

THE LIST

MARKETING

3 effective ways law firms should use content marketing to retain clients and diversify



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At a time when Houston law firms are dealing with the impact of the oil downturn, client retention and diversification are critical business priorities. More than ever, virtually every lawyer within a firm feels the pressure to be thinking beyond the practice of law and prioritize client retention and bringing in new clients. In other words: Marketing.

The most cost-efficient and time-saving marketing, advertising, and PR strategies today are far from traditional. It's a new world, with new technologies and client expectations. We are going through the biggest revolution in the way people communicate since the invention of television. Legal marketing is changing because your clients and potential clients already have changed.

Today's clients are more sophisticated and highly informed. The smartphone has made information available at our fingertips at any time, no matter where we are. Much of the information that influences how potential clients choose a lawyer is based on content found online via search engines, websites and social media.

The firms that have quality content online, and an effective social media strategy to distribute that content, are building their firm brand and their personal brand – and a strong book of business – effectively and cost-efficiently. They are also winning clients over their competition.

Here's the big takeaway: A content marketing strategy that is client-centric helps not only attract clients, but helps retain clients. As many of them continue to question the value of paying high billing rates and look to low-cost providers and solutions, publishing regular blogs, videos, white papers, and other content that is valuable to clients can effectively serve to stay top-of-mind and reinforce your value.

Content for your strategy can include blogs, videos, PowerPoints, case studies, client testimonials, webinars – and more (usually online). Through content marketing, you provide value to your target client by answering questions, providing insights, sharing "how-to" information, or creating some other type of content that your ideal client finds valuable.

Creating the content, hosting it on your firm's website, then pushing it out via your firm newsletter and on social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Twitter, SlideShare, Facebook, YouTube and other relevant channels for your desired type of clients is how people find you. It's also a way journalists find you for possible inclusion in their reporting. From my experience as

a former reporter, online research is critical to story development. The more quality content that is findable online and that is written in a conversational tone (not using legalese), the more potential that journalists, and even specialized bloggers, will consider including you in their content.

That's earned media, or advertising, you don't have to pay for.

Lastly, contributing your content, such as guest articles, has proven to be a valuable strategy to stand out from your competition. And when third parties include you in their media, your value to your

existing clients is reinforced. In a noisy, crowded online world, it often is perceived as a distinct competitive advantage.

Michele Ruiz is the author of "Content Marketing for Lawyers" and the president and CEO of Ruiz Strategies.

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