

MARKETING GUIDE

FOR FAMILY LAWYERS

Effective Marketing Strategies

Marketing Planning
for Success

Does Your Website
Get You Clients?

Your Law Firm's
Video Plan

Poor Online Ratings
and Fake Reviews

Why Bother
with Branding?

Marketing from a
Lawyer's Perspective

www.DivorceMarketingGroup.com

Our Clients Strongly Recommend Divorce Marketing Group for:



1. Strategic Thinking

“They will help you grow your business into the future before you even know what the future is.”

– Joy Feinberg, Boyle Feinberg Sharma, Chicago



2. Website Designs for Family Lawyers

“You’ve been extremely patient, responsive, and knowledgeable.”

– Melanie K. Reichert, Broyles, Kight & Ricafort, P.C., Indianapolis



3. Resources to Promote Family Lawyers

“Their marketing products and services are 100% focused on the subject of divorce.”

– Patricia Carter, Carter Morris LLP, Houston



4. Videos for Family Lawyers

“I highly recommend the DMG video team: they are very professional and will distinguish you from the rest of the crowd.”

– Mary Ann Burmester, NM Divorce & Custody Law, LLC, Albuquerque



5. Reputation Enhancement & Management

“The exposure we and our peers get through DivorceMag.com, Divorce Magazine, Family Lawyer Magazine, etc. has been tremendous.”

– Randall Kessler, Kessler & Solomiany, Atlanta



**Focus on your practice.
Trust the marketing to us.**

Contact Us for Your Free Initial Marketing Consultation • 866.803.6667 x 124
Sales@DivorceMarketingGroup.com • www.DivorceMarketingGroup.com

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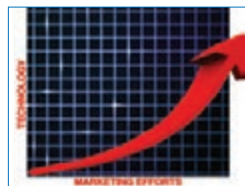
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About This Guide

Since we started Divorce Marketing Group 21 years ago, marketing for family lawyers has grown exponentially. In 1996, most family law firms did not have a budget for marketing; today, our clients are spending 5% to 12% of their revenue on marketing.

This third edition of our popular *Marketing Guide for Family Lawyers* is a reflection of the growing interest in marketing among attorneys.

We created this *Guide* to help you stand out from your peers, generate regular referrals, attract quality prospects, and convert those prospects into clients. We offer tips and strategies to help improve your marketing results, get you on track, or get you started if marketing is on your firm's agenda for the first time.

Top family law firms have trusted us to handle *all* their marketing needs. As the only marketing agency 100%

dedicated to promoting family lawyers and other professionals serving the divorce market for more than 21 years, we are eminently qualified to offer this advice.

In the "Divorce Marketing Group Insights" sections of the articles, we share the best and most-practical ways to implement our suggestions based on our collective experiences from having worked with family law clients across the country.

We hope you benefit from the expert advice you find in this *Marketing Guide*. Please contact us to explore how we may help you grow your practice.



Martha Chan



Dan Couvrette



Marketing Planning for Success

Failing to plan is planning to fail. Rapid changes in technology are generating a multitude of new marketing options – which makes marketing more complicated, and planning more important. Here are tips for growing your business in 2017 and beyond.

By Martha Chan

Marketing Has Changed. Have You?

Fifteen years ago, when we first told family lawyers they needed websites, they looked at us as if we were from Mars. Ten years ago, when we told them they needed to be on social media, many family lawyers told us that they would not be caught dead on Facebook. Eight years ago, when we started shooting videos for clients, most family lawyers didn't see the need. There were a handful of lawyers who embraced new ideas about marketing, and they have

continued to reap the benefits from being an early adopter.

Things have changed among family lawyers. Today, most agree that having a website is a must, and most have cautiously (or eagerly, in some cases) started using social media, especially LinkedIn. And – like it or not – videos are the dominant force on the Internet, accounting for 70% of all traffic.

In short: if you don't have a website or a social media presence, you are pretty much viewed as a dinosaur. If you have podcasts and videos, then

you are seen as more progressive and relevant. Guess what? This matters to your prospective clients.

And there are seemingly endless opportunities to promote yourself on local directories, directories of lawyers with ratings, or to become selected as a SuperLawyer, Best Family Law Firm, just to name a couple of examples.

Marketing Under Pressure

Many of our clients first came to us for websites because their competitors had websites. Others needed to have their

existing websites redesigned because theirs were terribly outdated in looks and technology. Many of those did not realize their content desperately needed updating as well. Some lawyers came to us when they discovered that they had been paying far too much for far too long for their website hosting or maintenance. Some dipped their toes into marketing when their business was not doing well, asking for a Facebook page or to place some advertising.

