



Overview: Marketing Your Personal Injury Firm	A
Not All Personal Injury Marketing is Created Equal	2
PI Marketing Essentials Today's Marketing Landscape The Strategic Decision: Time Versus Capital	4 6
Elements of a Successful Personal Injury Law Firm Marketing Plan	10
Finding Your Marketing Gaps	14
Resourcing Your Plan	16
Traits of Successful PI Marketers	18
What to Do Next	19

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Overview: Personal Injury Law Firm Marketing

Over the last several years, we've done strategy sessions with over six thousand firms. We've spoken to every variety of personal injury practice:

- From solo practitioners ... to multi-partner firms with large staff headcount.
- From referral-only practices ... to firms running sophisticated paid media campaigns.
- From firms doing no marketing ... to those with marketing budgets in the millions.
- From rural "small town" practices ... to firms in downtown skyscrapers.

The one theme that's consistent is that most firms - even those heavily invested in one marketing philosophy - aren't sure if they've made the right choice, or if their marketing is as effective as it could be.

For those practices who aren't doing enough (or any) marketing, this guide will also help you assess where to spend your valuable time and money before running down the wrong road.

Being in the unique position to see across so many different personal injury practices, we created this guide to help you answer this question.

Not all Personal Injury Marketing is Created Equal

The Difference Between Accountable and Unaccountable Personal Injury Marketing

Marketing, at the highest level, falls into two broad categories - accountable marketing and unaccountable marketing. Every marketing strategy and tactic you use (or are considering using) falls into one of these buckets.

Accountable Marketing

Accountable marketing has a measurable return on investment. Whether the investment is dollars or time, you know with certainty that if you do (or spend) X, you get Y. For example (numbers for illustration only):

- If I spend \$98.56 in paid digital media, I get an appointment with a prospective client.
- If I spend 11.25 hours doing a specific set of three in-person networking activities, I get one referral.



To be accountable marketing, the activity generating results must be specific, measurable, tracked, and reported.

Unaccountable Marketing

Unaccountable marketing is anything that isn't accountable marketing. Oftentimes, it's a set of actions that are being done (often inconsistently) to "check the marketing box" rather than being results-focused. For example, a firm that generates business by referral but does not have a set of specific actions that are measured, tracked, reported, and are known to generate a referral after a certain level of effort, is doing unaccountable marketing.

As you might guess, we're fans of accountable marketing - because it creates predictability in your business. With unaccountable marketing, you might get lucky (even a broken clock tells the right time twice per day) and think it's working, but more often than not, you're spending valuable time, money, and focus on things that really aren't helping your firm.

Unfortunately, we see that the vast majority of firms fall into the trap of using a grab-bag of unaccountable marketing. Then, months or years down the line, they have little to show for it.

So now that you know you want marketing that is accountable to results, what should you do?

Discover the Essential Marketing Strategies for PI Law Firms

Today's Marketing Landscape

During the course of our conversations with thousands of law firms, one of the least understood things is how quickly the marketing landscape has evolved. Most lawyers look at what other firms are doing - and as a whole, the legal industry is operating with a more than ten-year lag in adopting modern marketing methods.

We see firms with an orientation towards adopting more current marketing strategies and technologies "pull away from the pack" and acquire a disproportionate amount of the available business.

Simply put, the adage "just do good work and the business will come" is a romantic idea; it's not sound business advice today. While we have seen a few modestly successful referral-only practices, they are few and far between - and most notably, their revenue consistency is very poor.



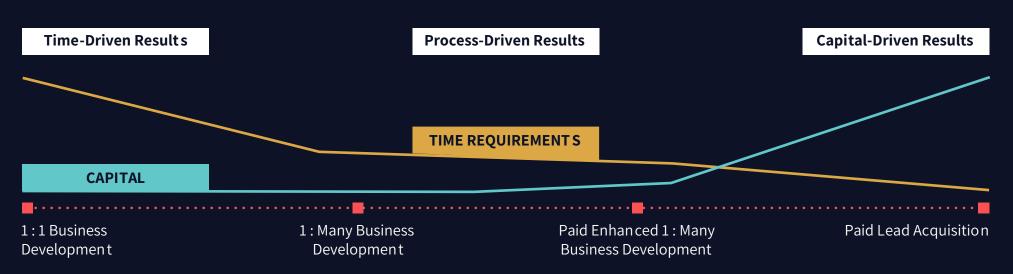
As shown by the illustration below, (which itself is a simplified list), if your firm has not actively considered the strategies on the right side of the curve, including SEO, social media, video marketing, content marketing, and more, your ability to compete will be poor in comparison to firms that make the decision to take control of their client acquisition. At this point, you may feel slightly overwhelmed when you see what it takes to be successful in today's marketplace. Don't be. Your job as the business owner is to look at "CEO-level" data, not be an expert on every aspect of new marketing platforms.

