

Online Videos: An Effective Marketing Tool for Law Firms

By Dale Tincher

If you've heard the hype about online video and are wondering about its relevance for your law firm's Website, you're not alone. Videos are a pervasive part of our media-driven culture. No longer confined to TV, videos are now available on everything from cell phones to miniscule music players with two-inch screens.

Questions still persist about the use of video as a marketing and information tool for lawyers' websites. At Consultwebs.com, we're sold on the potential for this new marketing avenue. Many of our clients are, too.

"We believe that when done properly, Website video makes a lawyer seem more approachable," says Lauren Black of Hardison & Associates in Raleigh, N.C.

Whether you are a YouTube fanatic or you are only just learning about online videos, we'll share what we've learned at Consultwebs.com from helping clients leverage this medium in a professional and effective manner.

First, remember why clients are searching for a lawyer: they need help. When someone is looking for a firm to help resolve a problem, personality is often just as important a factor as legal experience. A video allows you to capture individual lawyers' personalities, as well as the overall tone of the firm. Video can enhance the written qualifications on your Website to provide a more complete picture of the experience a potential client might have if they choose your firm.

Black agrees: "By using videos on our Website and personalizing our message, we can start to develop a relationship with the client, before they ever actually meet an attorney," she says.

Online videos also grab – and retain – the interest of potential clients more effectively than text. Studies have shown higher recall, attention and action with video – but to maximize this benefit, videos should be brief and specific to your practice areas. The online attention span is short; don't waste time trying to convince clients that you represent every case under the sun, but quickly and clearly answer their most important questions: do I have a case and how can you help me?

At Consultwebs.com, Inc., we often hear from lawyers who are concerned that a video message will sound unprofessional unless delivered by actors. We have found the opposite to be true. People want to see who might actually be representing them in court. We typically recommend that our clients feature senior partners in their videos, in addition to partners who may be more representative of a specific ethnic or age group that the firm wishes to target.

After selecting the staff for a video, the next question we typically encounter deals with format. Specifically, what is the best way to communicate the message you want delivered about your firm?

There are three basic formats that work well in law firm videos: presentation style, which allows you to present information and your experience about a specific area; question-and-answer style, in which typical client questions are posed by the speaker and answered; and interview style, in which one lawyer will “interview” another about the practice area and the firm’s experience.

The Consultwebs.com, Inc. team can help provide recommendations on which approach best fits the needs of your firm. Regardless of the format, we recommend a time limit of one to two minutes maximum for each video.

The final question most law firms have about online video is how to get one made and at what cost. Price can vary, but a general range of \$3,000 - \$5,000 should cover a series of videos for your Website (individual videos can start at \$750 each).

At Consultwebs.com, we work with our clients to determine how and where the video should be produced, and then we find the right local vendor who can deliver a polished final product at a reasonable price in a timely manner. Pressing legal decisions often demand immediate responses, so the turnaround time must be tight in order to take advantage of media attention. We often help clients expedite the process of placing videos online when necessary.

Once a video is finished and loaded on a firm’s Website, our clients generally assume the work is complete. However, we can maximize the video’s ability to generate interest by using search engine optimization to market videos on Google, YouTube and other sites. This tactic extends the reach of your video beyond visitors to your Website – which is vital when trying to attract new business.

So if you’ve been wondering whether video is right for your law firm’s Website, don’t hesitate to leverage this powerful tool. An online video can help communicate your qualifications and personality in a dynamic and effective way that raises your firm’s visibility and Web presence.

Potential new clients are searching right now – and they want to hear from you.

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