Law Practice Strategy
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Law Blogs and Marketing Strategies: Remember What's Important

As much as lawyers are often maligned in public forums (i.e., are there more lawyers jokes than blonde jokes?), we are still held to a higher standard of conduct. We have an obligation to our clients, our readership and the public in general to maintain standards that just don't apply to the rest of the world. Never mind that as a group we are woefully inept at this (think really stupid entries into lawyers' Facebook profiles), the obligation remains and, with blogging, will benefit us far more than using SMO tactics.

For as many different people writing blogs, there are different approaches to blogging. To begin with, everyone has his/her own writing style. But there is the added element of the kind of blog you want to write, or the different strategies you want to employ depending on your blogging goals. In his post 5 Content Development Strategies For Blogging, T.J. Philpott says:

When creating content . . . every blog owner must consider the needs and intentions that are unique to their particular blogs. Since every blog differs according to their theme and/or writing style so will the methods used for creating content for the site.

Philpott goes on to list the 5 strategies:

- **Useful** – offering good quality content
- **Insightful** – lending a different perspective on thought-provoking content
- **Inflammatory** – content that inflames or provokes reader reaction
- **Humorous**
- **Reporting** – covering news and information as it occurs

Unfortunately, inflammatory blogging is one of the most effective marketing strategies; it is also the strategy lawyers need to stay away from. Why? Because inflammatory writing inherently requires that you distort the truth in some way. The purpose is to give your content either a misleading slant or more weight than it carries, just to get a reaction. Neither is appropriate for a law blog.

Think about it: who reads law blogs? other lawyers? legal researchers? people looking to hire you as a lawyer? Yes to all. These are people who will depend on what you say. If you are misleading in the characterization of your content, not only do you damage your own reputation, but you direct your readership down the wrong path.

Here's a great example. In response to the blog post Blogging as Thinking Out Loud *Sometimes* (a somewhat dry discourse on whether legal blogging can be considered scholarship), a commenter writes:

I don't know about highbrow scholarship, but legal blogging is a godsend for students [like me] who're trying to write a paper/memo/etc. on a topic they know nothing about. Law firms blogs are like lighthouses–they steer you away from the rocks (for the most part) and help you get started on the nitty-gritty work of doing the hardcore research. Anything that cuts back on time wasted on wild goose chases is pretty nice.

There is a wonderful blogger named Onibalusi. He describes himself as a teenage Nigerian entrepreneur who shares tips on blogging and making money online on his site YoungPrePro.com. His blog post entitled Blogging With Influence in 5 Steps was published on AriWriter.com. The post on how to blog to gain influence is intensely inspirational, and when I lose my blogging way, I always go back and read it. In it, Onubalusi says:

Your influence is mostly about your content; you are influencing your readers and anybody who comes across your message. What impact does your content have on them? Is it just a read and forget or the type that will continue to bring live into itself years and years to come.

When you're in a courtroom, writing a brief or contract, talking to your client or opposing counsel, you are mindful of what you say. It is part of our stock and trade. Why should this go out the window when you're writing a blog? Because no one's watching? No one's listening? Maybe not, but they are reading. And as they read, their decision to become your client is being influenced and your reputation is being created. What would you rather it be?