Ad Hoc Marketing

Many family law firms practice “ad hoc marketing”: they try out different things once or twice sporadically. These efforts include pay-per-click advertising (PPC), magazine advertising, search engine optimization (SEO), writing blog posts, advertising on YellowPages.com, etc. Mostly, they try something because a salesperson contacted them or they received a seemingly irresistible email offer from an unknown person (normally from India or the Philippines) telling them they could be on page one of Google search results within two weeks.

When there is no game plan, success is unlikely. Scattershot marketing efforts – thrown together with no strategy or vision – usually provide poor results, proving that whatever they were sold was not worth it and not to be repeated again. Sometimes lawyers have been ripped-off because they don’t know how to screen for legitimate and effective providers.

So You Have a Website...

Many family law firms think that once they have a website, their work is done and they do not have to worry about it anymore. There is no strategy for growing traffic to the website or updating the content on a regular basis. Google does not like unchanging websites, and visitors don’t like to navigate through outdated websites either. If you have a website, then you need a plan to add new content to it frequently – and with today’s digital world, reading articles is being replaced by watching videos and listening to podcasts.

How’s that Facebook Post Coming Along?

Many of our clients ask us to build them a corporate social media page but do not invest in continuous posts on their Facebook, LinkedIn, Google Plus, or Twitter accounts. They believe they can handle it in-house – but 90% of the time, the posts stop soon after the pages are up. This, too, is part of ad hoc marketing.

Invest in Creating Your Marketing Plan for Your Law Firm Every Year

There is a saying: “Failing to plan is planning to fail.” This is especially true today when rapid changes in technology generate a multitude of new marketing options – which makes marketing more complicated, and marketing planning more important.

When you create a marketing plan, you need to:

1. **Define the prospective clients you desire.**
2. **Compose your marketing positioning statement.**
3. **Develop your strategy.**
4. **Define and implement your action plan.**

More and more of our clients have taken our advice to do two- and three-year marketing plans. Why? So they can allocate their marketing budget effectively and cover more bases.

We love it when our clients have a marketing person that we can work with on strategy and execution. That’s where we see the most results and growth for the law firm. Unfortunately, that happens less than 5% of the time. Most often, we work with the lawyer, their assistant, or a paralegal. While we usually manage to execute their programs, we are often met with delays as we wait for information or feedback from the client. For example, we tried to launch a website with a former client for more than three years!

We highly recommend you work with a marketing firm who can offer advice for how to take advantage of the latest marketing techniques and technologies – and then put the plan into action for you once you have determined a strategy. ■

Divorce Marketing Group Insights

Few Law Firms Have a Marketing Plan, Budget, or Department

Let’s be honest: creating a marketing plan is probably not an “A” priority for you – even if you think it’s a good idea. You need help from marketing professionals.

We’ve been in the business of helping family lawyers plan and execute marketing plans for 21 years. We only work in the divorce niche, so we can share “insider information” about how successful family law firms across the country are securing high-quality divorce cases with our clients. Since 1996, we’ve also been providing information and resources for divorcing people through our *Divorce Magazine* and websites, www.DivorceMag.com and, more recently, www.DivorcedMoms.com and www.TheDivorceSchool.com.

Focus on Your Practice. Trust the Marketing to Us.

We guide our clients through the marketing planning process in the same way you guide your clients through the divorce process: one step at a time. Just as someone could get divorced without the help of a lawyer, you could design your own marketing plan – but in both cases, the results will likely be sub-par.

We know your top priority is taking care of your clients. Even if you find the time to create your own marketing plan, you’ll hit roadblocks when it comes time to execute it. For example, you might be able to identify what distinguishes your firm from the competition, but have no idea how to powerfully articulate those differences, choose images and words that will attract your ideal clients, or determine the best way to get your message out to the world. We can help: we have been doing this work every day for 21 years. ■



Poor Online Ratings & Fake Reviews

Your online reputation may not match who you really are. It can also be destroyed in just a minute by some anonymous person who might have never used your service. Here's how to manage your online reputation.

By Martha Chan

Just about everyone who wants to hire a family lawyer will do some research online, even if your name was given to them by someone they trust. According to research by SoftwareAdvice.com¹, 43% of prospects said they used online reviews to research attorneys and 70% of them would consider going to an attorney in an inconvenient part of town if he or she had better online reviews than one closer to home. While this research was conducted in 2014, we expect the percentages of prospects using online research to increase in 2017.

