



2020 Best Practices for Law Firm Websites and Internet Marketing: Top 130 Ideas for the New Year

We have been creating some of the [best law firm websites](#) online since 2001. The big year of 2020 is upon us, so what are some of the best practices for law firm marketing in 2020? Check out the top 130 ideas.

Chapters



Web Design



Web Development



Pay-Per-Click Advertising



SEO



Logos



Social



Newsletters



Content



**Offline Marketing & Membership
Marketing**

Web Design



- 1 Background videos.** Tell a story when your website loads instead of having a static image or outdated image slider.
- 2 Micro Animations.** Animate key CTAs, icons and graphics to add a nice touch and draw the user's eye to key areas of any page.
- 3 Photos.** Have new custom photos taken. Bio photos taken against a background that can be cutout by the photographer creates a cleaner look that is better for responsive designs.
- 4 Branding.** Have one team design your logo and website. It leads to consistent branding.
- 5 Large type and elements.** Bigger and bolder is better for 2020, where large text takes center stage.
- 6 Whitespace Wins.** Cluttered and compact design is a thing of the past. It's all about the breathing room now with lots of whitespace between content sections, around images and type and just an overall airy clean look.
- 7 Boxed Elements and Colors.** Embrace the boxiness this coming year as sites continue to use obvious boxed images and text areas that are oftentimes overlapped, as noted below.
- 8 Flat Design.** Flat design is still in but it's been elevated for the likes of this coming year. One color buttons and backgrounds are still prevalent and the foundation of the design but they may be finessed with a few light gradients and design touches.
- 9 Overlapping Text and Images.** This trend from 2019 is still going strong, including floating elements and asymmetrical designs.
- 10 Light Drop Shadows.** Dark shadows have been out for awhile but subtle drop shadows add a bit more interest to the design and are becoming more popular in current and upcoming websites.
- 11 Glowing Buttons and Hover States.** This super fun trend can be seen in a lot of new tech sites not afraid to push the boundaries of the norm. We especially appreciate the glowing elements that are animated.
- 12 3D Illustrations.** Expect to see more graphics and illustrations with 3D renders. It's another way that designers are mixing media and their programs for one final product.

Web Development



- 1 ADA.** Get your website audited and updated. Have a professional review your website for accessibility/ADA compliance. Your website should provide good color contrast for readability, be navigable by keyboard, offer text-based alternatives on images, and so much more. Only a human can determine if your website is truly accessible.
- 2 Speed.** Good website performance isn't a "feature" in 2020 -- it's a baseline requirement. A simple goal to strive for is a 90+ score in Google's PageSpeed Insights, but tools like WebPageTest provide more technical insight into how the page is loading and how it can be optimized. It's not just the file size of what's loading, it's also the sequence in which it loads.
- 3 Manage your content.** WordPress represents a staggering one-third of the web, and as a Content Management System (CMS), it does its job of content management well. The Gutenberg block editor introduced in WordPress version 5 is maturing toward real adoption in 2020, and one of its core goals is to put non-coders in control of their content. Become comfortable and familiar with WordPress -- it's your site, after all.
- 4 Build for browser compatibility.** While modern browsers like Chrome and Firefox are good at presenting web code consistently and reliably, older browsers lag behind. In fact, WordPress ceased support for Internet Explorer 10 and below back in 2017! When building sites, don't forget the laggards: Internet Explorer 11 and mobile versions of Safari for older iPhones need testing and possible code adjustments.
- 5 Know your editor .** Mastering your code editor - that is, making use of its shortcuts, creating code snippets, and knowing where to go to change specific settings - is an underrated aspect of development work. We recommend a popular, powerful editor like Microsoft's Visual Studio Code. It's feature-rich, well documented, extensible and developer-friendly.
- 6 Mobile-first development .** Mobile dominates Google rankings and traffic. Make mobile just as or even more important than desktop.
- 7 PDF .** Get exact copies of any page on your website for yourself and users via PaperStreets newest PDF library that provides flexibility to meet any design needs of any page.
- 8 Proposal Generator.** Build fully custom proposals on the fly in WordPress.
- 9 Security.** Security on your website is key with nefarious bots and traffic at an all-time high. Rest easy letting PaperStreet handle the security for your website and server via our hosting platform.
- 10 SSL Certificates.** Google made these mandatory when using Chrome by flagging your website as "Not Secure".
- 11 PHP Version.** If the site you are running is a PHP site, it is essential that you are on a supported version - <https://www.php.net/supported-versions.php> . As of October 2019, your site should be on PHP 7.2 or 7.3.
- 12 Standards.** Build a set of coding standards that is used by your entire development team. Collaboration is a big step of web development and it is important that your team is on the same page when it comes to certain standards. Industry standard is to be PSR compliant (<https://www.php-fig.org/psr/>)
- 13 Code commenting.** Odds are that you will most likely not remember the code you wrote a few months prior. Leave docblocks for large sections of codes that accomplish a goal. You don't need to comment every line in a function; rather, create a docblock with a brief overview of what the function does.
- 14 Password storing.** If you need to store passwords, do NOT encrypt them. Encryption can always be unencrypted, meaning it is not secure. Hash your passwords. For PHP, use the built in password_hash function to hash, and password_verify function to verify the hashed password.
- 15 Version Control.** Use Git to keep track of changes to your project and "push" after every key feature is implemented. Should anything go wrong, you have a full history of your project and can restore each checkpoint if necessary.
- 16 Staging Environment.** Use a staging environment or local host when making edits to prevent errors/issues being created or a live site going down momentarily.
- 17 Clear Cache.** It is important to always clear the WordPress cache after any updates have been made to content or development. Anytime the client accesses their site, they should see the most updated version.
- 18 Compress Images.** Before uploading an image to a site, make sure to compress it. This will not only save server space, but it will also help to improve loading speeds.
- 19 Themes.** If using a theme for your website, make sure it is one that is well written and light. They can quickly get overwhelming if not managed properly.
- 20 Simple is Better.** Don't get too complicated with a solution to a problem or an idea, otherwise it makes it that much more difficult to troubleshoot or add to it in the future.
- 21 Expectations.** Have clear and attainable expectations whenever building a site. Doing so can help prevent mix ups or inconsistencies.

