



## Blogging, Social Media & Marketing Tips for Small Firms and Solo Attorneys from the LMA Tech Conference

by Morgan C. Smith

Owner of [Cogent Legal](#)

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At the [Legal Marketing Technology Conference/West](#) in San Francisco Thursday, I spoke on a panel about blogging, social media and online marketing for small firms and solo attorneys. As a self-proclaimed “reluctant blogger” who used to cringe at marketing, I was happy to share some of the reasons why I’ve embraced social media and what I’ve learned since starting a business in the legal industry. I also felt fortunate to speak with the two other panelists, who were terrific. What follows are some of their key take-aways and a few points that I made, which I hope will help other attorneys build their practice and strengthen their network.

On the panel, I was joined by Stacy Stern, president of [Justia.com](#), a very useful and user-friendly portal for legal info and legal research with a public-interest and community-minded mission; and Jeena Cho, a bankruptcy attorney with the [JC Law Group](#). Jeena is in a two-person firm, and thanks to her successful blogging—as well as her podcasts, videos and use of social media networks—she is well known in her field and comes up near the top in Google searches for bankruptcy attorneys.

Many thanks to Adrian Dayton for moderating. He’s a real pro on this topic, so if you’re trying to get up to speed on incorporating social media into your life as a busy lawyer, then follow [his blog](#).

Stacy’s Tips:

- Blogging is the most efficient form of social media in terms of generating business. It enhances your reputation as a go-to person in your practice area, generates leads, helps you rise in search engine ranking and more.
- What makes a successful blog? High-quality posts, original content and consistency. How does she define “consistency”? Aim for once a week at least.
- Don’t make the mistake of being overzealous in using keywords. Google recognizes keyword stuffing, so it won’t boost your search engine ranking as you might have hoped.



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Google also recognizes misspelling and poor grammar. Use synonyms, proofread and—most important—write useful, thoughtful posts.

- Follow reporters who cover your area of law in both major media and local media, and if they report on something relevant to your area of specialty, then quote or cite them in a blog post you write on that topic. Reporters Google themselves, and when they see you've referenced them, they're likely to start following you and may cite you as an expert or quote you in the future.
- Set up your firm profile on Google Plus and Google Places (which are now integrated). Even if attorneys and others are not engaging in conversation on Google Plus the way they do in more robust platforms, such as in Linked In Groups, it's important to stake out your place on Google Plus and Places because it will increase your ranking in Google searches.

## Jeena's Tips:

- Anticipate the questions that potential clients will have, and answer those questions in your blog posts (or on podcasts or videos). They are more likely to find you while re-searching that topic online; if they read your blog post or watch one of your videos and it provides information they need, they are more likely to trust you and choose you as their attorney.
- Track your analytics to see which blog posts are most popular. Write more on those topics that resonate.
- If you use WordPress for your blog—which she recommends (as do I)—then use plug-ins that will attract readers to your archived posts. For example, on my blog, I have a "Related Posts" plug-in that provides links to similar blog posts, which appears at the bottom of each post. She recommends a similar plug-in, but one that has thumbnail images, called [LinkWithin](#), which I'll have to check out.
- Be patient: It took her about 50 posts, or a year, to see ROI (return on investment); i.e., measurable business and results generated from her blog. I'd agree with that.

## And a few points I'd add:

Blogging helps your business in myriad ways even if your monthly readership stats don't come near cracking the five figures. Not only does a blog bring clients in the door if they find you by searching the topic you've written about; it also helps you score article assignments to write for traditional publications, increases the likelihood you'll be invited to speak at conferences, and helps with client retention.



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But perhaps the best ripple effect of blogging is its role in relationship building. One of my favorite moments personally at the LMA Tech conference happened in the hallway when I met [Kevin O'Keefe](#) of LexBlog. He's someone whose blog archives I dug into for advice on starting this blog and building my website two years ago, and whom I now follow online. We started chatting, discovered we went to the same law school, and then I enjoyed hearing his reflections on the growth of online marketing for the legal profession—something he's been a part of since the dawn of dot-coms. Engaging with colleagues, thought leaders and potential clients online really pays off when it leads to satisfying face-to-face conversations.

One last thought: If I can do it, anyone can.

*Morgan Smith is the owner of [Cogent Legal](#), a litigation graphics and trial strategy firm based in the San Francisco Bay Area that develops clear and compelling visual presentations for attorneys to use in mediation or trial. Services include animations, 2D and 3D graphics, medical illustrations, PowerPoint or Keynote presentations, interactive timelines, videos, strategic consulting and trial support. Cogent Legal integrates the legal expertise of a successful trial attorney with the creative and technical talent of a design firm.*