When a prospective client searches for you or your firm's name online, you

hope the results will encourage them to contact you; unfortunately, that is not always the case.

Google Your Name and See What You Find

To avoid your search results being biased by your search history, you need to clear the history on your browser. Don't know how? Just google it!

Do you show up on page one of the Google search results? Better still, do you *dominate* page one? Is there any "bad stuff" about you on that page or on the next page? You may be surprised to see that you show up on many websites and directories – including city directories, www.FindLaw.com, www.Lawyers.com, www.DivorceMagazine.com, or

www.DivorcedMoms.com.

You may also be listed on websites that encourage consumers to "rate" and

**You want to
dominate the first
two pages of Google
search results,
and you want
those results to be
overwhelmingly
positive.**

¹ www.softwareadvice.com/legal/industryview/how-clients-use-legal-reviews-2014

leave reviews about you, such as www.Yelp.com, or www.LawyerRatingz.com. There are other websites that rate you, as a family lawyer, based on public information they have gathered about you, such as Avvo.com.

Negative Ratings and Fake Reviews Remain Online Forever

You may think that if you are an excellent family lawyer, your online reputation will also be excellent. Unfortunately, online, you are your search results.

The unflattering information about you could be the work of a disgruntled individual who may have never used your service, such as the ex-spouse of your client or a former employee. They may post negative reviews or comments about you anonymously on multiple websites – including your firm’s Facebook page. Justified or not, this negative information is online for everyone to see, forever. It is hard to prove that slanderous reviews and comments are fake, and most websites will not remove them.

What If You Cannot Be Found Online?

Depending on how much “Google power” your website has, it may not show up on the first few pages of search results. Or, you may have a very common name such as “John Smith” and other John Smiths have done a better job at marketing themselves online. When this happens you can be hard to find, and prospective clients will be unaware that you exist, see other law firms that interest them and stop looking, or (if they eventually find you) they may conclude that you are behind the times. There is no doubt that online invisibility will hurt you. You may never even know you have lost a great client because they never place an initial call to your office.

How to Enhance Your Online Reputation

Today, most law firms have websites. If you do not have a good website, however, you need to get one right away. Just having a website does not help you dominate the Google search results. Web pages with negative

reviews and ratings may show up immediately following – or even before – your website. Directory listings with incomplete or dated information about you may also show up on page one.

Ideally, you want to dominate the first two pages of Google search results, and you want those results to be overwhelmingly positive. To achieve that, you have to be proactive and create great content that you market online. This way, Google search results can show the content you control and reflect your excellent reputation.

Here are some tips on how to be proactive in managing and enhancing your online reputation:

- 1. Create social media pages for yourself and your firm.** Start with the free and most powerful ones: we recommend LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest, where you can post and update your information at any time. Make sure you do a great job when completing your profile. State your experience, cases you have handled, and why visitors should choose you over other family lawyers. The more active you are on your social media pages, the better the chances of them showing up on page one under your name.
- 2. Complete and update your listings.** Find the top 10 web pages that show up under your name; if they are directories with listings about you,

make sure you claim them, complete your profile, and correct any dated information.

- 3. Create videos and promote them online.** Create a series of short videos on divorce and subjects that your prospective clients are searching for, then promote them for free on www.Youtube.com, which is the second-most visited website after Google. These videos can feature you answering simple FAQs, which you can also add to your social media pages and your website.
- 4. Enhance your ratings on lawyer rating websites.** Learn their rating system and supply the information that favors you. To learn more, read “What’s in an AVVO Rating?” at www.familylawyermagazine.com/articles/whats-in-an-avvo-rating.
- 5. Encourage your satisfied clients to review you.** Build up your five-star ratings by regularly inviting your happy clients to review you. This way, one bad rating out of 20 will not have as much impact. Also, the latest ratings are usually displayed at the top of the page, pushing the unfavorable ones out of sight.
- 6. Respond to reviews.** Do not let poor reviews sit there without offering a professional response that invites them to contact you so you may further understand their issues. Certainly you should thank clients who give you a positive review. ■

Divorce Marketing Group Insights

After we perform reputation audits for our family law clients, many of them are shocked to find poor reviews about them; in one case, someone had built a dedicated website just to bad-mouth them. Some clients had incorrect phone numbers, or were listed as working for a family law firm they left several years ago.

