



The Complete Guide to Building a Marketing Strategy for Your Law Firm





Introduction

There is no single “magic bullet” marketing plan for law firms. Every firm is unique, and has unique offerings and clients. While there may be very strong similarities between competitors in the same field of practice, their approach to business will almost always be different. Why? Because different law firms are made up of different people, from the principal to the associate to the paralegal. These fundamental differences in team make up the law firm’s brand, and no two are alike.

Now despite that “special snowflake” speech, there is a proven marketing process that underlies the differences in messaging at each practice. In this guide, we’ll run through that marketing process and prompt you with the critical questions you need to ask at every stage in order to develop a wellthought-out marketing strategy of your own. It’s only with a holistic view of the marketing process that you can develop a plan or starting point

for it. So with that, let’s dive into the first phase of the legal marketing process. It’s only with a holistic view of the marketing process that you can develop a plan or starting point for it.

To break down the marketing process into a more digestible format, it’s best to group your efforts into four overarching phases: Strategizing, Deployment, Ongoing Analysis, and Growth. The bookends, Strategizing and Growth, require a higher-level vision and clear internal communication. Deployment and Ongoing Analysis will be more “hands-on,” and success during this phase will depend heavily on time and labor management. Let’s dive into the first phase of the legal marketing process now so you can start critically thinking about - and eventually build - your firm’s marketing strategy.

Phase I: Strategizing

Creating your marketing plan is going to be critical to the successful generation of new clients. Without a plan in place, you have nothing to refer back to as a guide and no record of accountability for when things go awry. Here are the steps to developing your practice's strategic plan:

Your Current State of Your Practice

"History repeats itself" is exactly the phrase you want to avoid if your law firm hasn't grown the way you hoped it would. The whole reason you downloaded this guide is because you're hoping to change something about the way you bring in leads, so ask the question, "What do I want to change?" You can answer this by making a list of what you're doing now, and noting which of those activities is helping you reach your goals, and which are not.

Key Question: What do I want to change?

Developing Your Ideal Client Profile

In a sort of chicken & egg conundrum, identifying what you need to change is going to depend a lot on whether the things that have been working have been giving you the right clients. Who even are the "right" clients? Looking to your current client list and picking out who provides that special blend of being pleasant to work with and profitable is a good place to start. If you can identify those clients' sources and how you communicate with them, you have the framework of process to duplicate and build upon.

Key Question: Who are my best current clients?

Translating to a Plan

Marketing your law firm isn't going to just be about reaching out to leads. Internal alignment and communication with your own team is a big factor that can either drive progress or hinder it. What's going to make the most sense to your team members or assistant? Having a strategic document with goals and processes written out? How about drawing out a flow chart and assigning a name to certain actions? Your practice's plan is going to be pretty tough to follow if it's just kicking around in your brain, so figure out the best way to get it through to the rest of your team.

Key Question: What's the best way to communicate this to my team?



Phase II: Deployment

Your marketing efforts are only going to be as effective as the assets themselves. The right messaging will convey not only the services you offer, but the benefits of working with your practice over competitors. After that, you just have to get it to the right people. To set your firm up for success, follow these steps for marketing deployment:

Revival of Your Practice Brand

Making an impression - and leaving a lasting one - is a subtle but effective way to get your foot in the door with your ideal leads. That's where your law firm's branding comes in. If your branding isn't consistent across all media, though, your message gets lost and loses its effectiveness. Take stock of all of your firm's content platforms (e.g. website, social media accounts, printed material, etc.) and make sure your practice is being represented the same way every time.

Key Question: Am I consistent when representing my practice?

Development of Messaging

When reaching out to leads, you want to do two things: show them that you understand their needs, and demonstrate that you're an expert at solving those needs. Obviously, one of those messages needs to come before the other. It's only when leads can see themselves working with you that you can finally suggest working together. If you're not sure that you're properly identifying their needs, look again at your strongest client relationships. How have you successfully solved their problems?

Key Question: Am I addressing the client's biggest needs?

