

Using COVID-19 as a Springboard for New Marketing Activity

How did solo attorneys adapt and market their services during the interim 11 weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown (March 22- June 7)?

By **Janet Falk** July 07, 2020 at 01:12 PM

As New York emerges from the pandemic lockdown, it's appropriate to look closely at the unusual second quarter of 2020 in the context of conducting a mid-year marketing audit. How did solo attorneys adapt and market their services during the interim 11 weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown (March 22- June 7)?

Some solo attorneys offered specific counsel on COVID-19-related issues. A few went as far as to experiment with new approaches to marketing to reach potential clients and referral sources who were working from home and, therefore, somewhat less accessible during this period.

For the solo practitioner who revisited or initiated new marketing activities during the lockdown, which ones will she continue?

Starting with the primary marketing tool, the website, Sarah Gold, who advises companies and nonprofits on business contracts, leases and other transactions at **Gold Law Firm** in Albany, said, "I made sure that my website reflected the fact I was still open and fully operational. That statement appeared just below my firm name on the website. Additionally, I have taken this time to work on updating my website in a general manner, as I've made an emphasis to update my marketing overall." Plus, a new

addition is a chatbot to welcome visitors and gather preliminary information, on a trial basis.

The COVID-19 pandemic prompted Kyle-Beth Hilfer to identify different aspects of her services. “On my website’s Dispute Resolution page, I highlighted my background in conducting virtual hearings. I also am adding COVID- related representation descriptions to my website’s *Representative Matters* section.” Hilfer’s practice focuses on advertising, marketing, promotions, intellectual property and new media clients at [Hilfer Law](#).

Jamel Oeser-Sweat created a COVID resource page for attorneys and individuals on his website. It offers “comprehensive information resources linking to real-time information sources,” which range from the New York City Department of health to the New York state courts to guidance from the federal Small Business Administration. He has a criminal defense practice at [Oeser-Sweat](#).

Likewise, Eric Sarver added a “COVID-19 Legal Resources page, with links to my legal updates, articles, webinars, and my video podcast and new YouTube Channel, regarding businesses’ employment law issues arising due to COVID-19.” Sarver focuses on employment and business law for companies at [Law Offices of Eric Sarver](#).

COVID-related concerns prompted some solo attorneys to produce new communiqués, such as blog posts, articles, newsletters and video. Nicole Galli, with an intellectual property, trade secrets and litigation practice at [Law Offices of N.D. Galli](#) in New York and Philadelphia stated, “We sent out a special client alert in April. People said they appreciated it and found it clear and shared it with others.” She also used her LinkedIn profile to post both original articles and shared content on the CARES Act and other aspects of COVID. Galli wrote an article on restrictive covenants during COVID for The

Legal Intelligencer. Looking ahead, “I am writing several articles on trade secrets that will include COVID issues; we are issuing more CARES Act articles.”

Gold noted “I had a piece in the New York State Bar Association Journal about virtual notarization, which was well received.” As for new marketing initiatives to attract clients, she performed an experiment. “I posted a brief video on Facebook stating that I was doing consults. I plan on doing more videos, because it was easy. I’ve invested in some additional equipment to make it easier to create videos and it’s going to be a push in my marketing going forward.”

Sarver launched a YouTube channel, which was in the works and took priority during the lockdown. “I created a couple of short videos about COVID-19 related business law and employment law issues. I plan to record periodic videos, some of which will be educational, and others will feature a client business owner describing their experiences in reopening during the pandemic.”

Like Galli, Barry Heyman found it helpful to share materials from other attorneys. “I had collected tip sheets and articles from colleagues or industry associations and provided the information to clients. There were many resources available for people and I thought it would be best not to oversaturate the market with information overload.” Heyman has a practice in entertainment, music, new media and IP at [Heyman Law](#).

Hilfer utilizes her blog as a platform to write and share timely articles. For the most part during the early stages of the pandemic, however, “I felt personal communications with clients would be more effective than an article on a blog. I, therefore, focused on customized and individualized tips based on particular client needs and disseminated based on email.” Going forward, “My blog will continue to spotlight advertising, marketing, and branding law trends that are related both to COVID-19 and other industry and legal developments.”

Webinars and podcasts proved popular formats for sharing fast-moving developments during the pandemic. Galli participated in an ABA webinar on trade secrets and COVID. Gold spoke on two webinars for the NYSBA on Skype in the courts.

Sarver conducted several webinars with educational content: “explaining the new legislation surrounding COVID-19 and employment law (from new federal laws on emergency paid FMLA, the PPP, EIDL and other forms of business relief to state laws related to quarantine pay and other employee rights). I also co-hosted two virtual roundtable discussions/Q&A sessions, where the focus was on *thriving again*—giving business owners the knowledge and tools they need to transition their business up and running again.” All three attorneys have plans to appear on webinars in the future.

Several solo attorneys appeared on Facebook Live and podcasts during the pandemic lockdown. Heyman spoke on a live-streamed video and also a video podcast on COVID-related issues. “The content primarily revolved around the creative, music and arts community and the legal aspects pertaining to their creative endeavors and *cleaning up* and addressing this while homebound.”

Galli spoke on a podcast on trade secrets, while Gold’s podcast topic was the history of the courts and the Spanish Flu of 1918. Gold adds “We’re continuing podcasts without an explicit theme of COVID, though obviously it will have an impact on our guests. A Zoom meeting to record podcasting is easier than we expected.”

Speaking of Zoom, consider Oeser-Sweat’s approach to this tool and format. Oeser-Sweat has been using Zoom for three years, “with one powerful computer that I treat like a Zoom phone booth. It has a virtual background and all the features I need to handle client work remotely.” Oeser-Sweat finds this Zoom setup particularly useful to arrange “meetings without logistical issues, which is especially important for those of us with practices that require field work, like court and site visits, and who do not sit at a

desk full-time.” Given the rise of work from home for clients and referral sources, Oeser-Sweat’s reliance on Zoom is likely to be followed by many other solo attorneys.

For those with a contrarian bent, consider the guerrilla-style marketing of Charles-Eric Gordon, investigative counsel at [Law Office of Charles-Eric Gordon](#) in Plainview, who turns the tables, so to speak. “I often reply (to emails announcing a reopening by congratulating the firms and inviting their attorneys and staffs to reach out to me if I can be of assistance in locating missing individuals. I tailor the type of individual to the practice area of the firm. For example, I would pitch my expertise in tracing missing heirs, beneficiaries and witnesses to wills to a firm concentrating principally on trust and estate work while I emphasize my ability to locate witnesses, defendants and out of touch clients for personal injury firms.”

Clearly, the pandemic lockdown has spurred solo attorneys to rely on the traditional marketing tools: update their websites and write more newsletters, client alerts and articles. Some used the opportunity to explore new marketing initiatives—chatbots, video, YouTube channel, webinars and podcasts—to promote their insights, guidance and practices. Early indications are all these marketing activities will continue long after the pandemic recedes.

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<https://www.law.com/newyorklawjournal/2020/07/07/using-covid-19-as-a-springboard-for-new-marketing-activity/>

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