



Demystifying Social Media: Two Simple Points

by Greg Sutphin

Setting aside the debates and various perceived inhibitors on all aspects of law firms using social media for a moment,

- **The results are in....it works!**
- **Making “connections” with people in online “communities” matters in any marketing strategy.**

Using social media to cultivate professional relationships WORKS in generating new business! Based on a study conducted recently by HubSpot, business-to-consumer users generated two times more leads than non-Twitter users. Twitter’s positive correlation to leads was statistically confirmed for B2C companies. For B2B companies, however, the results are less reliable. In addition, “35% of adult Internet users have a profile on an online social network site.”– Forrester

Social Media for Search Engines

Search engines (SEs) place huge emphasis on content because their single most important objective is to find the most relevant, up-to-date information for any given searched term typed into their search box. The more you Tweet, blog, and Facebook, for example, the more search engines will “like you” due to the content. It is actually the blogging that can disseminate all of this content optimally to the search engines.

Matthew Harrod, who practices with Wood, Atter, & Wolf (www.woodatter.com and www.estateplanningandtaxlawyer.com) in Florida, is a great example of a lawyer who embraces social media effectively. However, does his social media involvement generate new clients? Matthew says, “As far as Facebook goes, it in and of itself does not necessarily bring in clients. It is a vehicle to disseminate the education/news that I post on my estate planning blog. The main tool we use is the blog, followed by Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn to get the message out. These tools are critical in broadening the reach of our message which does support the website ...” In fact, lawyers with blogs generate 67% more leads when compared to those who do not have a blog (HubSpot, 2010).

Social Media Helps Attorneys Connect

Since there are more than 70 million registered LinkedIn users, spanning more than 200 countries and territories worldwide and millions more “connecting” in online communities, why would attorneys *not* want to be where their potential clients are? As social media trainer Gina Rubel explains, “people do business with people they know, like and trust. As a result, when people you know personally (alumni, friends, family, etc.) know that you’re a lawyer, they are more likely to remember you when they have a need. I also find that people like to know that you’re a real person. The fact that you may have children, you may participate in community programs, you have interests other than work, etc., can instigate conversations which ultimately may lead to business.”

In these challenging economic times, the “giving to get” philosophy may not bode well with attorneys who struggle to maintain their practices. Social media is pro bono work and a practice development investment. There is a huge misconception among lawyers that participating in online social networks by giving freely of useful information does not guarantee that business comes back to you. The facts are clear. The results are in. Social media works as part of an overall marketing strategy. It helps build your personal “brand” and creates better results with client development.

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