This is one of the harder aspects for attorneys to come to grips with - that running an effective business on the marketing side requires finding others (whether staff or outsourced providers) to deploy their marketing because it is no longer possible to do it themselves and also be an expert in the law. In addition, having a partner in charge of marketing is not only a waste of their time (34+ hours per week just to manage all the channels), but also a waste of money.

The Strategic Decision: Time Versus Capital

When deciding where to place your marketing investments to grow your personal injury practice, it's important to understand that how you invest in marketing is a resource allocation question. That is, there's no such thing as a free lunch. All marketing takes an investment - whether that's an investment of time or money (capital). We've created a visualization of this below.

Marketing Strategy: Where are You?



You'll see that on the left side, firms can choose to spend time, but less capital, to generate clients. Or, they can use capital, but less time, to generate clients. In the middle, firms can improve time-driven strategies by improving business processes (reducing time).

For other practice areas, such as attorneys with corporate clients, their choices are more limited. Capital-based strategies (such as large-spend advertising) typically has a very poor return on investment - thus, they usually opt for strategies that invest time - such as networking and speaking.

Personal Injury practices are in the enviable position of being able to choose their ideal mix of time versus money.

Unfortunately, some firms - especially ones which have not historically had a marketing budget - get seduced by the idea that they can grow their firms with minimal spend.



Unfortunately, that is usually not the case. While this diagram helps explain the choice firms have, it doesn't explain the consequences of the choice in the firm's growth path.

There are four important aspects that the diagram does not capture, and those are:

Client Velocity. 18-24 months of a well-executed capitaldriven strategy can grow firms at a rate that take timedriven firms a decade or more to achieve.

Predictability. We have seen that for personal injury firms - which tend to have very "lumpy" income, the feast-or-famine revenue roller coaster becomes exaggerated with time-driven results since marketing tends to be inconsistent, and (as noted in the prior item), velocity is low.

Return on Investment. While the "hard dollar" return on investment may appear best on the left (time-driven) side of the spectrum because little capital is spent, this ignores the fact that time is the most valuable and scarce resource an attorney has. Once attorney time is factored in, the best metric of success (Profit Per Owner-Hour) is usually lower.



Scale. Simply put, the ability to grow a firm on the left (timedriven) side of the spectrum is capped. While we routinely see firms with well-executed paid lead acquisition campaigns cross the \$2,000,000 profit per partner mark, it is exceedingly rare for time-driven firms.

At this point, if your firm isn't used to using a capital-based strategy, don't be turned off. Understand that it's not "billboard" marketing, nor does it necessitate aggressive/ in your-face collateral. While some firms deploy this, this style gets a disproportionate amount of attention and isn't necessary for success. In its most effective form, a capital driven strategy is highly targeted and educates potential clients - but does so in the framework of accountable marketing so that you know you are being effective with your spend.



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Elements of a Successful Personal Injury Law Firm Marketing Plan

Understand the Framework for a Successful PI Marketing Plan

As we move from strategy (big picture) to tactics (what to do to be successful with a strategy), we can start to look at individual pieces of the puzzle.

Too many firms start with tactics (such as social media, blogging, running events, etc) without first understan ing if the tactic fits into a framework of the optimal strategy. Because our outsourced marketing firm only works with law firms, we have developed a proprietary "map" that stitches together every element of legal marketing into a cohesive plan. In essence, it's the "DNA" of legal marketing. Now that you understand that there is a strategic decision to be made (time-driven vs capital-driven), you can map tactics onto the strategy.

You'll see our proprietary map below for reference. At the highest level, note that there are two "tracks" on this map - on the left (labeled "Marketing") is the track that allows for leverage. On the right (labeled "Business Development") is the track that is higher-touch. Firm Goals

ADJUST ACTIVITIE S

Ideal Client: Positioning Packaging and Pricing



The key is to overlay what is, in essence, a "teacher's key" onto this map for a specific type of practice.

For example, the aforementioned corporate practice doesn't get much mileage out of paid media. So their activities would be mostly in the "Business Development" box, with a few select items in "Marketing" (such as a website, email, social media, and the like).

However, as we noted above, personal injury firms have a broader palette to play with. So in this second diagram, we highlight in green the items which should be under consideration for your firm.

In other words, now that we understand that from a strategic level the firm should be choosing to strategically deploy capital instead of time for the best ROI, here at the tactical level, we look at what accountable marketing actions to take to make it real.

Once again - don't get overwhelmed if this feels like a lot. First work on understanding the big picture.

Personal Injury Client Acquisition



(Once again - don't get overwhelmed if this feels like a lot. First understand the big picture, then we'll provide you with a checklist.)

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Finding Your Marketing Gaps

Assessing Your Marketing Needs

Now that we've gone over the strategy and how the tactics fit together, it's time to assess which tactics you should actually deploy.