Most of our clients tend not to worry about a problem until they have one. However, we believe that it pays to have someone conduct an online reputation audit for you so you can determine whether you need to take action to ameliorate a poor reputation or ranking.

Although the work to enhance your online reputation is not rocket science, it is tedious and time-consuming – but highly beneficial. The bottom line is this: your online reputation is important and deserves your attention. The alternative is simply too costly. ■



Does Your Website Get You Clients?

Does your family law firm's website deliver on your business objectives, or does it merely look good?

By Dan Couvrette

A lot of family lawyer websites have sizzle but no steak, because with today's technology it is relatively easy to have a website that looks good or even dazzles visitors with all its bells and whistles. But does it deliver what you really want?

Questions to Ask Yourself:

1. Does my website reflect my branding and marketing positioning of my practice properly? (Read "Why Bother with Branding?" starting on page 12 to learn more about this.)
2. Did I get any appointments or business from my website? What is the traffic to my website and how do they come to my website?
3. Does my website offer useful information and resources that visitors can use to help them make decisions during separation and divorce? Consider the following factors as you

prepare to (re)design your website.

Hire the Right Firm to Design Your Website

Before you start the process of creating your website, make sure you hire a firm that understands family law as well as your practice, business objectives, desired prospective clients, positioning statement, and branding strategy. Most website designers are designers first; as such, your business objectives will take a back seat. Be sure to discuss what elements you need to include on your website to generate business.

See Your Website Through Your Prospective Clients' Eyes

Contrary to common practice, your website should not only be about your law firm and lawyers – it should also be about serving the needs of visitors and prospective clients. Prospective clients

are interested in more than reading a firm overview and the lawyers' biographies. They want to know whether they'll feel comfortable with you and your firm, and whether you can deliver their key objectives. Most divorcing people are prone to making emotional decisions during this highly emotional time. The graphics, pictures, and text displayed on your website must address what a tough time this is – appealing to their hearts as much as their heads.

Post Plenty of Top-Quality, Relevant Content

Improve your visitors' lives by easing their pain of going through a divorce. Include a "Resource Centre" on your website, adding relevant and easy-to-consume content regularly in these formats:

- **Videos** – This is the most powerful

way to give prospective clients an idea of what it would be like to work with you.

- **Podcasts** – This is a simple way of providing useful information that costs less than videos.
- **Text and Video FAQs** – Divorcing people have lots of questions and want them answered now.
- **Monthly eNewsletter** – A good way to demonstrate your knowledge and keep in touch with your referral sources.
- **Blog posts** – Another great way of educating visitors and letting them know you in a more personal and informal manner.

Providing the above will accomplish the following business objectives:

- Bring more people to your website.
- Increase the chances of them returning to and sharing your website with others.
- Increase the chances they'll contact and retain your firm.
- Enhance your image as a thought leader and authority in family law.
- Improve your search-engine ranking if the content is optimized for search engines.

Make Your Website Visitor-Friendly

Visitors to your website need to be able to see immediately where they should go to get what they want. Keep in mind that website surfers are generally impatient. Use conventional navigation so they do not have to learn how to use your website. Make sure the navigation buttons are self-explanatory, not hidden or laid out differently from page to page.

Your prospects and clients are not lawyers, so keep unnecessary jargon off your website. Use “we” and “you and your spouse,” instead of “the parties” and “the file.”

You Need a Responsive Website

With approximately 60% of people viewing websites on mobile devices, you need to make sure you have a mobile-friendly website that adjusts itself and displays well on smartphones, tablets, laptops, or TV.

Make Your Website Search-Engine Friendly

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is a big topic – much too big to handle as part of this short article. You need to deal with website designers who understand this subject inside and out, as it is complex and ever-changing. At minimum, you need to:

- **Optimize your web text and images.** When using key phrases, consider long-tail key phrases and voice searches for answers to questions such as, “How long will my divorce take?”
- **Use best practice for meta tags.** Don't focus on just “Family Lawyers” or “Family Lawyers in New York”. Each page has to have its own unique title and description that will entice people to click on your website from their search results.
- **Optimize the speed of your website.** When more people are visiting websites on mobile, the speed of delivery matters to them and to Google.
- **Get backlinks from relevant and authoritative websites.** This will improve your website's value in the eyes of Google and other search engines. Don't fall for any scams that get you 1,000 backlinks from one website; that is a red flag for Google.