Pay-Per-Click Advertising



- 1 Audience targeting.** Audiences are the present and future of paid search. They allow advertisers to choose the right messaging and viewers for a given campaign or ad group, either by targeting groups you want to show your ads to or excluding groups that don't fit your target audience. Continued innovations on audience creation and targeting may eventually make keywords obsolete.
- 2 Responsive ads.** Responsive ads take your copy and other properties (i.e. images and videos on display) and show the best combinations to users based on machine learning. This takes a lot of the guesswork out of testing ads and adds an element of versatility, particularly on display.
- 3 Mobile is king.** The majority of clicks from paid searches come from mobile devices; so having ads and landing pages that appeal and target to mobile users is key. If your message or page functionality are not in line with user expectations, your business will suffer.
- 4 Display campaigns.** Just a few years ago, display campaign strategies for lead generation were essentially "throw everything at the wall and see what sticks." With advancements in targeting, from audiences and topics to expanded demographics, display campaigns are now viable options for driving conversions.
- 5 Google Analytics integration.** Google Analytics is not just for website analysis, it also offers insights into how paid search is performing. Additionally, Analytics is the preferred source of conversion tracking for Google Ads.
- 6 Don't be afraid of automation.** Whether through the use of rules, scripts or platform-provided automated bidding strategies, automation can be helpful in freeing up time to focus on more important tasks. Most bidding strategies have at least some element of control, so risks are negligible as long as the correct strategies are chosen and campaigns are regularly monitored.
- 7 Platform diversity.** While Google is the undisputed champion of paid search, that doesn't mean that other platforms don't have something to offer. Facebook, LinkedIn, Reddit and Microsoft Ads, among others, each have a niche that they can serve (i.e. B2B on LinkedIn). Branch out from Google when the opportunity arises.
- 8 Proper use and testing of extensions.** The amount of space available for extensions on paid search ads is limited, so it is important to ensure you have the right extensions showing at the right times and on the right devices. It's also a good practice to test extensions beyond the default sitelink, callout, location and call extensions. You never know what might click with your audience (pun intended).
- 9 Monitoring negatives.** Frequently check search term reports for possible additions to negatives, including competitor terms (if you don't want those) and locations your business doesn't service. Also check auction insights reports and do a Google search for potential competitor names to add to negatives. Robust negative lists can prevent unwanted searches.
- 10 Niche your keywords.** Some areas like criminal defense and personal injury can get extremely competitive in larger markets. If you don't have a large budget, you may see more success by splitting these down into smaller focus areas like slip and fall and white collar. By niching your targeting, you commonly also see higher quality clicks, as your audience is searching for exactly what their case is about.
- 11 Proper tracking is key.** You don't know how well your campaign is doing unless you set up a means to track every opportunity that someone may contact you through. Be sure that you have conversion methods set up for your contact forms, call extensions and phone calls from the website through a service like CallRail. Having this conversion data will also allow you to make adjustments to your campaigns in order to improve the quality and
- 12 A/B testing.** Every area of law performs differently, and every city will have different results. You can't expect the same campaign to work well in all areas. You should A/B test your ad copy, landing pages and keywords to build your campaigns specific to the audience you are targeting.

