

How to Develop a Strategic Marketing Plan for Your Law Firm

A "Ready. Fire. Aim." approach to legal marketing usually leads to wasted time and money. When building a marketing plan for your law firm, it's important to follow a comprehensive process. This post provides a systematic approach for creating a strategic marketing plan for your law firm that will keep your team organized, efficient and goal-focused.

Discovery Process for Creating a Law Firm Marketing Plan

Before you launch into establishing your tactical marketing plan, gather some background information.

1. **Review the firm's past marketing initiatives.** By looking at previous campaigns, goals and metrics that were used to measure success, you will get a good sense of what worked and what didn't. While objective key performance indicators (KPIs) are important, they may only tell part of the story. Be sure to inject subjective analysis as well contextualize the objective data points.
2. **Identify your target audiences.** Most likely, you will want to reach multiple audiences with your marketing program. Break these down into groups and define their key demographic, geographic and psychographic characteristics.
3. **Conduct market research.** An understanding of industry forces will help guide the priorities in your marketing plan. Consider how you will keep tabs on industry shifts that inevitably happen over time. Your marketing plan will have to adapt to unexpected occurrences and changes in the marketplace.
4. **Assess your competition.** Reviewing the websites and social media platforms for your competitors will provide important information about their services, attorneys, locations and certain marketing initiatives. A simple Google search will also shed light on news that has been published online about the firm. You'll want to create a table to compare key aspects of your competitors and look for gaps in their services, locations, talent, etc., that your firm can fill. Compare brand elements such as messaging statements and website design to judge how your firm differentiates itself. Does your website look dated in comparison? Are your messaging statements too generic?

Developing a Strategic Marketing Plan

Once you've gone through the discovery process, you can begin to outline your law firm's marketing plan. Start with your goals.

Goal-Setting

Often a firm identifies "Bring in new business" or "Increase revenue" as goals. Think more specifically about your target audiences and how to create a sales funnel that nurtures



Melanie Trudeau

Executive Vice President
Client Relations
970.376.7746
mtrudeau@jaffepr.com

your audiences and builds relationships with attorneys, referral sources and potential clients. Ask yourself important questions. Should your brand [perception be refreshed](#)? Should you be focusing on [recruiting laterals](#)? Will becoming more involved in the community and [developing a corporate responsibility program](#) help to raise awareness for the firm? Do your [new associates need marketing support](#)?

Marketing Channels

Once you have your list of goals, breaking down your plan into a list of "channels" (how you're going to get your marketing messages to your intended audiences) will provide structure.

Consider these channels:

- Firm website and blog content
- Social media marketing
- Media relations
- Traditional advertising
- Digital advertising
- Events and sponsorships
- Individual/Group business development programs

Marketing Tactics

Within each channel, list the tactics that you're going to employ over time. Here are a few examples of a tactical plan. (Some of these echo goals to set.)

Firm website and blogs

- Update the [hero area of the firm's website](#) with fresh images and messaging statements.
- Develop a twice-monthly blogging schedule with attorneys.
- Revise all attorney bio pages to include the most up-to-date information and create consistency in tone throughout your website.

Media relations

- Pitch the employment practice to industry-specific publications to comment on stories or provide background to reporters.
- Secure two bylined articles each month for the IP practice.

Measurement Strategy

For each channel, develop a measurement strategy that you can refer to at regular intervals. Some tactics are easy to measure, such as "Revise all attorney bio pages." Once the new bios are live on the website, track the number of visits to the bios over time, the average time spent on bio pages and the "conversions" that you have configured on the site (contact form completions, newsletter signups, downloads, emails, and so on).

It's often difficult to [measure your firm's public relations program](#) and brand awareness initiatives objectively. But including subjective elements in your measurement strategy can yield insight into your efforts. Create a system for gathering feedback from key attorneys. Sometimes hearing from people on the front lines is as valuable as looking at

data points.

Budget Considerations

Once you've outlined your list of tactics, assign monthly or quarterly costs for executing your program. Consider your internal resources and identify gaps that will need to be filled by outside vendors. Do you need to contract with writers, hire a publicist or bring on a web developer? Sometimes these outside costs will dictate your priorities and timing.

Executing Your Law Firm Marketing Plan

Most marketing teams use a project management tool and/or an editorial calendar to organize the implementation of an integrated marketing program for their law firm. Tools like [Microsoft Planner](#) and [Trello](#) can help with assigning and tracking tasks for your marketing team. (Cloudwards has an excellent resource, "[Trello Tutorial 2022: A Beginner's Guide to Project Management Basics](#)" to help get you started.)

When rolling out your strategic marketing plan, it's important to be realistic about timing. By building in adequate time for creative brainstorming, proper review and a realistic approval process, you'll avoid rushing initiatives through and putting your team at risk of errors. Sometimes an extra proofreading step or individual [media training](#) session can save time in the long run by avoiding a reputational misstep.

And don't forget to schedule monthly or quarterly review meetings with your team to assess your measurement plan and determine whether shifts are needed. Your law firm marketing plan should never be carved in stone. It should evolve and improve with ongoing assessment and measurement.

If you have questions about your law firm's marketing plan, reach out to me, Melanie Trudeau at mtrudeau@jaffepr.com.