

Building a BETTER WEBSITE

SEVEN TIPS TO MAKE YOUR SITE MORE EFFECTIVE.

WRITTEN BY ZACK MCKAMIE



WHETHER YOU'RE CREATING A NEW WEBSITE from scratch or simply updating your existing site, these seven essential tips can make your website more prominent, interesting, and effective.

Make It Easy to Find

For many, the science of online search can seem like hieroglyphics. The truth is that when it comes to online search, your goal should be simple: Have a website that's easy for your potential and existing clients to find and read. It's not about having a site solely focused around SEO, or search engine optimization; it's about building a search-friendly architecture and providing targeted and relevant content. Search engines reward webpages that are clearly focused on specific topics and allow them to easily "crawl" the page.

Bottom line: Online search has changed the way people seek out information. It's important to make it easy for clients, potential clients, colleagues, and other important audiences to find your website.

Make It Easy to Use

There's a lot to be said about a website that invites you in and allows you to quickly get the information you're looking for. How many times have you abandoned a site because you were frustrated with the functionality or because you couldn't find what you needed? Developing an intuitive and

well-thought-out site map from the beginning allows you to direct how users travel your site and ensures they are able to quickly get where they want to be. Features such as a prominent navigation menu, breadcrumb functionality, and an intuitive link strategy to help visitors navigate pages on the site can make all the difference.

Bottom line: Don't make users work to access information they want. Give them access in an intuitive and logical manner.

Write for Your Audience, Not Yourself

On many law firm websites, the copy is often about honors received, achievements, and other resume stuffers. What you don't often see is information directed more to the website reader. Put yourself in the shoes of someone who needs to hire a lawyer. What information is going to be most important to them? They'll likely want to know about your relevant experience, your fees, and perhaps most important: What separates you from the many other lawyers and law firms who practice in the same area of law?

Bottom line: Talk to your audience in ways that are meaningful to them.

Update Your Content—Regularly

It's simply not enough to put up a website and then call it a day. Nobody

wants to read the same book over and over again. The same goes for your website. You don't need an entire facelift every two months, but regularly adding interesting news stories, blog entries, and case summaries and refreshing your homepage and attorney bios at least twice a year will keep your content fresh and stimulate traffic to your site. Updating your content regularly is also a great technique for enhancing your search engine optimization efforts.

Bottom line: Websites shouldn't be a one-hit wonder. Keep your readers coming back with fresh and interesting content.

Start a Blog and Stick With It

A blog can go a long way in positioning you as a leading expert sought for insights and information by new clients, colleagues, and even the media. The key to any successful blog is providing valuable content, or more

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specifically, content that is unique and useful to your audience. Blogs by nature are considered more conversational and therefore are an excellent vehicle for expressing opinions or providing commentary on topics your audience finds interesting. One of the greatest advantages of a blog is that it ensures you are continually creating new content for your site, making it more “findable.” Blogs also allow you to target very specific keywords from an SEO perspective, which can go a long way in driving qualified traffic to your site.

Bottom line: A blog can be an extremely effective communication tool, but you have to be dedicated to make it successful.

Share and Be Shared

With hundreds of millions of people using social media daily, ignoring this platform is not an option. You can no longer wait for people to come to you. You must reach out in places where they access and

share information. Creating social media accounts and republishing your blog posts, news stories, and other quality content can incite a social discussion that allows you to reach far beyond your website. Another effective technique is adding a “social media bookmarking” widget to your site that allows readers to share information they find valuable directly with their social media accounts through the click of a button.

Bottom line: Share great content and share it often.

Go Mobile or Go Home

We are all witnesses to the smartphone and tablet revolution. How many times have you checked email or viewed a webpage from your phone in the past month alone? The web is accessible at all times and having a parallel version of your site optimized for mobile viewing through responsive design isn't a maybe—it's a must. Whether users are reading attorney profiles, getting directions to

your office, or simply trying to call you, they want it in their hands and on the go.

Bottom line: Make sure your website is developed with responsive design—no excuses. **TBJ**

This article, which was originally published on Androvett's Insights blog, has been edited and reprinted with permission.



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is the vice president of marketing at Androvett, where he leads integrated marketing strategies for legal industry clients, professional services firms, and related businesses. Since joining the agency in 2010, he has helped a wide range of businesses develop comprehensive and impactful marketing strategies to help them stand out, reach the right audiences, and positively impact the bottom line.



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