Make Full Use of Calls to Action

If you are interested in generating business from your website, invite visitors to contact you, and make it easy for them to do so. Some visitors prefer to call right away or set up a time to call and some prefer to do it by email. You have many options, including:

- A submission form on every page above the fold, so visitors can see it without scrolling down.
- Showing your phone number right on the top of your website on every page.
- A pop-up that asks if they want to schedule an initial consultation by phone or in person.
- A chat service.

Make sure potential clients can call or email you with one click – and without having to hunt for contact information. ■

Divorce Marketing Group Insights

Having a Great Website Is No Longer Optional

No matter what you do or don't do to market your family law firm, almost all of your prospective clients will visit your website. We work exclusively with family lawyers, so we know how critical it is to distinguish our clients from all other competing family lawyers, and how important it is for them to connect with prospective clients.

We Know How Hard You've Worked to Get Your Designations and Awards

If you are a “Certified Family Law Specialist”, or have been recognized as a “Super Lawyer” or “Best Lawyer”, we'll be sure to highlight these and build the confidence a prospective divorcing client has by telling them they are being represented by a seasoned professional who is able to better protect their interests, understand their concerns, and help get them their desired results.

Top Issues Facing Divorcing People – and What Sells Them

Divorce Marketing Group launched *Divorce Magazine* and DivorceMag.com 21 years ago, so we know the needs of divorcing people and how lawyers can satisfy those needs. Other website design firms who don't understand divorcing people often highlight the wrong features and miss the opportunity to clarify the benefits the lawyer or their firm offers to their prospective clients. ■



Your Law Firm's Video Plan

Videos need to be a part of your marketing strategy *now*, here's how to ensure you create the best-quality videos for your law firm.

By Dan Couvrette

According to research data released by Statisticbrain.com last fall, there were more than 1.3 billion people using YouTube, viewing almost 5 billion videos every day. A November 2018 report from Cisco predicts that: "Globally, IP video traffic will be 82% of all consumer Internet traffic by 2020, up from 70% in 2015."

There's no question about the potential of videos to bring people to your website and to engage their interest once they've found you; the only question is whether you'll take advantage of this growing trend or be at its mercy.

"While marketers find video to be among the most effective content type used in content marketing initiatives, they also rank creating it as among the most difficult," says Michelle Manafy,

Editorial Director of Digital Content Next.

Prospective clients who visit your website have one thing in mind: should they hire you as their lawyer? Before making that decision, they want to learn more about you, your expertise, your firm, if you can solve their problems, and how much it will cost. Subconsciously or not, they also make that decision based on your personal style – especially when choosing between two similar law firms or lawyers. You're in a competitive market: in order to stand out and be remembered, you need to have videos on your website.

Converting Visitors to Clients

Aside from an in-person meeting, the most compelling way to demonstrate that your firm is the right fit for

a potential client is through informative videos featuring you and/or other attorneys on your website. If a picture is worth a thousand words, then a video is worth a hundred-thousand words.

Well-produced videos can dramatically increase your chances of being contacted by website visitors. These videos should be engaging and informative, and they should create a great first impression of your firm. Videos also provide a lasting impression that can be far more effective than text or still photos.

Divorcing people have a lot of questions, and they are often confused about what to do and what they need. Offering the information they are seeking in short, accessible videos will appeal to them – and possibly end their search

for the right lawyer!

What you say, how you say it, and how you present yourself in the videos will help prospective clients decide whether or not you're the right fit for them. The right kind of video will help you attract the right kind of clients – and help to reduce time spent on unproductive phone calls and initial consultations.

A well-executed video on a landing page can increase conversion by as much as 80%. “A high-converting video is one that’s focused on meeting people’s real needs (i.e., educating them), not on converting them,” writes Aaron Orendorff on Unbounce.com.

Reaching Potential Clients Through Search Engines

Videos can be optimized for search engines (Google, Bing, etc.) so that they show up in search results. They also enable you to broaden your Internet exposure because you can feature your videos on YouTube, Facebook, and on other websites in addition to your own.

What’s Involved in Producing High-Quality Videos?

1. Pre-Production Planning

The saying “Anything worth doing is worth doing right” was never more true than for video production. We recommend you create an “overview” video that helps prospects understand why they should choose your firm, supported by a set of videos answering FAQs about divorce in your state (or even city).

- **Your firm overview video.** This delivers your firm’s positioning statement: you should clearly state who you are, the type of clients you represent, and how you can help. The following examples show how to attract different types of clients.
- **Example 1.** “For the past 30 years, our firm has been helping business people and their spouses through complex divorces. We’re known for handling high-stakes divorce, and for keeping our clients’ cases private.”
- **Example 2.** “For the past 30 years, I have been helping families achieve amicable divorces while ensuring my clients receive their fair share.”

