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## WEBLINKS



### SUSAN I. NELSON

represents individuals and businesses in immigration matters, general civil litigation, and insurance claims.

She currently serves as chair emerita of the State Bar Litigation Section. She writes *Texas Immigration Lawyer Blog*, providing news and opinions on immigration law and policy with an emphasis on matters that have an impact on Texas ([www.centeximmigration.com](http://www.centeximmigration.com)). You can also find *Texas Immigration Lawyer Blog* on Facebook.

### State Bar Litigation Section (<http://litigationsection.com>)

Full disclosure: I'm on the Website Committee for the Litigation Section. Great content on this site, including *The Advocate* (journal), *News for the Bar* (newsletter), *Texas Legal Legends* videos (trial lawyers like Joe Jamail, Joe Reynolds, Barbara Aldave, and Gibson Gayle tell their stories), *Legislative Update* by Jim Dunnam, and *Arbitrary and Capricious* by Alan Nelson (yes, he's related to me somehow).

### Texas Business (<http://texasbusiness.com>)

Business and economic news and the "Texas Photo of the Day" (also a project of my husband, Alan Nelson).

### Politifact (<http://www.politifact.com>)

Nonpartisan investigation of statements made by politicians, pundits, and chain emails — 62 percent of chain emails receive "Pants on Fire" or "False" ratings. This is a great source for debunking the fears of older relations and friends who are active on the Internet.

## A New Social Media Policy

BY MICHAEL MASLANKA

Here are a few radical ideas. Law firms should allow billable hour credit for lawyers and paralegals who use social media. Lawyers who manage, encourage, and educate colleagues about the uses of social media should receive bonuses. Law firm websites should be given a sense of immediacy with podcasts, blogs, and videos.

Why should we pay attention to these revolutionary ideas? We don't create networks the way we once did. Marketing gurus tell us that business development depends upon extensive networks, and social media lets us create these networks. Incentivize its use by rewarding its use.

Social media is about the movement of knowledge. Useful knowledge goes viral and spreads quickly. A Tweet on closing arguments helped me win a recent trial. A potential client called and asked if I knew of a lawsuit study that was recently released. I did — but only because I saw a link to it on Twitter the previous day. Knowledge no longer moves exclusively from the top down. While law firms can't control the flow, they can surf it to their advantage.

Social media can also help revitalize law firm websites. Look at the typical attorney bio — they can be boring or staid. Think about coupling each bio with a lawyer podcast or videocast, in which the attorney answers a question or makes a comment — why he or she became a lawyer or how he or she handles government investigations.

Good lawyers become better lawyers when they blog. Blogs let you do double-

duty because they can be immediate (like a podcast) or reflective (like a newsletter). Potential clients notice these efforts. The Corporate Counsel New Media survey provides illuminating data.

- Thirty-seven percent of corporate counsel, in the 30–39 age cohort, say that lawyer blogs, after a personal recommendation, are the most important factor in their due diligence on lawyers for potential engagement.
- Fifty percent of corporate counsel either agree or somewhat agree that high-profile blogs will be a key factor in the future on hiring decisions. For those in their 30s, the percentage jumps to 63 percent.
- Fifty-one percent of corporate counsel say they would look at a law firm's social media channels to get information of use to corporate counsel in doing their jobs.

Should a law firm implement a social media policy? Yes, but one animated by the social media spirit of flexibility, transparency, and openness. Don't think of social media as one more thing to check off your to-do list. That would be a waste. Instead, think of it as a way to truly connect with others. And, when your blog post is mentioned by a fellow blogger, or your Facebook red light icons light up signaling a message or comment, or your Tweet gets reTweeted, you'll know what I mean. ☺



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