

Marketing From Your Computer

Pro-actively marketing a practice may be a new experience for solo attorneys who previously benefited from the resources of a larger firm. In her Best Practices for Solo Practices column, Janet Falk discusses marketing activities that may be done from one's own computer.

By **Janet Falk** | November 15, 2019



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Pro-actively marketing a practice may be a new experience for solo attorneys who previously benefited from the resources of a larger firm. Without formal training in marketing, some lawyers may not have a clear idea of which marketing activities to pursue. This article focuses on activities that may be executed from one's own computer and website, in contrast to those conducted outside the office, which will be discussed at a future date.

Website Design and Re-Design

A first step in marketing an independent law practice usually entails setting up a website. Some attorneys select among the templates of a vendor or contract with a web designer; other creative lawyers develop their own websites. Working with a vendor or web developer often includes optional services such as Search Engine Optimization (SEO), maintenance and websites updates. This package simplifies the process and may make outsourcing more attractive than independently performing website-related work.

Patricia Werschulz, whose practice focuses on patent and trademark law at **Werschulz Patent Law** (<https://www.wp11lc.com/>), designed her website through Martindale-Hubbell; she chose pictures from their library of licensed works, while writing the copy herself. "As an IP attorney, I was very concerned that I was not infringing anyone inadvertently, so I had confidence (they) had properly licensed the works, which in turn I was licensing;" Werschulz pays a monthly fee for the site, hosting and maintenance. Craig Wolson also wrote the copy for his website, then hired a web design company to create, host and maintain it for **Wolson Litigation Support Group** (<http://www.linkedin.com/in/craigwolson>) with a practice focused on securities, lending and other finance. Zara Watkins, who writes briefs for appeals and substantive motions in state, federal and immigration cases at **On Point Expertise** (<https://www.onpointexpertise.com/>), had taken courses on website design for a previous business. "I applied what I learned and created my own website on Squarespace, which is easy to maintain."

Many web designers recommend an update every three to five years to keep current with best practices, latest design advances, security issues and consumer sophistication. Indeed, Barry Heyman had a consultant perform a “look and feel refresh two years ago,” for his practice in entertainment, music, new media and IP at **Heyman Law** (<https://www.heymlaw.com/>). Stephanie Rodin, of **Rodin Legal** (<http://www.rodinlegal.com/>), offers a pragmatic reason for a re-design: “My practice has grown in the past two years in both size and type of clientele.” When completed, an updated website will reflect the current focus of her services for healthcare professionals and medical group practices.

Free Advice and Video

Prospective clients often seek free advice to decide whether they need legal counsel and, if so, with whom will they contract. Some attorneys openly invite a phone consultation on their websites, while other lawyers will speak on a no-fee basis with a potential client without specifically promoting this opportunity. According to Sarah Gold, who advises companies and nonprofits on business contracts, leases and other transactions at **Gold Law Firm** (<http://goldlawny.com/>) in Albany: “I do not actively offer up a free consultation, but, more often than not, I do that. I try to limit it to 20 minutes on the phone, though if they’re in the office, it’s probably more like 30.” Eric Sarver’s website has “a contact sheet for (business) clients to fill out if they want to schedule an introductory 15-minute phone call, followed by a paid consultation. Thereafter, potential clients who wish to retain him regarding employment law matters can schedule a paid consultation” at **The Law Offices of Eric M. Sarver**. (<http://www.sarver-law.com/>)

Posting a video to convey the person behind the law practice is becoming a popular website add-on. Wolson made one a few years ago, yet he finds the jury is still out on its impact attracting clients. Andrew Berks, with a practice in intellectual property, patents and litigation at **Berks IP Law** (<http://www.berksiplaw.com/>), prefers to *read* about other lawyers and not watch videos. Nevertheless, he recently filmed a one-minute introduction to his practice, targeting inventors, following the advice of marketing professionals. Rodin is contemplating the use of videos on the website in order “to provide more information about (her) services to prospective clients.”

Newsletter, Blog and Giveaway

Other marketing tools available to solo practitioners include offering a newsletter or blog. Many find the time required to select a topic, conduct research and write the essay is too demanding. Some manage this activity by publishing less frequently; Sarver's newsletter is sent out six times per year, while Watkins writes one quarterly. Others compose a blog for SEO purposes and then email that post as a monthly newsletter. In addition, Gold and Wolson share legal articles of interest and other materials through social media channels, like Twitter and LinkedIn.

Although there are consultants who will draft articles, most of the attorneys cited here prefer to write these informative and promotional communications themselves. Heyman notes an unsung benefit of writing his own content: "It provides me with an opportunity to brush up on or broaden my knowledge about the subject of the post."

Attorneys may also manage the time commitment of a newsletter and blog when they engage a social media service to execute the postings on multiple platforms. Berks and Werschulz use Phoneblogger to edit and publish their timely insights on patent-related subjects.

Marketing professionals generally recommend a giveaway to engage with potential clients and collect email addresses for future follow-up. Examples are a tip sheet, checklist or quiz for website visitors to learn best practices. Some provide an article written for the non-legal audience. Berks "has a few tip sheets, downloadable with email address required" on his website. For Heyman and Werschulz, their blog posts are available for review by website visitors, and they collect email addresses in another area of their websites. Gold and Watkins are likely adding a giveaway to promote their services.

Be Creative

Finally, attorneys with a solo practice have the freedom to utilize alternative approaches to marketing. Entertainment attorney Heyman is active on social media and often posts "photographs of the live events with which I am interacting; they hold an advantage over writing or reposting stories because they engage the viewer and make me more memorable." Watkins also sees many opportunities to promote

her appeals and motions practice even more broadly: “I think every communication has the potential to be marketing, including emails and email signatures, so I’m always trying to convey information about what I do and how I can help lawyers and their clients.”

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