand if it considers them quite useful.

The simpler a person visiting a Web page is made, the more they are inclined to deal with this on. A third of internet users to lose yourself on our website. Reasons are often an unclear user interfaces and lack of clarity of the website.

## Website Design

The usability factors, joy of use, aesthetics and design are called "user experience": the experience of the user in the use of the website.

Usability means that the site operator should ensure that it works properly and that a person may use more or less average skills and experience in the way they intended, without being unsatisfied.

Web users spend 69% of their time looking at the left side of the website. Therefore, a layout in which are found the navigation and main content on the left side, more likely to make a site successful than another, is not expected compliant design.

"Joy of use" means the joy of the user in and to the application. The term originally comes from the software ergonomics. A key component is the aesthetic appearance of web pages. Therefore the development and optimization of websites are always oriented in how websites are seen from the perspective of users and which aspects are important. For a trusted site, the user orientation is extremely important.

## Contents

For lawyers it is only with the slow realization that it is problematic when the specialization is not based on typical situations. The layman sees his primary problem and not the law (sgebiet). Therefore, contents of Web pages are processed strictly receiver-oriented.

The expectation of a user-friendly website has increased in recent years. For texts on the Internet should always use a simple language, repeat key ideas, and they are cognitively organized (structured, hierarchical structure).

## Review of Law website

Xamit has evaluated in this study exemplified nearly fifty pages of lawyers and law firms in Germany, including four websites of the current top 10 law firms according to prosecutors.

Considerable need to catch up on the websites of findability in search engines and the links. The overwhelming majority of Web sites has only ten or fewer links pointing to them.

For the expectation of compliance and the development of trust is important to include the integration of design, but was only 47% of the sites found. The basic structures, as expected, a conformal array of navigation and the number of the main navigation points are broadly in order.

It is different from the presented content. Additional interesting content (references, forms, patterns, or checklists), as well as simplifying the process additional features or options to interact directly with the interested parties (newsletter registration, callback function) are usually very sparse and not used at all. 76% of websites have the contents above are either not or only very rudimentary in the offer.

Very easy to understand, only 12% of rated websites, easy to understand 27%. A further 37% cut still satisfactory, whereas almost one quarter represents the website visitors for more or less big problems understanding. Thus, for example give 30% of web presence to explain to potential clients what they can expect from the firm.

The intelligibility index reveals that for the design of the content specialist advice is needed, not only understands the special needs of clients, but also aware of the usage habits of internet surfers. Customers want to be addressed to the problem, read no empty marketing talk.

For the - hopefully good - first impression of a website, we formed an index, which reached 47% of sites rated good to very good value. Just satisfactory, 37%, another 16% were worse than satisfactory. Here there is a clear need to catch up. What is more, one third of the imprints on the website is not lawful. Also does not contribute to confidence building.

### **Overall impression of attorney websites**

Xamit also assessed the effect of the tested basic law firm websites. So we have only 39% of the web presences found a statement on the target group. This suggests firms that have a business model with a defined target group. The specification of the target group therefore contributes to the overall professional image at a law firm.

Overall, the customer-oriented presentation of content, the biggest shortcoming of the tested sites. Stay here for almost two-thirds of the pages below its potential and fail so to give potential clients an important impetus to take the hurdle of first contact and take contact with the lawyer.

### **Summary**

In summary, that websites are becoming increasingly important for lawyers and have received these will continue to increase. Just put up a Web page is sufficient, but not today, but they must be based on standards and the expectations of clients.

May contribute to the success of a website but only if it is strictly linked to the corporate strategy of the lawyer. This is especially true for involvement in social media, such as in social networks. With the inclusion of so-called "social plugins" in the law firm website and in creating a unique corporate presence, for example, on Facebook, it is essential to design in advance a social media strategy that considers not only the company's philosophy, but also all the associated legal aspects.

All this shows that lawyers have to deal with these issues in order to get long-term stable, economically successful client relationships and keep them.

### **Background**

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