A well-executed video on a landing page can increase conversion by as much as 80%.

- **FAQ videos.** Divorcing people are searching for information that will help them through the process from beginning to end – and if you want these videos to convert viewers to clients, then offer valuable information that educates your viewers. The questions you choose to answer should be determined by the type of clients you want to attract, so select questions based on the needs/wants of your target clients.
- **Write and rehearse what you are going to say.** Many lawyers are more nervous in front of a camera than they are in court! Knowing exactly what to say allows you to focus on your tone and delivery; using a script reduces the number of takes, which saves time and money.
- **Tone and manner.** No matter what type of client you’re trying to attract,

you should present the most professional image possible. You need to look and be the part, ensuring that the message and delivery are consistent.

2. The Video Shoot

- **Location.** Let the videographer help determine the best location in your office; he/she will factor in lighting and sound before deciding where to shoot. The space needs to be as quiet as possible: fluorescent lights and office equipment can create a surprisingly loud hum or buzz that is clearly audible on your videos.
- **What you see is what you get.** Once the camera is set up, take a look at what you can see through the viewfinder. Is your favorite painting or sculpture showing up the way you want? Are your Best Lawyers or Super Lawyer plaques in the frame? Are there fingerprints or crumbs on your desk?
- **What to wear.** In terms of outfits, most solid colors are good. Make sure what you wear is not distracting: avoid loud colors or big patterns. Also avoid shiny or jingly jewelry.
- **Teleprompter.** If you have access to a teleprompter, use it and read from a script rather than winging it. ■

Divorce Marketing Group Insights

We Know the Divorce Market – Inside and Out

When it comes to producing videos for our family lawyer clients, we have an advantage because we understand what divorcing people are looking for and how family lawyers want to be portrayed.

Pre-planning is the key to success, but we also need to be able to think on our feet to take advantage of everything that could make the videos better for our clients. That means we:

- Assess all possible locations for the shoot within the client’s office plus outside the office (i.e., courthouse, landmark buildings, etc.).
- Use awards and plaques in shots to make the point – but not so many that they become distracting.
- Make adjustments on the fly when one of the attorneys is not at their best or unable to get through a script as well as they were hoping to, ensuring that they’ll be thrilled with the final product.
- Work with scripts, storyboards, and teleprompters to make the video process as stress-free as possible. This enables us to create the best videos possible. ■

Why Bother with

BRANDING?

Branding is a way of declaring who you are to the people that matter: your clients, your prospective clients, colleagues, judges, the community that you service, and the public.

By Martha Chan

Branding helps you attract the kind of clients and cases you want in your practice. Do you want complex divorce cases, high-asset or high-conflict clients, or collaborative cases? Do you want to attract men, women, or both? Military divorce cases? Custody cases?

4 Key Elements of Branding

1. *Business Objectives and Marketing*

Positioning. Branding is a way to accomplish your business objectives. Are you interested in growth? Changing your company's direction? Securing more cases from the same kind of clientele – or expanding to include a wider range of cases? Branding must also address the marketing positioning of your firm, so you need to know exactly who your target audience is and what kinds of cases you want to attract.

2. What Sets Your Firm Apart? Why should prospective clients choose your firm rather than another one? You have to differentiate yourself from other lawyers in such a way that your ideal client thinks that you'll be their ideal lawyer.

3. Determine Your Main Message. What is the primary message you want people to know about you or your firm? If they were to visit your

website, can they tell within a matter of seconds what services you offer, whether your outlook and ethics are compatible, and why they should hire you? According to HubSpot.com, 55% of visitors spend fewer than 15 seconds on a website that doesn't appeal to them. You must distill your main message down to a clear, concise statement so visitors can see – right away – whether or not your firm is right for them.

4. *Manage Your Online Reputation.*

Your branding is not limited to your own website or marketing materials: it includes everything that is available online, whether you like it or not. You may be a great family lawyer with a strong reputation among your peers, but online, you are your Google results. Have you performed an online reputation audit recently? If not, the simplest way to start is to Google your name and the name of your firm. If the results are unflattering, it is time to take control of your online reputation.

may be colleagues who refer business to you – but some are also competitors who can take business away from you. Perform a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis to help you determine what you, your team, and your practice might need to compete successfully for desirable clients and achieve your goals.

First, you need to be clear about what your business and personal goals are; then you need to do an honest review of yourself and your practice to determine how your current SWOT will impact your goals.

