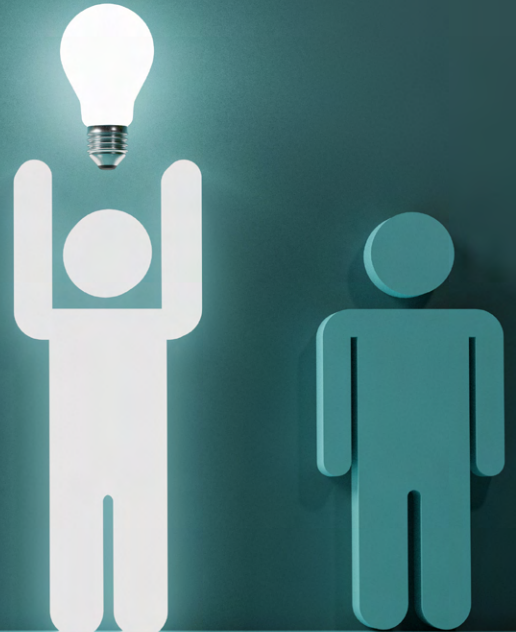


Q&A



with marketing professionals

Guest speakers Mark Hunter, Principal Consultant with Glen Maple Group and Mara Da Camara, presented a succinct overview of the steps law firms can take to improve their marketing activities as part of LAWPRO's *What They Didn't Teach You In Law School: Marketing, Management, and Mentorship* online seminar. Their presentation demonstrated the key to marketing is being strategic about where you focus your limited time and resources based on your target audience and practice area. Start with the most cost-effective tactics that align with how your ideal clients are searching for and evaluating lawyers. The following is a summary of the lively question and answer period following their talk.

Q. How do you recommend we update our content to be findable in search engines that rely on artificial intelligence?

Mara Da Camara

Artificial intelligence is still relatively new, and we're forever learning so keep in mind that your content strategy should try to address any kind of open-ended questions, because that's essentially what the AI is pulling from.

Mark Hunter

Also, if you are thinking of using AI to help build your website and blog content, remember that Google is always looking for original content, not just stuff you've regurgitated. AI can help you with developing the content, but you really need to make it your own.

Q. What do you recommend we do to reduce the awkwardness of asking clients for a Google review?

Mark Hunter

One of the best ways to do this is to make it part of your process. Ask your clients for a review at the end of a matter, especially if you are delivering good news. They're in a great mood so it makes sense to ask for a Google review at that time. Let them know how meaningful it is to you. If your client understands they are helping you and it's going to help other people in their situation they may be more willing to provide feedback.

Mara Da Camara

I'll add that you shouldn't ask for a review until you've done something for the client, and there's something to prove. And, as Mark

The key elements of a marketing toolkit are: a website, digital campaigns, networking, client experience, thought leadership, sponsorships, advertising, events, and entertainment.

said about being authentic, we found a high rate of success when you say, “I’m really working on building my digital strategy, and this would really help me. Can you take five minutes to share your experience so others can find our services?”

Q. Should we reply to Google reviews?

Mark Hunter

Yes. If somebody’s willing to go and put something out there for you, you should reply, acknowledge that they put the effort into commenting and comment back. If it’s a bad review, find out what that problem might have been and address it so it doesn’t fester online. I encourage you to ask people to contact you offline via email or phone call, and then see if you can remedy the situation.

Q. Can you elaborate on some of the rules that restrict lawyers’ marketing?

Mara Da Camara

In terms of any email marketing, you need to consider anti-spam legislation. Basically, if somebody’s giving you their email address, you have the right to email them. If you are using an email tool like MailChimp, the required unsubscribe button is built in, and you can’t send an email without it. In terms of the LSO guidelines, familiarize yourself with chapter 4 of the *Rules of Professional Conduct* including the commentary section, and review the Marketing guide on the LSO Guide to opening your practice page. I think that a lot of the fouls that I’ve seen are addressed in the commentary.

Two key areas to remember are, first, to avoid qualitative superiority--for example, you can’t say you’re the “best” lawyer, even if you’ve won a “Best Lawyer” award. Second, you shouldn’t solicit somebody else’s client. If you are outsourcing any of your marketing work, make sure that they have experience working with lawyers and are familiar with the rules. There are marketers out there that don’t even know that these rules exist, and that’s where you can run into some issues.

Q. Do you think it’s affordable for lawyers to consider SEO, blogging, subscription email services, along with sponsorship and paid advertising? What is the effectiveness of different kinds of marketing and paid advertising?

Mark Hunter

To make the best use of your investment, try to understand, as best as you can, where your potential clients are. If you’re doing paid advertising, including targeted online advertising through Google Ads, it can get really expensive, really quickly. I have seen firms spend up to \$50,000 a month on paid advertising. On the flip side, email marketing is quite inexpensive but there is a time commitment in terms of crafting the content. So, it’s a different type of marketing. Where do you want to spend your time and money? Determine what your budget is and then start considering where your market is and where the best bang for that buck is.

Q. How can small firms effectively leverage low-cost, time-efficient marketing strategies to reach their target audience?

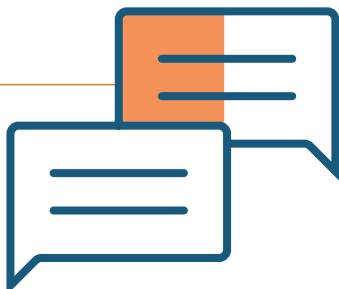
Focus on email marketing using tools like MailChimp or Campaigner

Leverage social media platforms like LinkedIn: Creating a strong social media presence can help you connect with potential clients and referral sources without a large budget. Try setting out topics in advance to help keep you on track with regular posting.

Optimize your Google My Business profile: This is a free way to improve your local search visibility and credibility with reviews.

Seek out speaking or writing opportunities: Positioning yourself as a thought leader through blogs, articles, or presentations can attract new clients without a big marketing spend and continue to bring attention well into the future.

Network and build relationship: Attending local events and reaching out to colleagues can lead to referrals and new business, often at little to no cost. Keeping focused on providing a consistent client experience will preserve your reputation and lead to word-of-mouth referrals. ■



Check out these marketing tools to get started

Website builder: Wix, GoDaddy, WordPress, Canva, Buffer

Email services: MailChimp, Campaigner

Online surveys: Survey Monkey, Simple Survey