

## WHAT'S YOUR BRAND?

- Your brand is how you are perceived in the marketplace – what you are known for; your reputation and your image. It's what the majority of people think of you based on your experience, skills, and actions. (Logos and taglines are ways to express your brand identity; they are not your brand.)
- Your brand should give you a distinctive and positive identity that attracts people and helps you stand out from the competition.
- Questions:
  - Why should someone hire/refer/connect with you over your competitors?
  - How do you bring value to your clients/referral sources/contacts?
  - What would others say about you – i.e. your strengths, your personality, your skills, your values and how it is to work with you?
  - Do others perceive you as you perceive yourself?
  - Who is the audience for your brand?
- How to differentiate yourself – examples:
  - Unique or notable background, education, experience, interests, activities, skills, etc.
  - Develop a niche. For example, focus by:
    - Industry (ex. manufacturing)
    - Type of client (ex. individuals of certain age/wealth/situation; companies of certain size/stage)
    - Type/nature of services (ex. training, ADR)
    - Combination of these
  - Become an expert or authority in an area/issue

## 5 TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL MARKETING

### 1- Develop a distinctive brand with a clear and unique selling/value proposition

- Focus on your differentiators – how you stand out from competitors.
- Determine what unique benefits you provide to clients and referral sources.

### 2- Know your audience

- Create a profile of your ideal client/referral source.
- Understand and speak directly to your audience's interests and pain points.

### 3- Share high quality content regularly

- Both your content and other people's content.
- Be consistent (occasionally writing and speaking isn't enough).
- Repurpose everything you do to get the *maximum value* out of your work product.

### 4- Expand your reach by using multiple marketing channels

- Leverage your website, email, social media, PR and networking (and possibly paid advertising).
- Be targeted in your promotion. Find the best marketing channels for your audience.

### 5- Have a plan

- Write it down – be specific about what audience you want to target, what steps you are going to take, set priorities and goals
- Allocate resources to it – have a budget, create schedules, delegate tasks, hold yourself and others accountable.

## How Women Can Strengthen Their Personal Brand

<https://www.rdtcontentmarketing.com/how-women-can-strengthen-their-personal-brand/>

In honor of Women's History Month, I am dedicating this post to helping women with their personal brand. That's not to imply that men don't also need a strong brand and these tips work well for them too. However, I think that women need to pay extra attention to shaping and promoting an effective brand. The reality is that even in professions where women are well-represented, as you go up the food chain into senior management there are fewer and fewer women. For example:

- Women have made up at least 40% of U.S. law students for decades and today, about 48% of law firm associates are women, but only 23% of equity partners are women.
- Approximately 62% of accountants and auditors are women, but only 23% are partners in accounting firms and 14% are CFOs of Fortune 500 and S&P 500 firms.
- Among entrepreneurs, 39% of businesses are women-owned, but only 2% achieve \$1 million in revenue.

By strengthening their personal brand, women can raise their profile both within their firms and to a broader network to help position themselves for advancement and better opportunities.

Here are a few tips to get started:

**1. Figure out your current brand.** Your brand is your reputation and identity. It's what you are known for and what people expect from you personally and professionally. A good way to think about it is that your brand is what people say about you when you're not in the room. To determine your brand, talk to people you know – colleagues, clients, managers, and other contacts to learn more about how you are perceived. There are ways you can couch your questions to make sure you are getting helpful and accurate feedback.

You should also ascertain your online brand. Google your name to see what shows up about you. Review your website and social media profiles and compare them to your competitors. It's important to have a strong online presence with lots of positive information appearing when people search for you.

**2. Identify any problems with your current personal brand.** Do others have a negative or incorrect impression of you? Or is it that you have a good reputation but you are barely known beyond a small circle of people? Are there aspects of your brand you would like to change? Is lack of confidence, cultural conditioning, a bad work situation, bias or other circumstances affecting your personal brand or inhibiting you from promoting your brand? It's hard to fix a problem without determining what it is.

**3. Create a personal brand story.** You want to highlight your personality and values along with your expertise. To do this, it helps to create your personal brand story – consider how your background and past personal and professional experiences have influenced your choices, work and relationships. Why do you do what you do? What do you enjoy most about your work? What unique value do you offer that your competitors don't? What examples do you have? Your brand story should piece together the

different aspects of your personal and professional life to tell a concise story demonstrating that you're not just knowledgeable, but people can trust you and know what to expect from you.