You also need to decide whether you are branding yourself or your company. If you are a sole practitioner, then your personal and corporate branding could be fairly similar. But if your firm has multiple attorneys, then you must establish your corporate branding first, and then, within that corporate brand, each attorney's personal branding could be different.

Step 2: Marketing Positioning

Questions you need to answer regarding positioning your firm include:

- Who are your primary and secondary prospective clients?
- What is your unique value proposition (UVP)? Your UVP describes the benefits you offer clients, how

The Branding Process

Step 1: SWOT Analysis

When you are branding yourself and your firm, you need to be aware of who your competitors are. Many of them



We changed the look and feel of the client's website (above), then applied the same marketing approach to their firm's newsletter and a magazine ad (right).



you solve their problems, and what distinguishes you from the competition.

- What position do you own now – and what position do you want to own?
- Who will you be competing with?
- Can you match or surpass your competitors?

Step 3. Execution

Apply your answers from the above exercise when you're creating or reviewing your marketing materials – including your logo, tagline, business card, the design of your website, advertisements, videos and brochure, the text that you use to describe your practice, and your image choices.

Many law firms do not have logos – and that's a mistake, because a good logo can say a lot about you. It can be ultra-modern or traditional, brightly colored or conservative, and it should be consistent with your marketing positioning.

Case Study: Successful Branding

Divorce Marketing Group recently worked on branding for an established law firm in Chicago. They handle high-net-worth divorce cases – including business owners and professionals – and they also handle custody cases. Their issue was that their brand did not accurately reflect who they were as lawyers or speak to their desired clientele. Some clients they thought should have retained them went to other law firms with fewer

credentials, so they asked us to help them secure more high-net-worth cases.

First, we interviewed the partners to create a full and accurate picture of them and their ideal clients, worked with them on their UVP, and then devised a tagline that reflects who they are: "Family Lawyers Who Mean Business." We also modified their logo and redesigned their business card.

We changed the look and feel of their website – which included a new tagline and new photos that show them as strong, no-nonsense, and business-savvy lawyers. Because it only takes a prospective client seconds to decide whether a firm might be right for them, we highlighted their preferred clientele on the homepage.

We applied the same marketing approach to a magazine ad, their firm's newsletter, and their business cards. ■



Divorce Marketing Group Insights

Good branding begins with a vision. You also need courage and patience, because you will have to make sacrifices and you will have to stay the course until the seeds you've planted start bearing fruit.

What are these sacrifices? Well, if you want your firm to be known as the men's rights firm in your area, then you must accept that half the divorcing population – women – will never hire you. The tighter your niche, the smaller your pool of potential clients – but if they're the right clients, this is a plus rather than a minus.

Most firm owners or associates can only think as an insider, or "inside-out." Thinking "outside-in" requires objectivity, and it requires that you leave your ego behind. ■

Marketing from a Lawyer's Perspective

The modern family lawyer must develop a consistent marketing strategy and embrace technology as a powerful promotional tool.

By Jennifer A. Brandt, Family Lawyer

A family lawyer's book of business is unique because, unlike those who practice in other fields of law, family lawyers cannot rely on repeat business. If you do not have a web-based presence and are not actively promoting your practice, you are giving away business to your more tech-savvy competitors.

Many lawyers operate on the theory that if they are excellent lawyers, they will naturally attract new clients. However, simply being an excellent lawyer is not sufficient: you must also devote significant time to cultivating new business in order to grow your practice.

Developing a Marketing Strategy

Attorneys are often advised to take potential referral sources to lunch or attend networking events, but not everyone enjoys making small talk at lunch, and networking events can be even more daunting. These folks must employ alternative marketing strategies.

If you enjoy writing, for example, seek out opportunities to write an article for a local legal publication or your local newspaper – both of which are usually searching for good content. You can create your own blog – which requires little effort to establish, but does require regular updates. Social media sites such as LinkedIn make it easy for anyone to be a blogger.