Unfortunately, there is no one-size-fits-all answer here. Just like it would be malpractice for you to give a conclusion to a prospective client without having done your diligence and truly understanding their facts, the same thing is true for marketing.

Unfortunately, the legal marketing world is filled with providers that are selling what they have on the truck. That is, if you go to a legal website provider, they'll try to sell you a website. Go to an SEO firm? They'll tell you SEO is what you need. Go to a generalist provider? They'll have a menu of options and will ask you for your budget, and fill that number with things off the menu.



The fact is, this is all backwards.

As a law firm owner, you must think like a businessperson. And the correct business question is: "based on my goals for the firm, what strategy should I deploy? ... and based on that strategy, what tactics will have a good return on investment?"

The proper way to do this is to:

- I. Determine overall strategy.
- 2. Understand what has worked across multiple personal injury practices.
- 3. Analyze the firm's current marketing.
- **4.** Determine what the financial yield will be at different spend levels, so that the firm can make a smart decision about how much to spend.
- 5. Choose tactics only after the above has been done. In short, our recommendation is to not accept the conclusion of any vendor who tells you what you need before doing the above analysis. Any provider who tells you a specific tactic is needed (whether SEO, a new website, etc.) before doing a proper gap analysis is more interested in selling what they have than in the long term success of your firm.

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Resourcing Your Plan

Your Law Firm Marketing Plan Checklist

Most firms are significantly under-resourced to achieve their marketing goals. While many have dedicated marketing managers or office managers tasked with executing marketing initiatives, the fact is that marketing has become so specialized that there is no such thing as a "Swiss Army knife" marketing resource.

What we have seen across the board is that firms trying to rely on generalist resources, or individuals who are not steeped in both personal injury and marketing, usually don't have sufficiently broad exposure to what's working (and what's possible) to be as effective as they could be.

Internal staff is great, and usually doing the best that they can, but the most effective marketing is done as a partnership between internal staff that know your business intimately and experts who can keep up with each aspect of marketing.

To that end, we've put together a helpful checklist below of the capabilities we advise firms have at their disposal. For example, if you are in a suburban area, make sure that you have the capabilities noted in that column at your disposal. We've made the "suburb/metro" distinction mostly as a proxy for competition - metro markets are significantly more competitive and require more heavy lifting.

It's important to note that we define a "capability" as having a person with 2+ years of direct, applicable full-time experience doing that item. Why? Because while many people can with the best of intentions "do" things on this list, it doesn't qualify as accountable marketing unless they understand how specific execution of the item drives revenue. It's the difference between checking the marketing box and marketing being a driver of firm success.

Firm Marketing Team Capability Metro Suburb Marketing Strategist \bigcirc **Content Strategist Content Project Manager** Writers Social Media Manager **Email Marketing Manager** Paid Media Specialist Phone Optimization Analyst Landing Page Designer Analytics Lead Page Optimization Lead ₹ Webmaster Marketing Automation Specialist Local SEO Specialist **Online Systems Admin Graphic Designer UI/UX** Front End Developer **Back-end Developer** System/Security Manager

Traits of Successful PI Marketers

How Successful Personal Injury Law Firm Marketers Think

Before we conclude with next steps, it's helpful to contrast the habits, attitudes, and actions of personal injury law firms that are positioned to grow, versus those who are losing ground in the new marketing landscape.

Stagnant Firms Think...

"Do good work and clients will come, just like it's always been"

"Marketing is shouting like billboard lawyers do, and feels wrong"

"Marketing is an expense"

"I can do it all myself"

"I am more interested in being the most technically proficient lawyer and am focused on doing the legal work"

Growth Oriented Firms Think...

"I understand the market has shifted, and my strategy has to shift with it"

"Marketing means helping more prospective clients understand their options, and doesn't need to be aggressive."

"When done right, Marketing is an investment where I will know my Return on Investment"

"Finding the best resource for specialized tasks is the best way to grow the firm"

"Being a great lawyer is important, but I want to be the CEO of my business"

What to Do Next

Mapping Out Your Plan of Action

The next step in the marketing journey is to fully map out your plan of action. That involves a detailed analysis of where you are, the options available to you, and what your likely return on investment is for choosing different strategies and tactics.

FullFunnel offers fixed-price "Marketing Audit & Discovery" engagements to give you a complete understanding of your marketing options and provide you with a comprehensive plan of action. Our team will work with you to understand your unique practice, assets, network, and goals. We'll then analyze and synthesize thousands of factors about your practice, market, marketing, and competition.

The output will be an analysis of where your practice stands in the market and areas that need to be addressed (and which tactics aren't worth your

time and money). It's accompanied by a written twelve-month marketing plan with specific quarterby-quarter recommendations, including pricing proposals to have FullFunnel execute this plan for you. However, you aren't in any way obligated to use our services to implement the plan. If you're interested in discussing this strategic plan for your law firm, click the link below to request a free consultation.

Request A Free Consultation