**4. Find brand champions.** It's always better to have other people talk about you in positive ways than talking about yourself. Ideally, you'll have a few people that are true champions, but anyone you've dealt with can be helpful. Regularly request feedback from those you work with and when it's good, try to document it publicly. (If it's bad, make sure you address the problem or you'll develop a poor reputation.) Don't be afraid to ask for recommendations/reviews. Also, ask happy clients for referrals and introductions. If you are praised by your boss, try to make sure others know about it in appropriate ways. Seek promotions, raises, desirable work assignments or even just a public thanks. Women often downplay their accomplishments which can significantly hurt them when they are looking for new opportunities. It's also a good idea to develop a diverse support network to give you the most options in the future should you decide to take a different professional path.

**5. Leverage all channels to promote your brand.** Unfortunately, people have short attention spans. You want to be the one your contacts remember so you have to promote yourself. Obviously, networking is important both within your organization and outside of it. However, also take advantage of digital marketing channels like social media and email marketing, your website, blogging, writing and speaking opportunities, publicity and other [owned, earned and paid media](#) outlets. You want to share your ideas and expertise publicly so people know about you and you take control of your image.

**6. Take small but well-planned steps.** Random acts of marketing are a waste of time. Before you take action, it is important to [develop a plan](#). For example, write down your brand message, who you want to target with that message, what you want to accomplish and what steps you will take to improve your brand. Start small and commit to at least one or two marketing tactics or a set amount of time per week and then expand from there. Marketing is cumulative and the longer you keep at it, the more successful you will be.

## What Does Google Say About You? 6 Tips To Help Beef Up Your Online Presence

<https://www.rdtcontentmarketing.com/what-does-google-say-about-you-6-tips-to-help-beef-up-your-online-presence/>

When was the last time you googled your name? If you haven't in a while, do it now and regularly hereafter. Studies show that over 70% of people research someone online before hiring or doing business with them. They may google you before or after contacting you to verify your credentials, learn more about you, and/or compare you to competitors. That's why it's essential to pay attention to what shows up in your Google results and think about how you can beef up your online presence. Here are some tips to get started:

**1. Assess your Google results.** What shows up on the first page? Presumably, your website and social media profiles will appear at the top, but what else? Are the other results on the page little more than directory listings? Is there anything that demonstrates expertise or credibility, such as articles, presentations, professional memberships, awards, media mentions and the like? Do you have any

reviews or recommendations? It is not enough to ensure that bad things don't appear in your search results, you want to make sure a lot of good things show up as well. A minimal presence can hurt you because people want to know you are active in your profession, in your community and so on.

**2. Google your competitors.** How are they marketing themselves? How does their online presence compare to yours? Review their Google results, website, and social media profiles. It is important to know what you are up against. However, if your competitors aren't doing much online, don't take that as an excuse to continue to ignore your online presence. You have an opportunity to lead the field and make everyone else catch up to you.

**3. Do the easy stuff first.** Your website and social media profiles are typically the first results that show in Google. Fortunately, you have complete control over what appears there and should be taking advantage of them to demonstrate the value you offer clients. Highlight your strengths, but don't make it a marketing brochure. Instead, provide information that your prospects would find useful and interesting. It might be insights about their problem, what they can do to help themselves, and when they may need extra assistance. Blogs, articles, eBooks, newsletters, videos, podcasts, presentations, FAQs, and case studies can be added to your website and highlighted on social media to build credibility.

Also give prospects a reason to like and trust you. Tell them a little about your background, your motivation for doing the work you do, and your other interests (charitable activities, hobbies, etc.). Social media is great for this because you can be a bit more informal than on your website, just don't go too far into the personal.

**4. Develop content for third-party sites.** Appearing on reputable third-party sites is invaluable because you can't control it. The more authoritative the other website, the more it improves your credibility and search engine ranking. Start identifying a list of sites where you could provide content, such as articles and presentations. Likely sources include associations relevant to your profession (e.g., bar associations) and to your client base (industry and business groups). Consumer-oriented, community, and charitable websites may also be possibilities. In addition, reach out to contacts in complementary businesses and offer to guest blog on each other's websites or otherwise partner on creating content to cross-promote.

**5. Ask for recommendations/reviews.** Contact people you know well – referral sources, colleagues, vendors, and happy clients – to ask them if they would be willing to give you a recommendation or review on your firm Google listing, on social media pages, and other relevant websites. Remember to give them one as well if you can. Depending on the nature of your relationship, encourage them to be detailed in the review and suggest things they could share in the review. When dealing with clients, it is best to ask for a review at the conclusion of a successful engagement.

**6. Downplay the negatives.** If you have negative reviews, you should respond online carefully. Do not engage in a debate online, but do tell the person you want to discuss the problem and follow up offline to try to resolve the situation. If you are successful, try to get the person to retract the review or add a comment that the matter was resolved. If you have negative press, there may be little you can do but if there is a possibility of responding to limit the damage try to do so. It may be worthwhile speaking to a public relations agency if it is a serious matter. Again, take care in your response that you are not making matters worse or drawing more attention to the situation. Assuming you cannot eliminate the damage,

you can counteract it by getting more positive reviews and publicity and taking the other steps mentioned above. Most businesses end up with some negative feedback so it is not as bad as it may feel. Over time, the impact will lessen.