Deployment of Marketing Assets

Saying the right thing doesn't matter if there's nobody around to hear it. Choosing how to speak to your leads can be a tricky process, but if you look at your current methods you should be able to determine where they're most active. Alternatively, you can turn to your competitors and see how they're getting their message out. Do they have different types of media on their website? Are they active on social media? Surveying your surroundings is a good way to find answer to your question.

Key Question: How do my clients prefer to communicate?





Phase III: Ongoing Analysis

Marketing doesn't end with getting your practice's message out the door. Remember, we're talking about deploying effective marketing that yields results. Your time is too valuable to just work for the sake of working. Regular reporting paves the way for smarter operations. There are a few investigative actions you can take to ensure your marketing continues to improve:

Research Potential Referrals

Sometimes what separates a small law firm from a big one is whether or not those firms have implemented sustainable practices. Bringing in quality prospects is always going to help your practice, but the impact is felt a whole lot more when there's less work involved in attaining them. That's why referral partners are going to be such a critical component of your practice's marketing efforts; a hands-free lead engine to accompany any direct marketing efforts you're executing. The trick to creating a strong and beneficial partnership, though, is knowing how to make that engagement a win-win, so make sure you figure out what you will be able to contribute to the partnership prior to reaching out.

Performance Analysis

Based on your communication methods, you may have different key performance indicators (KPIs) you can measure your marketing performance on. Identify those for each communication method (e.g. social media shares and clickthroughs to your website) and share those KPIs with your team. Performance data doesn't mean anything on its own, however - you need to know how to react based on the outcomes. Choosing whether you should try a new method or just work on your existing one can save your firm big on time and money in the long run.

Key Question: Do I need to do something differently?

Modification & Redeployment

When you have a clear takeaway goal after analyzing an asset's performance, it's important to know what you can actually do to achieve that goal afterward. You should never set a new task for yourself if it's going fall flat. Spend some time to research the appropriate course of action based on your results by medium. For example, if your emails aren't getting opened, do you need to change their format for mobile devices, or just change the subject line? Test different approaches against one another and continue practicing the ones that work.

Key Question: Why am I making these changes?

Phase IV: Growth

After establishing an effective, sustainable marketing plan for your law firm, you might think that the strategic work is over. You'd be wrong. While your initial plan is being implemented to full effect, you earn yourself some breathing room in order to set new goals and lay the groundwork for future achievement.

Setting New Goals

Measuring campaign or asset performance is useful for developing the right marketing materials, but to advance your practice's position, you need to think bigger. Set your goals for actual lead generation and client closure on a monthly or quarterly basis. These goals should be SMART goals - that is, Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely. SMART goals are incredibly powerful, as they allow you to easily recognize success and to pinpoint failures and improve on them.

Key Question: Are these SMART goals?

Tracking Revenue

To determine if you're bringing in the right amount of revenue from your clients, you need to know where your practice stands today. Understanding your firm's health means keeping track of your "true revenue," which totals the hours that you've actually invoiced for. Many practices will be more aware of their writedowns - tracked hours for client work and the associated costs for those hours - but since that money isn't actually coming into the firm, it's easy for attorneys to lose sight of which clients are actually the most profitable. If the margins for your true revenue are thin, it's time for either a rate change or client churn.

Key Question: Am I following an appropriate growth trend?



Conclusion

Strategize, deploy, analyze, and grow. These are the essential phases to executing effective legal marketing. You have some questions to answer at each stage, but even with responses to all of them, there's one final, desperate question that trumps them all: "How am I going to do all of this?"

By partnering with FullFunnel, you don't have to.

FullFunnel is a legal marketing firm that relies on techniques that are proven to work for legal professionals. Based on the current state of your practice's marketing, FullFunnel proposes a marketing plan that is tailored to your firm and designed to reach your ideal clients. By developing a network of high-end referral partners for your firm, FullFunnel delivers a sustainable model for acquiring premium-paying clients that underlies all other outbound digital marketing efforts. It's completely outsourced and handled by FullFunnel's team of experts.

If you're interested in meeting with FullFunnel for an assessment of your own practice, you can click below to request a private session with a strategist.

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