

Not Just How – But Why Lawyers Need to Engage in Social Selling

Social media has forever changed the marketing communications landscape and is increasingly becoming a useful sales tool. While social media as a content distribution and engagement platform is part of the marketing mix for most law firms, social selling of professional services is not.

A study by [Google and Millward Brown Digital](#) found that 46% of decision-makers are now between 18 and 34 years old, which, coincidentally, is the largest social media user demographic. Is the legal industry dismissing social selling too quickly?

The biggest difference between social selling and traditional sales tactics is that traditional sales focus on short-term results, while social selling is more about building relationships, which takes time. At its core, social selling is the art of using social networks to identify, listen to and develop relationships with prospects and referral sources. In other words, it's a modern way to do what lawyers have always done to develop new business: [Network and develop meaningful relationships](#) with prospective clients and potential referral sources.

If your law firm maintains a [LinkedIn Company Page](#) or a professional Twitter account, you already are engaged in the basics. Every time someone in the marketing department logs into the firm's account to share relevant content, they are social selling. When a lawyer logs into his or her personal account and provides value by answering a question or sharing knowledge, they are social selling.

Here are five tips for effective social selling for attorneys.

Go where your audience is

With so many channels available, especially when you're working without a large social media staff, it's impossible to have an active presence everywhere. As with in-person networking, quality is better than quantity – so maintain an active presence on only a few of the right channels.

To identify the channels where your prospects hang out digitally, you have to define their primary demographic data, including age, income level, common values, common pain points, where they get their information and what type(s) of content they consume. You can do this through a lot of research or by using social analytics tools, such as Twitter Analytics or Hootsuite. Alternatively, and to be certain you are spending your time on the right channels, ask your current clients which social media channels they prefer.



Joi D. Neike
Senior Vice President
Marketing & Business
Development
850.830.2356
jneike@jaffepr.com

Engage regularly

For social selling to work, you must engage with your social media community on an ongoing basis. Maintain regular activity on the platforms you have determined your prospects frequent. Share content; like and comment on other people's posts. We recommend LinkedIn and Twitter for the legal industry. How you engage is where you set yourself apart. If you can answer a question or address a concern by providing a solution based on your knowledge of the subject, you have made a difference, not just noise.

Provide value

Content is still king. Although prospective clients have greater access to information, they are not necessarily better informed. Nurture prospects with value-added content (yours and others'), relevant insights and thought-provoking questions.

Leverage your brand

Social selling is also a brand-based endeavor. You are putting yourself, your experience, your knowledge and your personality into a very public space. Your social media landing pages and profiles should be professional in appearance and consistent in messaging. Devote time to developing the persona you want portrayed in social selling. Are you the tech-savvy lawyer who works well with software engineers or are you the attorney who was once a mortgage broker and now makes real estate closing deals happen rather than being the attorney who kills them?

Get offline

There is no "Buy Now!" link on your tweets. Once you've established a back-and-forth conversation with someone on social media, it should be easier to suggest a phone call or coffee date via a direct message or email. When your email subject line to a prospect references your Twitter conversation, it is more likely to be opened. The next step is to show the prospect that your real-life persona is just as great as your digital one, and that you can solve their problem.

Selling legal services is still about building and nurturing relationships. While social selling can give you a leg up, you probably will still have to close the sale in person. In other words, [ask for the business face-to-face](#) when it's appropriate (social selling might mean finding new clients outside your geographic area), as you've always done.

With a properly executed strategy, social media allows you to engage with the right audience on a regular basis and even shorten the relationship development time. If you're interested in learning more about developing a social media selling strategy, contact me at jneike@jaffepr.com.