If public speaking is of interest to you, then look for opportunities to

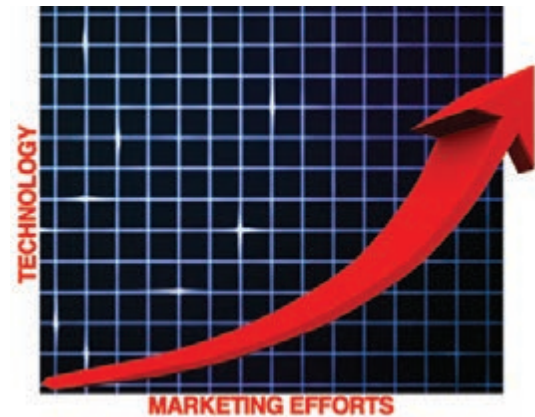
speak to professional or lay audiences. Most states have continuing education requirements for lawyers, so there are many chances for qualified speakers to lead or participate in seminars and webinars (which can be done without even leaving your desk). You can even create your own seminar and publicize it on YouTube or invite a live audience to attend.

Getting involved in local and national bar associations is a well-established method of business development.

If the more traditional marketing techniques are not for you, there are innumerable ways to promote your practice. As family lawyers, our prospective clients are our neighbors, friends of friends, etc. Therefore, business development can be accomplished wherever we meet people, such as at our kids' sporting events, community gatherings, parties – just about everywhere. The most important thing is to come up with a marketing plan and implement it regularly.

Using Technology to Grow Your Practice

Once you have established a plan, you need to let others know about what you are doing. These days, it is easy to do so through social media. Sites such as LinkedIn and Facebook, for example, allow you to connect with many people and provide an immediate platform to publicize your most recent articles and speaking engagements. If you are



consistent in this practice, others can't help but think of you when they want to make a referral.

Your website must be a crucial part of your marketing plan. It should accurately reflect your practice, letting people know what you do, your corporate philosophy, and how you work with clients. It is worth your time and effort to pay as much attention to your website as you would your most important client, updating it frequently so it reflects your latest accomplishments.

Prospective clients will Google your name and your firm's name and visit your website before they pick up the phone to call you. To grow your business, it is critical to develop and implement a personalized marketing plan that you will follow with consistency. ■

Jennifer A. Brandt is a shareholder in the family law department of Cozen O'Connor. A frequent commentator on national and local news networks, Jennifer is the author of the Family Law Focus blog: www.familylawfocusblog.com

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“We have been extremely pleased with the responsiveness and creativity of the Divorce Marketing Group. It is quickly apparent that working with a firm devoted to working with and promoting family law practices has its advantages. This is a company that understands the unique needs of the family law attorney and the marketing sensitivity required to advertise to those going through such an emotionally difficult period in their lives. Highly recommended!”

~ Robert Stevens, Attorney
Clark & Stevens, www.clarkandstevens.com

“I just wanted to tell you that the website looks really nice and I appreciate all of your hard work on it and your patience with me and Melanie!”

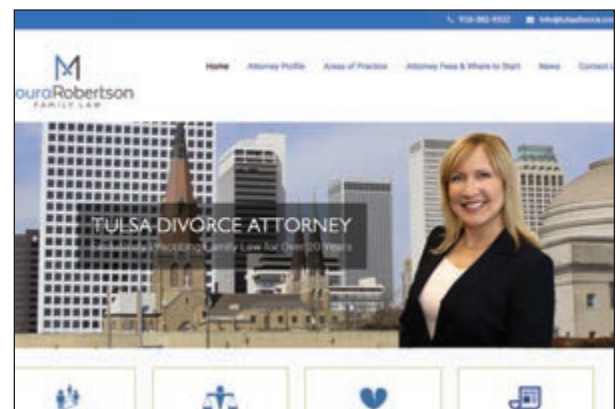
~ Nissa M. Ricafort, Attorney
Broyles Kight & Ricafort, P.C., www.bkrfamilylaw.com

“I second that. You’ve been extremely patient, responsive and knowledgeable – all things that are a big plus for two type-A attorneys with zero marketing savvy.”

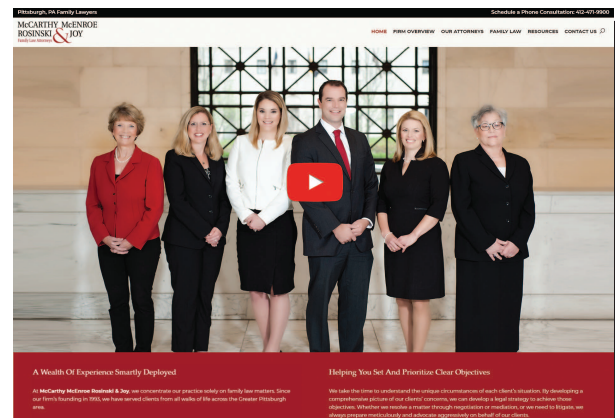
~ Melanie K. Reichert, Attorney,
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