**7. Have a marketing plan.** It takes time to implement these steps and we all have limits on the resources we can put towards this. A written plan can help you think through your options and prioritize, set goals, and determine what time and money you will need to achieve your objectives.

Following these suggestions has additional benefits. First, it will improve your search engine ranking when people search for a professional with your expertise or want more information on a specific issue that you have written or spoken about. It also makes you more visible with existing contacts. Assuming you are actively promoting your activities through your website, email, social media, and other means, they help you stay top of mind with your referral sources.

Finally, it makes you more aware of what your competitors are doing so you can be more effective in your own efforts. Studies show that prospects research and talk to multiple firms before making a decision. If you want to compete, a strong online brand is essential. It may not guarantee you get the business, but the lack of one may lose you the business.

## 10 Steps to Social Media Success

<https://www.rdtcontentmarketing.com/10-steps-to-social-media-success/>

Social media marketing is most effective when it is based on a well-thought-out strategy. Random posting is mostly a waste of time and money. You want to focus your social media activities where they are most likely to give you results. Whether you are just getting started or trying to improve your efforts, follow these steps to be more successful:

**1. Define your goals.** There are many options, including increasing your online visibility, driving traffic to your website, generating leads for a specific area of practice or other objective. Be specific because the content you share and the tactics you use will vary depending on your goals.

**2. Identify and research your target audience.** Decide who to prioritize. Then identify their [demographics](#) – age, income, gender, education, location, etc. Finally, determine their [interests and pain points](#). You want to focus your messaging on your key audience.

**3. Select the best social media platforms.** Determine where your audience is most active and likely to look for answers to the type of problems you solve. Also, look at the demographics of each platform to ensure it matches your target audience. You should focus on the top platform first. Once you are reliably posting, building a following and engaging on that platform, add the second-best platform. It's better to do a great job on one platform than do an okay job on two platforms.

**4. Check out your competitors.** Look at what platforms they are using, how active they are and what types of content they are posting. You shouldn't necessarily copy them but it is important to evaluate

your competitors and look for where you can improve on what they are doing or offer something different.

**5. Create a library of content.** First, evaluate your existing [content](#) to determine whether you can repurpose it for social media. That includes blog posts, articles, presentations, videos, pictures, charts and infographics. Next brainstorm topics of interest to your audience and ones that speak to their pain points. Focus on developing ‘evergreen’ content that doesn’t go out of date and can be reused multiple times. Topical content can be added into the mix as needed.

**6. Engage with your audience.** Social media should help build relationships. That means it can’t just be about you posting. You must [interact](#) with others. Like, comment, and share other people’s posts; follow relevant influencers and companies; join groups; send personal messages; and take other steps to strengthen your existing connections and develop new ones.

**7. Post consistently.** Commit to a schedule for sharing content regularly. Be realistic. If you have rarely posted in the past, it is hard to suddenly start posting daily. It is fine to start simple. Post once a week. After a few weeks, try twice a week. Most professionals are fine posting three times a week on a reliable basis. If you have interesting things to share more often, then do so. The key is to have it on your calendar or use a scheduling tool so you don’t forget to do it.

**8. Establish metrics and evaluate results.** All social media platforms provide analytics. What metrics are important depends on your goals. For example, if you want to increase your visibility and reach, you will want to look at the growth in followers and visits to your website. If you want more engagement with your audience, you can track likes, comments and shares of your posts.

**9. Promote your social media channels.** Add your social media links to your email newsletter, email signature, website, business cards and any digital marketing. You can also cross-promote between social sites. Remember to invite existing contacts to follow or connect with you and when you meet new people, make sure to send them an invitation as well.

**10. Integrate it into your other marketing.** All of your marketing should work together. You should be consistent in your messaging and branding and repurpose content across platforms. This is more cost-effective as well as likely to give you the best results because clients are more likely to remember your marketing if they see it regularly in multiple places.

Social media marketing like all types of marketing works best when you are strategic about your efforts. If you need assistance with your social media marketing, get help from an experienced marketer.

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The Ethical Issues in Online Marketing for Attorneys

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<https://jurisdigital.com/ethical-issues-online-marketing-attorneys/#:~:text=Some%20of%20the%20most%20common%20problems%20and%20ethical,8%20%E2%97%8F%20know%20the%20rules.%20...%20More%20items>

In today's digital world, nearly all advertising for all companies and organizations, including lawyers, is done online. It's becoming rarer for the majority of lawyers to turn to TV, radio, or billboards, let alone Yellow Pages, to promote themselves anymore.

