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## What You Should Expect From Your Web Strategist

Posted by [Gyi Tsakalakis](#) on August 02, 2011

Are you working with a web strategy consultant? Do you know what they should be doing? Do you know what they are actually doing?

When it comes to web strategy, for most legal professionals, there is a huge knowledge gap. This is at least part of the reason that terms like "search engine optimizer" or "SEO" have become synonymous with snake oil. But whether you call it SEO, web strategy, or internet marketing consulting, the fact is that there are a lot of reasons why working with a web strategy consultant can make a lot of sense.

Choosing to retain the services of a web strategy consultant is a decision that should be made with care after understanding some basics about how people use the web and search engines.

While hiring the right partner can improve the effectiveness of your web properties, as well as, help you save time, hiring the wrong partner can result in a big waste of money and even cause damage to both your website and your professional reputation.

But what should a web strategist be hired to do and how does someone distinguish between the right and wrong partner?

### What Should My Web Strategy Consultant Be Doing?

Before we get into the specifics of some of the types of things your web strategy partner might be able to help you with, it's important to understand that not all services are right for all people. This means that you should seek someone out that is willing to take a customized approach to assisting you with your online reputation. There really needs to be an evaluation, inventory, and research period so that your prospective web strategy partner has understanding of your marketing messaging and goals. That being said, here are some services that might make sense for you:

- **Website Content & Structure Analysis & Development Assistance**  
Making sure that your website content and architecture is well-organized is one of the most important services a web strategy partner can provide. Making mistakes in this area can have a significant negative impact on your site's effectiveness. Further, aside from making sure your site is technically sound, content development is the single most important aspect to your web strategy. Having someone that has experience developing web content can have a significant impact on your results.
- **Technical Web Design & Development Advice**  
Unless you have experience with domain registration, hosting, and content management systems, working with someone that has experience planning and developing websites is really a must, in my humble opinion. While these aspects of web strategy aren't difficult per se, mistakes in this department can cause expensive headaches. In fact, some mistakes here can even prevent your website from appearing in search results altogether.
- **Keyword Research, Discovery, Mapping, and Planning**  
In my experience, the importance of keyword strategy is often overlooked. While some will claim that all you need to do is to "write on topic," the truth is that your keywords matter. Getting help from someone that has specific experience with legal keywords makes a big difference.
- **Web Strategy Training**  
While there are many things that your web strategy partner can and should handle for you, there are some things you may decide are better handle by you or someone at your firm. If this is the case, your web strategy partner should offer training to ensure that what you are doing in-house follows best practices.
- **Link Acquisition**  
If you know anything about the web and search engines, you know that links are extremely

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important. But not all links are created equally. And how you go about acquiring new links is critically important. While your primary focus should be on developing content that your visitors want to link to and share, there are other ways of acquiring links that you might not have thought about or don't have time to research. This is another area your web strategy partner can assist you.

- **Social Media Design, Support, & Training**

As you've probably noticed, social media and social networking platforms are the hot thing. And there is no doubt that social signals will continue to play an important role in terms of your visibility online. However, it's important to understand that social networks are not very good advertising platforms. You should work with someone that understands how lawyers are effectively using these tools for business development and professional networking.

- **Local Search Marketing Strategies**


If you have a local consumer practice, local search marketing is a great opportunity. Unfortunately, the number of web consultants that understand local online marketing is much smaller than those that know traditional search engine optimization only. With recent changes made by search engines related to local search marketing, this is an area that can get fairly confusing without some experienced assistance.

It's also important to recognize that not all online landscapes are the same. Legal is a particularly competitive online space. That is why it is helpful to seek out a web partner that has expertise in working with law firms, practice areas, and even geographies similar to yours. Further, as you know, marketing a law firm is unique in terms of professional ethics rules. Your web strategist should have some understanding of these rules and help you make decisions that keep you in compliance.

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