

Your Profile, Your Door to the World

By Roberta M. Gubbins

While some may doubt it and others may not like it, the Internet is here to stay. Or to put it in lawyerly terms, it appears that the Internet is here to stay. People use it to find information, goods, services, places, and other people. If they want to know how far it is to the moon, they Google it. If seeking something closer to home such as the nearest restaurant, they can click on an app on their smartphones.

And when the average consumer wants to find a lawyer, what will that person do? Search the Internet.

Roughly 75 percent of people looking for a lawyer will turn to the Internet as part of their research. Every day, consumers look for a lawyer in their geographic area who provides the service they are seeking. They'll find several from which to choose. How do they narrow the list to one or two?

They read the lawyer profiles.

That is, they read available and comprehensive lawyer profiles such as those found on the newly expanded SBM online member directory powered by ZeekBeek®. The number of Michigan lawyers who have taken advantage of the profile feature is steadily growing. They recognize that the best place for potential clients to find them is on the Internet.

Once you have uploaded the basics, such as a professional photo, business contact information, education, and employment, you can add to your profile:

- Your publications, including videos and press releases
- The courts in which you practice
- Arbitrations you've conducted
- Links to your website, articles, and social media
- Community contributions



Lawyers can describe their practice, whether general or niche. One lawyer may handle only DUI defense while another practices general criminal defense. Some prefer civil work, drafting wills and trusts, writing contracts for businesses, or taking on litigation such as personal injury or medical malpractice. A well-crafted profile will reflect the lawyer and his or her area of law. Consumers reading a profile in the SBM member directory will know if a lawyer is right for them.

Lawyers who want to expand their profiles for marketing purposes can add additional features. They can accept reviews and endorsements from clients, indicate they are available for hire, and turn on contact capability, meaning a potential client can send a message through the site.

The State Bar makes it easy...and free. The new SBM member directory helps consumers find lawyers and allows lawyers to find other legal professionals with profiles on the site.

Building a profile is easy. Already have a profile on LinkedIn? You can pull it into the new SBM member directory. Add more features if you wish, and you're on the Internet. Your cyberspace door is open and ready to receive prospective clients and contacts who will travel the information highway to your mailbox. ■



Roberta M. Gubbins, Esq. practiced law before serving as the editor of the Ingham County Legal News. Since leaving the paper, she provides services as a ghostwriter, editing and writing articles, blogs, and eblasts for lawyers and law firms. She is the editor of Briefs, the Ingham County Bar Association newsletter; and The Mentor, the SBM Master Lawyers Section newsletter.

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