Quality scores matter. Google assigns a quality score to every keyword that you target in your account. This number is based on how closely your ads match that keyword term, the landing page that your ads direct to and how closely they match the keyword, as well as user interaction with those ads. You want to build your campaigns in order to achieve a 6+ quality score. For every point above a 5, you will see lower cost bids and you will have an easier time achieving higher positioning.
- 14 Branding.** More and more, competitors are targeting the brand names of other firms to piggyback off of their marketing efforts. Creating a campaign based around your brand name can help drive them out of the ad space and ensure that potential clients find you first.

CHAPTER 4

SEO



- 1 **SEO/Core Content & Blogs.** You need both.
- 2 **Less isn't more.** Less than 500 words of content per page is not recommended for SEO purposes.
- 3 **One size doesn't fit all.** Only one generalized piece of content per practice area isn't always enough to reach all of your potential clients.
- 4 **Headings.** Headings are easily the most overlooked, but one of the most significant aspects of SEO content. Don't stop at H1!
- 5 **Client Think.** Think about what your clients ask. This is a great way to frame blogs and core content.
- 6 **Be Creative with Your Blogs.** A little blog clickbait never hurt anyone; in fact, it can get you on the map.
- 7 **Think Beyond Your Search Position.** Have an SEO title and meta description that stand out from the rest and get you clicks.
- 8 **Anchor Wisely.** An internal link is much more effective provided that the anchor text is meaningful and relevant.
- 9 **Allow for easy conversions.** Site visitors will be reviewing your site on different devices and locations. Provide options for the client to contact you on every page of content and offer various formats to make their communication as easy as possible.
- 10 **Link Away.** Make sure all related pages have some internal links to each other. Links can boost your SEO value and help users navigate your site.
- 11 **Visuals Matter.** Keep your readers engaged with images and proper use of white space to prevent a high bounce rate for longer pieces of content.
- 12 **Don't Belittle Brand Awareness.** Creating blogs should provide relevant information for attracting clients, but including topical information such as pop culture, lists and more can also rank and be used to expand your brand.
- 13 **Use Google Predictive Search to Brainstorm Content Ideas.** Google autocomplete essentially gives you the "questions" to answer directly to match the user's intent.
- 14 **Structured Data.** Implement structured data for rich snippet opportunities and to help search engines better understand information on your website.
- 15 **Mobile First.** Focus on mobile first since that is what Google now uses for indexing and ranking purposes.
- 16 **Need for Speed.** Fast loading websites must be a top priority. It's important to find a balance between fast loading sites and modern functionality and design.
- 17 **Better Search Attribution.** Use UTM parameters in your links to better classify traffic that would otherwise have attribution issues. Examples include clicking links from email newsletters, YouTube video descriptions and social media cards.
- 18 **Call Tracking.** Setup call tracking on your website for a better overall depiction of your conversions and ROI. If you are only tracking contact forms, then you are missing pieces to the puzzle.
- 19 **Video Marketing.** Produce and incorporate high-quality videos into your content to help with dwell time and user engagement. Make sure to incorporate structured data for the videos on these pages to help with a video rich snippet in search results. Also, upload these to YouTube and share on social networks for more visibility.
- 20 **SSL is a MUST.** Install an SSL certificate on your website. This upgrade gives you a slight ranking boost in Google but also helps to avoid browser notifications to visitors that your site is insecure.
- 21 **Optimize for Voice Search.** Write in a conversational tone and incorporate FAQs into your content.
- 22 **Lazy-load Functionality.** Images that are below the fold do not need to preemptively load. This helps with site speed and to prioritize loading elements above the fold that visitors see first.
- 23 **Contribute Guest Content.** Writing for your own blog is not enough. Increase backlinks and brand awareness by getting published on well-known media outlets and guest blogging for other websites relevant to your industry. Engagements, getting involved in charities and other initiatives that help the community but also increase your online presence.
- 25 **Invest in Link-Worthy Content to Build Backlinks.** Marketing copy is necessary to convert website visitors to clients, but it is not the type of content that will get you backlinks or will be reshared on social media. Create ebooks, in-depth guides, how-to blogs and other valuable link assets that you can promote.
- 24 **Earn Backlinks from Community Engagement.** This means sponsoring local events, taking part in speaking engagements, getting involved in charities and other initiatives that help the community but also increase your online presence.
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CHAPTER 5