Instead, most lawyers choose to advertise themselves by maintaining [law firm websites](#), posting content regularly, and perhaps even being involved in social media. In some instances, attorneys may also choose to run paid ads online.

While the advent of the internet has no doubt added convenience and made accessing information instantaneously, so too has it turned the ethics of marketing and advertising on its head.

Today, the ethics surrounding online marketing for attorneys are often muddled by the desire to gain leads and acquire clients. Some of these ethical requirements and missteps have even been so severe that they have been tested in court.

The following seeks to explore the ethical issues in online marketing for attorneys, beginning with a brief history of marketing for attorneys and touching upon common problems in online marketing, proposed limits on online marketing, and general good practices for online marketing for attorneys.

#### Brief History of Marketing for Attorneys

Before the days of the internet, how exactly did attorneys market themselves? And were there any rules for marketing?

Prior to the 1970s, legal marketing was practically banned throughout the United States. In 1976, two lawyers took the chance to advertise themselves despite the risk of penalty from their state bar. While the advertisement was successful, they were indeed reprimanded, which included a six-month suspension.

Ultimately, the case made its way to the Supreme Court, which concluded in *Bates v. State Bar of Arizona* that truthful advertisement of services was protected under the United States Constitution.

The Supreme Court decision opened the floodgates to legal advertising. Prior to the 2000s, the primary forms of lawyer advertising included newspaper ads, ads placed in local phone books, radio and television ads, and billboards.

In 2021, most law firms maintain their own websites, and legal advertising has reached a whole new level.

#### Common Problems and Ethical Issues in Online Marketing



As lawyers seek to be competitive, new and potentially unscrupulous tactics have been devised to attract potential clients. Some of the most common problems and ethical issues that are seen with [attorney SEO programs](#), particularly legal advertising, include:

- Claiming to be a specialist or expert. Most states' bars have rules that prohibit an attorney from claiming to be a specialist or an expert. These rules are in place to prevent false and misleading claims.
- Blurring the lines of the client-attorney relationship. In a world of instant communication, the lines that distinguish the formation of the client-attorney relationship can be blurred. This is especially true when clients ask online questions and lawyers post open responses, often through social media. It is important that online communications contain a disclaimer, and that communications are taken offline as soon as possible.
- Posting deceptive or misleading information. Unfortunately, advertising can often be deceptive. Even something like writing the word "lawyers" when the firm only has one "lawyer" can be misleading.
- Claiming to offer legal services in an unauthorized jurisdiction. In today's day and age, geo-targeting is an important part of effective online marketing. But lawyers must be wary of promoting themselves in jurisdictions where they are not authorized to practice.
- Making unsubstantiated claims. Using qualifiers like "best" and "most" can be problematic. A law firm should refrain from saying things such as, "The most reputable law firm in..." etc.
- Making unfounded promises or citing victories without qualifying them. Finally, legal marketing may make unfounded promises or talk about legal victories without qualifying them with a statement explaining that an outcome is not guaranteed and that outcomes vary on a case-by-case basis.

Clearly, the ethical issues are myriad, and surely the list above is not inclusive. Other potential issues include online reviews and blurring the line between personal and professional via social media.

#### Proposed Limits on Online Marketing for Attorneys

Due to the large number of ethical objections that are raised as a result of online marketing, many states' bars have attempted to place limits on the ways in which attorneys can market themselves online. Some of these proposed limits include the requirement for content to include certain disclosures, the prohibition of client testimonials, the exclusion of any of the law firm's past results, limits on the use of the word "specialist," and more. It is important to familiarize yourself with any standards set forth by your state bar.

#### Good Practices for Online Marketing for Attorneys

To not advertise is unthinkable for the majority of law firms and could be extremely harmful to a law firm's success. Fortunately, ethical advertising is very possible when law firms and lawyers adhere to a set of guidelines and general good practices for online marketing. Some tips for ethical marketing include:

- Apply guidelines to all online activity. If you're not sure whether or not what you're doing online is considered advertising, it's smart to assume it is as an added layer of protection.

- Know the rules. Know the rules for your state bar. The more you know, the more confident you will be in your ability to meet guidelines.
- Be honest. The best way to avoid an ethical issue is to make sure that everything you say online or post on your website is honest. This ranges from the number of years you've been practicing to the number of cases you've won to the type of law you're most experienced in and more.
- Work with a reputable and knowledgeable marketing company. Working with a knowledgeable marketing company who is familiar with the laws for your state and is aware of ethical issues in online marketing for attorneys can provide peace of mind.

Finally, remember that everything that you do online has a permanent digital footprint. Before you post any online content, familiarize yourself with ethical issues and ensure your content is in compliance. The best way to avoid a problem is to stay educated and informed.



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