

Use LinkedIn to Identify Referral Sources

Forget everything you know about social media. Forget [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and the [tinyurl.com](#). Lets just get back to basics, the bread and butter of most law firms- referrals. The #1 source of legal business for most firms of any size is referrals. Why are referrals so effective for bringing in business? Referrals add credibility and make individuals in the market for legal services feel more at ease with the nerve racking decision of hiring legal counsel.

Does the telephone bring in business?

The grand debate over whether or not social media works to bring in business is framed the wrong way. Asking whether social media works to bring in business is like asking whether the telephone works to order pizza. The primary value of the telephone and social media lies in facilitating conversations that would not have been possible otherwise..

To maximize referrals attorneys need to maximize the quality contact they have with each potential referral source. Attorneys need to stay at the top of their clients mind. How does an attorney do that? They can go to every golf outing, all the cocktail parties, and the charity auctions- but seriously, who has time for that? Besides- won't those events mostly consist of the same people?

By using social media Attorneys can stay connected with all of their current clients. They can publicize their latest articles, share pictures about winning the golf tournament, or the great outcome of the latest IPO. More importantly than sharing about themselves they can keep up to date with what is happening with their current clients. Social media provides a window into the lives of an attorney's clients. This window also provides opportunities to develop referrals.

Social media makes it easy for attorneys to identify potential quality referrals. Let me give you an example, say your firm does all the legal work for the major real estate developer in town, and the attorney that handles his work is connected to him through LinkedIn. With that connection an attorney can easily go to CEO's LinkedIn profile and see who else the CEO is connected to. Which builders do they use? Which insurance/benefits company? Where do they buy lumber and building supplies? All of these contacts can easily be identified through a single connection on LinkedIn. Then it is simply a matter of following up through the CEO and asking for an introduction. Could this have been done before social media? Absolutely, but it wouldn't have been as easy- and it would have most likely required using the telephone.