Logos



- 1 Colors.** Choosing the right color can make a logo stand out in the crowd. However, it is also important to make sure that the logo translates well in black and white too. Keeping colors to a minimum is also helpful to keep printing costs low and it ensures that your logo isn't too busy when scaled down on smaller screens or print materials.
- 2 Typography.** Most memorable logos are because of the unique and versatile fonts used. By selecting a practical font and the right typography, your logo is sure to be timeless.
- 3 Elements.** Part of keeping your logo timeless is limiting the amount of elements, textures and filters used. For example, absolute "no, no's" are drop shadows and photographs within the logo.
- 4 Simplification.** The latest trends show that companies are rebranding their logos to a simpler version of what they have. Sleeker and more focused identities will become the norm soon.
- 5 Gradients.** Blending colors to form a smooth gradient has been trending since last year and it doesn't seem to be going anywhere for 2020. It's a nice way to use only 2 colors but add what seems like additional colors and impact.
- 6 Animation.** A great way to enhance and draw more attention to your identity online is to add animation. Whether it be a script that looks like the letters are being drawn out or emphasizing a particular element within the logo, adding motion elevates your logo to the next level.
- 7 Casual Fonts.** The chosen typeface of a logo can set the tone and trends are showing a less conservative and more casual feel to the overall look.

CHAPTER 6

Social



- 1 **Be Newsy.** Social media is your chance to boast about firm life, charity work, case victories, new employees, etc.
- 2 **Pay Attention to Reading Trends.** There are times of day and days of the week where people are more likely to be on social media and reading blogs. Monitor the trends for your intended medium and post accordingly.
- 3 **Social Media.** Social media platforms are more important than ever for engaging your audience. A new crop of social media tools makes posting, engaging and tracking easier than ever. Social is not just a sharing platform but a publishing platform.
- 4 **Frequent posting.** Posting fresh content and linking to your blog posts on a weekly basis can help build followers.
- 5 **Interaction.** Interacting and engaging with your followers is key to building a following.
- 6 **Strategy.** Using key themes and having a strategic approach are important to a successful campaign.
- 7 **Content.** Content should provide something of value to your followers, such as information, entertainment, intrigue, inspiration, etc. Making posts that appear to be ads or have too much of a templated feel will give a reason to your followers to opt out.
- 8 **Marathon, Not a Sprint.** Social media is a marathon, not a sprint. Putting out intriguing and visually stunning content consistently over time is the absolute most important focus for building a base of quality followers.
- 9 **Social media as a search engine.** Google is the most popular search engine and is most focused-on from an SEO standpoint. But do not overlook the power of social media platforms for searches. You are in much more control over your optimization for these sites; however each of these search engines uses a unique algorithm. Adding hashtags,
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- 10 **Visuals.** Images should have a consistent look so that they all meld well in gallery views and subtly fit with your branding.

CHAPTER 7

Newsletters



- 1 Compelling Headlines.** Incorporate attention-getting titles and headlines to increase click-through rates.
- 2 Calls to Action.** Always include a clear call to action, calling the firm or liking your Facebook page.
- 3 Targeted Content.** Customize your message to your audience so you speak directly to the reader. Consider segmenting your newsletters to each target audience you serve.
- 4 Themed and/or Timely Content is Appealing.** Newsletters that draw from seasonal events (i.e. the holidays, Super Bowl, etc.) or major news stories increase their own relevancy and are more likely to be read.
- 5 Conversion-Friendly Design.** Create a clean, modern newsletter design that aligns with your branding and maximizes conversions.
- 6 A Compliant List is ALWAYS Best Practice.** Make sure you have a legitimate subscriber list. That means no address book dumps, no purchased emails and no “fish bowl” business card information.
- 7 Attention-Grabbing Subject Lines.** Give the reader a reason to check out your content instead of sending it to the junk folder.
- 8 Test Subject Lines.** Some newsletter platforms let you test a subject line to see if it’s a winner. Take advantage of the opportunity.
- 9 DON’T YELL AT YOUR AUDIENCE.** Email subjects should never be in all caps. Not only is it a red flag to spam filters, but you don’t want to YELL at subscribers.
- 10 Keep It Short & Sweet.** Newsletters shouldn’t be a dissertation. Keep it to the point so you don’t lose your subscriber’s interest.
- 11 Design for Inboxes, Not the Web.** Newsletter design has come a long way, but always remember the ultimate goal is to get in readers’ inboxes. This can’t be done with big files for images, videos etc.
- 12 Don’t Depend on Images to Relay Key Information.** Most people disable images for their email. Make sure important information is reflected in the content.
- 13 Don’t Depend on Images to Make Your Email Look Good.** Again, some subscribers may not even see them, so ensure your newsletter works without and always use alt-text to describe images so everything still makes sense.
- 14 Make Sure Your Letter Looks Good on Mobile.** Most email service providers allow you to view how your letter will look on mobile. Make sure to test it out.
- 15 Keep Your Goal in Mind.** Newsletters have the unique goal in moving the reader from their inbox to your website. Keep this in mind when writing your content and make sure you include plenty of easy to navigate opportunities for a subscriber to make the move.
- 16 Choose a Familiar Sender Name.** Do you normally open emails from people you don’t know? Exactly. Choose a sender name that most of your subscribers are familiar with and they will feel more comfortable opening.
- 17 Test Your Letter Before Sending Out.** Always send a test email to yourself and a few volunteers (bonus points if they use different email programs). This gives you the chance to catch any mistakes and see what the finished product will look like in inboxes.
- 18 Include a Signup Form on Your Website.** This helps grow your audience and guarantees you always have proof of permission for your subscriber list.

