

Authority MARKETING

CAPITALIZING ON LAWYERS'
THOUGHT LEADERSHIP.

WRITTEN BY STACEY E. BURKE

THE PAST YEAR HAS SEEN A MASSIVE CHANGE

in live events, including professional speaking and networking at conferences. Since we can't speak at live events or network in person, online authority marketing is more important now than ever before. People who decide to market their authority invest in what appears in digital search results for their name, their firm name, and their specific areas of knowledge. When the results of a web search position you and your firm as authorities in your practice areas and geographic locations, your credibility rises.

What Is Authority Marketing?

Authority marketing involves the strategic positioning of a person or an organization as a leader in their industry and community

in order to gain influence over competitors. This strategy does not work overnight or quickly—it takes carefully defined planning and implementation over time. Authority (also known as “thought leadership”) can only be gained with long-term, deliberate intention.

The ultimate goal of developing authority is to become so well known in a particular area that people will look to you by name or your law firm by name proactively—even with similar services available.

How Can Lawyers Increase Authority?

Various marketing experts have identified the most common and effective methods of making yourself a known entity in your industry. The bad news is all of them take time and effort and require being intentional and thoughtful. As always, make sure to follow the Texas disciplinary rules regarding advertising and solicitation.

Strategic Components of Authority Marketing:

1. **Branding**—Yes, even online, image matters. Branding yourself and your law firm appropriately makes all the difference. Internet users know how to quickly reference standard verification factors to determine if an author, source, or speaker is the “real deal,” including job title, degrees, certifications, and industry recognitions (awards and honors). As things continue to move more virtual, it's even more important to highlight your credentials and pedigree to attract and maintain user attention.
2. **Referral Marketing**—Referrals should bring in a large number of new clients. While you hope those you serve well will refer you business, you can't afford to count on that without encouraging them to do so via actionable steps like requesting digital reviews and/or website testimonials.
3. **Content Marketing**—Prioritize content creation to establish thought leadership. Content that doesn't support clearly defined business objectives has no value. Every law firm has its own unique goals; by aligning each piece of content you create with a specific purpose, you'll avoid creating content that doesn't engage users or help cement your authority. Some examples of content you can create beyond just text include podcasts, newsletters, and online courses/webinars.
4. **Media**—Offer and pitch yourself to write articles for related publications. Once published, you can then list yourself as a contributor to these publications, which boosts credibility instantly, bolstering your authority marketing. But seeking to become a source or an author should be done strategically—not all publications and media sources are created equal, so be sure to evaluate things like current circulation or online reach, if they will share your content on their own social media channels or via their own email marketing, and if the publications or media outlets will provide a link back to your website (if digital) or a short author biography with your article in print.
5. **Social Media Marketing**—Millions of daily active users engage on social media. Your law firm should be present in a meaningful way on LinkedIn and Facebook. On these channels, the firm can highlight lawyers' awards, honors, accomplishments, speaking engagements, professional successes, and more. Beyond LinkedIn and Facebook, be sure to claim and build out your Google My Business listing, where you can also share content.
6. **Speaking**—Whether it's a webinar, conference, or networking event, speaking to a group of people about a topic you are knowledgeable about is a great way to build authority. Once you've built up your speaking resume, you can secure even better and more prestigious opportunities that dramatically increase your credibility. Be sure to magnify the value of any speaking engagement by recording it and sharing it online later in an email newsletter, on social media, and on your website.
7. **Events**—Whereas in previous years in-person events and in-person networking were a crucial component of business development for law firms, since the pandemic struck, those events have largely been canceled or switched to an online format for safety reasons. That being said, you can still join relevant trade organizations and offer to speak to them for free (virtually), give free virtual seminars as a law firm, and shoot video of you giving a previous speech. You can also upload slides to SlideShare to repurpose existing authority marketing content. **TBJ**

This article was originally published on the Stacey E. Burke blog and has been edited and reprinted with permission.



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