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Marketing and PR Social Networking Best Practices

When should your team get involved in social networking marketing tactics, and which sites offer the most appropriate venue to shorten the sales cycle? Many marketing departments are still holding back on this initiative for good reason, it is practically impossible to manage what you do not understand.

Determining the right time to jump in is not as important as investigating the sites to determine if your involvement would complement your legal technology marketing or legal services marketing, sales, client communication, or any host of business initiatives. Simply jumping in for the sake of getting your feet wet is not a strategic social networking tactic. You should do research to gain an understanding of your options, match options with organizational goals, and then consider launching initiatives through multiple outlets. If you do not have time to research this or determine if or how to weave social networking into your organization, call experts in legal marketing and PR services and ask them for social networking strategy advice.

Whether or not sites that are popular today will evolve and remain popular next year cannot be predicted, however, given every teenager knows of this technology and actively uses it, your customers and prospects of the future are developing social networking finesse and will expect to connect with you in a few years in these ways. If the popular “must have” social networking sites of today fade into the abyss, rest assured, new “must have” networking outlets will emerge to satisfy social networking needs in business. Think of today's big buzz social networking websites like a wave that has water in it that you can choose to ride or let pass. If you miss this one, certainly there will be another. Because no one knows how long this wave will be upon us, rather than simply waiting for this to pass, there are plenty of good reasons to investigate and consider getting involved today.

Why use Social Networking for Legal Marketing and PR

Connections through social networking sites allow groups to quickly catch up on each other's business, while also allowing for the free-flow of information. People are increasingly becoming more excited about checking their social networking page rather than checking email for good reason, spam has a difficult time finding its way into your “friend” list and the platform for interaction is growing increasingly dynamic.

How extensively you get involved with social networking initiatives depends upon how these initiatives align with your firm's goals. Your firm may want to leverage a site like Facebook to create a client group, post news, share client success stories or post YouTube videos of client testimonials and demos. LinkedIn has recently added greater flexibility into their site as well. For any firm sending out electronic newsletters, or client communications, creating a chat group or client networking group on these sites provides another outlet for sharing important content that may otherwise get buried if it were delivered as an email message.

Top 10 Social Networking Best Practices

1. **Conduct your own investigation.** Before you determine whether or not to invest resources or any energy into creating a business profile and joining a site, investigate the leading sites and kick the tires!

Social networking sites require zero "real cash" outlay, costing only the investment of research time.

2. **Select social networking opportunities that support business goals.** Test the waters before you dive in, ask your prospects, clients and employees which social networking site they prefer. Not every site is going to be a fit and align with your firm goals.
3. **Get the word out - and if needed - educate your clients!** Connect to your prospects, clients and who's who in your channel. Introducing a "chat" group on Facebook for clients makes little sense if your clients have no understanding of how to create a profile or get connected.
4. **Structure or limit the time invested in managing a social networking site.** Whether responding to posts, making connections with people, or adding content to your profile, make regular updates once or twice weekly. Calendar for 15-minutes one time per week to maintain each site.
5. **Avoid getting personal.** Publish content relevant to your expertise to establish thought-leadership status. No one really wants to know if you just finished a cup of coffee or if your dog has fleas.
6. **Don't over-stimulate with too much content.** Keep postings brief and informational.
7. **Resist begging.** Create a consistently informational space and followers will line up to "friend" you.
8. **Avoid posting on what may be sensitive topics.** Events will unfold in the industry or within a competitors business that may be highly tempting to post about. The safest approach is to stay neutral, be informative and remain professional.
9. **Measure your activity.** You cannot analyze what you cannot measure. Track your tweets, followers, time spent, and conversions.
10. **Keep current on social networking trends.** Subscribe to a social networking blog or legal industry RSS feed to receive legal industry social networking, marketing and PR updates daily or weekly.

Recommended Social Media Resource Webcast

Watch this YouTube webcast video, [The Business Value Behind Social Media](#) featuring social media experts [Charlene Li](#), [David Meerman Scott](#) and [Chris Brogan](#) as they weigh in on social media and discuss the latest strategies and opportunities that executives face when considering the implementation of social media initiatives. This webcast was recorded at the Premier [Business Leadership Series](#) in Las Vegas in November 2010. Please note, although informative this video is approximately an hour long.

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