

4 Mistakes You're Making on Your Law Firm Website

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Every law firm's website is unique, but after viewing thousands of them at our marketing firm, we can name the most common mistakes in our sleep. Run through a quick check of your site to look for these mistakes, and correct them to clear the path for potential clients.

1. Not having a clear way for your visitor to reach you

Don't make your potential clients work to reach you. If you've ever been unable to contact a company because you couldn't find a phone number or email, you understand the frustration of those who can't find an easy way to contact a law firm. Most firms have their number on their website, but consider taking that a step forward. Potential clients now have their pick of communication methods in other industries, and the legal industry is slow to adopt these alternative methods. A website might have a contact form... but do you allow potential clients to chat with you live, text you, or schedule time directly on your calendar? Remove the barriers to communicate with you and your team and allow your potential clients to reach you on their terms.

2. Putting too much content

Occasionally lawyers will engage in a game of one-upping each other through their overly-complex published papers, sometimes peppered with citations. While this can have varying results among your peers, this rivalry universally alienates potential clients. Clients coming to you are seeking understanding and a solution to their complicated issues. The last thing they want to see is walls of academic content that is even more confusing than their present issue. Think of that last computer or TV you bought. Did your buying experience include a high-level easy-to-digest summary of the features that would solve your needs, or did you have to wade through pages of technical details with voltages, amperages and operating temperatures? In a similar way, potential clients count on you to condense years of honed experience and knowledge into understandable chunks of information, pertinent to each clients' needs. Keep the content on your website brief, and if you intend to write something longer, make sure it is easily digestible for someone unfamiliar with the legal industry.

3. Treating your website as a brochure

If you could print out your website and get 80% of the same value, your website is a brochure. There was a time when all websites were just a collection of single “webpages,” and they were used as an online menu for services. However, your clients are now used to dynamic online experiences. If you’re trying to increase the sense of comfort and trust your visitors feel towards your firm, the last thing you would want to do is offer a jarring, antiquated experience. Like any other well designed thing; creating a beautifully simple experience takes significant work. Invest in making your website the streamlined client generation tool it should be.

4. Listing your AV rating front and center

I know what an [AV rating means](#), you know what your AV rating means, your colleagues know what it entails, but for someone who is new to the legal industry that just needs their problems solved, the AV rating means little to nothing. That’s the cold hard truth. An AV rating, or any other prestigious accolade is difficult to attain, but only people in the legal industry understand that.

There’s a hierarchy in a visitor’s mind of what they are looking for, and accolades wouldn’t usually make the top three. And yes, that’s even if you represent businesses and the General Counsel is hiring you. That being said, any evidence of success and authority is great to have... but it shouldn’t be the first thing your visitor sees.

Your accolades should follow in the sequence that they’re needed for getting the engagement. They’re a credibility booster for the ultimate decision to hire, not the reason they hire. Put it towards the bottom of the page for the truly intrigued potential clients, and use the top of your website to give the basic information about your firm, what you do for your clients, and why that web visitor should contact you instead of the five other websites they visited in the past hour.

Companies can make hundreds of website mistakes, but law firms have their own unique hurdles to focus on. Staying within ethical guidelines and keeping your website client-focused will put you in the right direction, but endless opportunities exist to transform your website into the marketing machine it can be. If you’re not seeing your ideal client types move through your website and into your office, then you should reevaluate your website to see what you can improve.

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