CHAPTER 8

Content



- 1 Interactive content.** Interactive content such as polls, surveys, quizzes, and calculators can attract and engage users and yields 2X the conversions of static content. Other examples include chatbots and interactive maps and timelines.
- 2 Content tailored to voice search.** At least half of all web searches are conducted by voice. Content tailored to voice queries – such as FAQs, tailored headlines and incorporating long-tail keywords into the content – is more important now than ever before.
- 3 Personalized content .** Clients want to engage with firms that provide a highly personalized experience. Content and calls to action are more impactful when they are personalized to the user. Lawyers can also automate the curation and delivery of content relevant to clients, for example, with newsletters or client alerts tailored to various market segments.
- 4 Topic hubs.** Topic-focused content pillars help lawyers build topical authority in their practice niche.
- 5 Solution-focused long-form content.** This type of content is favored by Google and is more likely to be featured in Google's snippets (or a similar widget).
- 6 Storytelling.** Forging an emotional connection with users is a powerful way to promote conversions. Convey a story the reader can relate to. Address and solve their pain points.
- 7 Next level visuals.** Charts, graphs, custom imagery, video clips are more important than ever, boosting traffic and social shares.
- 8 Content marketing.** This is one of the most effective ways to drive traffic and generate leads through content that educates, inspires and informs, providing value to the reader.
- 9 Thought Leadership.** Become a thought leader in your practice niche. Thought leaders become go-to resources in their field which generates new business and other opportunities.
- 10 Audience Building.** Build a loyal audience by answering client questions, solving client issues and becoming a trusted resource. You can then market to and monetize that audience and grow your practice.
- 11 Analytics.** Analyze high-performing, low bounce rate pages and produce more similar content. Let data drive your content decisions.
- 12 Reposting.** Producing fresh content and blogs on a weekly basis can be a time and budget strain. Tweaking older, well-performing posts and republishing them with a recent date is an easy way to push great content to the forefront and give it new life.
- 13 Repurposing.** Work smarter, not harder by repurposing content that you have already written. For example, distribute monthly blog posts in a newsletter or gather content with a common theme and create an ebook.
- 14 Content Mapping.** Map out your customer's journey and develop a strategy for delivering the right content to the right users at each point in the lifecycle.
- 15 Omni-channel Content Strategies.** Establish a strategy and consistent voice when marketing across multiple channels (social media, websites, blogs, YouTube, etc.)
- 16 Guest Posting.** Raise brand awareness and drive traffic through guest posting on influencer sites and media outlets.
- 17 Live Video.** Experts predict that by 2021, 13% of all internet traffic will consist of live video. Leverage the growing popularity of video streaming through live video and podcasts.

Offline Marketing & Membership Marketing



- 1 **Offline Marketing.** Do marketing in the real world, not just online.
- 2 **Giveaways.** Do charity work and giveaways. Safety giveaways for personal injury firms is a great chance to market your firm.
- 3 **Attend Events.** Have a plan for attending at least one event per quarter (and maybe per month). Networking in-person is still a great way to meet people and make connections. - Pete
- 4 **Niche Membership Marketing.** Consider niche marketing for a specific area. Find the publication they read online and/or the publication they receive in the mail/pickup. Get the mailing list of those people and send a mailout. Use remarketing online to have ads follow them around the web. Basically saturate the user with your message. - Pete
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- 5 **Market to Current Customers.** Some of your best marketing should be directed to your current customers. They already know you. They hopefully already love you. Set a budget to market to them regularly.
- 6 **Leave Something Behind.** Always have something that you can provide potential clients with after you meet them. Business cards are good. Pamphlets, flyers and brochures are better.

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