

Is One Online Presence Enough?

By Roberta M. Gubbins

Let's assume you've created a dynamic and engaging profile on our SBM Member Directory. You are certain it will attract potential clients. Does that mean you can sit back and relax, secure in the belief that your online presence is complete?

Probably not. One stop on the Internet doesn't complete your marketing journey; you need more than one to raise your ranking among the search engines and make it easier for prospective clients to find you.

Your first stop is to look at your profile. To make it stand out, update your vanity URL (Uniform Resource Locator, or Internet address)—initially containing numbers, such as www.zeekbeek.com/u/84958594—to include your name: www.zeekbeek.com/u/lawyer's name. Research shows that within approximately three weeks, this change results in a noticeable improvement in the Google search result ranking of your Member Directory profile. Please note that you can only change the URL once, and even Zeekbeek can't reset it later.

Next, add links to your digital life, such as your website, articles you've published, case decisions, interviews, awards, pro bono work, and your social networking pages. Next, look at other legal directory listings such as Martindale-Hubbell or FindLaw; most are incomplete and need to be updated. Being listed in several directories will



look good to Google's algorithms, increasing your page ranking and causing you to move up in the listings.

Now, create or rejuvenate your website. Like your physical office, your online presence can occasionally use a facelift:

- Make it client-focused with educational content.
- Create and check links to other informative sites.
- Give visitors something to download, such as a booklet on estate planning for pet owners, being careful to present information in a manner that does not classify as legal counsel.

Finally, decide how—or if—you will use social media.

Social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, and LinkedIn allow people to create, share, or exchange information, ideas, and pictures and videos

in virtual communities and networks. Social media builds consumer loyalty by connecting and communicating with an audience.

It's an understatement to say that lawyers and legal marketers are busy people. A shortage of time and interest could cause lackluster results for your social media sites. Maybe social media should not be viewed as a necessity, but as a means of achieving clearly defined marketing goals.

Lawyers with niche practices such as bankruptcy, transportation, aviation, or animal law can quickly update Twitter or Facebook accounts with new information that might interest their followers. This may spark a conversation, which could lead to a client visit and more work for the firm. Success should not always be judged by the number of followers but by the quality of the conversations with those followers.

Everyone doesn't need to use social media, but LinkedIn is one social network where you should be present. It's where people go to find information about you, and you should review it frequently to be sure the information is current.

The more places you can be found on the Internet, the better your search-engine rankings, the easier it will be for potential clients to find you, and the quicker your business will grow. ■

The more places you can be found on the Internet, the better your search-engine rankings, the easier it will be for potential clients to find you, and the quicker your business will grow.



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.