Introduction to Personal Injury Marketing in 2016

With 2015 in the rearview mirror, we now look at 2016 and what is in store for legal marketing and personal injury attorneys. Our focus is on a few of the top 2016 legal marketing trends and how they apply to personal injury attorneys and trial lawyers. With personal injury attorneys facing one of the most competitive marketing landscapes in the world, it is important to address how the top legal marketing trends and tactics can be effectively used to grow a personal injury practice.

Personal Injury Marketing: Mobile-Friendly Websites Are Essential in 2016

In April 2015, Google launched an update to its mobile search algorithm, which rewards mobile-friendly compliant websites with higher search rankings while penalizing websites that are not mobile-friendly compliant. However, law firms have been slow moving to adapt to the new mobile search algorithm. A 2015 report by Kevin O’Keefe, CEO of LexBlog, stated that approximately 53% of the top 350 largest law firms do not have mobile-friendly websites, and 73% of nearly 1,000 blogs published by Am Law 200 are not ready for mobile viewing.

Since April 2015, an increasing number of law firms have already, or are in progress of, transitioning to a mobile-friendly compliant website; however, 2016 is the year that law firms realize how critical mobile compliance is for legal marketing and client acquisition. The lack of mobile search visibility on Google, which has an 89% search engine market share, can have a crippling effect on a personal injury practice due to the significant increase in mobile device users. Google has estimated that over 65% of users start searching for information on a smartphone. Mobile search penalties not only limit exposure to your personal injury practice, but also adversely affect your content marketing strategy, SEO efforts and even mobile paid search campaigns.

Keep in mind, though, that even if you are late to the party, there are opportunities for law firms to make an impact with the launch of a mobile-friendly compliant website that is better optimized than competitors. Law firms that take a mobile-first approach to their site design can find success against competitors through greater search visibility and user experience, as well as a more effective way to promote and distribute relevant content to the growing number of mobile users. Content, which is discussed below, is particularly important for personal injury lawyers and their ability to generate an internet presence and engage prospective clients.

Personal Injury Marketing: Content, Content and More Content

Content marketing for all businesses, regardless of industry, is one of the most important digital marketing strategies to implement. Quality content creation and distribution is even more important in 2016, and no law firm – especially personal injury attorneys – should ignore its role in acquiring prospective clients. Compelling and relevant content related to your legal practice and targeted user base is the foundation for brand development,
an organic search presence and user engagement through digital distribution channels such as email marketing and social media.

Any content generated for consumers should be relevant to the target audience, concise and clearly organized. There are also opportunities to generate different types of content to appeal to a wider audience, such as blog posts, local injury news updates and videos. Content posted on a routine basis helps increase user engagement and interest in the related content, and it also provides SEO benefits. It is advised to cater content to a specific target audience so you can more effectively appeal to the user base and generate more related keywords to help with SEO and organic results.

Additionally, according to a white paper published by CMO Council, 78% of consumers believe that organizations providing custom content are interested in building good relationships with them, which is an important component for personal injury attorneys trying to help injured people in need.

It is also worth noting that, in 2015, Google officially announced that U.S. searches on mobile devices surpassed desktop search queries. This means that it is critical that personal injury attorneys create mobile-friendly compliant content to assure maximum exposure.

**Personal Injury Marketing: TV Legal Advertising Continues to Grow in 2016**

Unlike all other industries, legal advertising in general – and particularly for personal injury attorneys – continues to increase year over year. In fact, legal advertising on television has increased from $531 million in 2008 to $892 million in 2015 (approximated), which is an increase of 68%, and grew 6 times faster than all other industries.

While legal TV advertising is growing at a rapid pace, it is primarily dominated by established law firms that typically have the right to first refusal once they secure a desirable time slot. This becomes evident when you are able to see that the top 10 legal advertisers, on average, spent over $15 million each in 2015.

However, while that figure may sound daunting, there are multiple options if a law firm is interested in legal advertising on TV.

**Local Market Commercial Costs**

TV advertising costs fluctuate based on the competitive nature of particular markets. Some areas can be significantly more expensive than others. Differences between TV audiences, such as broadcast TV vs. cable TV, can also influence the overall costs, as well as the show and time of day.

**Quality and Production Costs**

While the best response to TV advertising comes from a quality commercial, the product quality varies significantly per legal advertisement. If you are looking to keep production costs low, there may be several options available to lower costs while still maintaining a level of quality consistent with your legal practice.

**Group TV Advertising**

Group advertising is the most cost effective options used to generate ad response leads from TV commercials, which remove direct production costs and air time purchases. This works for personal injury attorneys that are looking for the end result – creating more prospective clients – but are not worried about building a brand on TV.

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