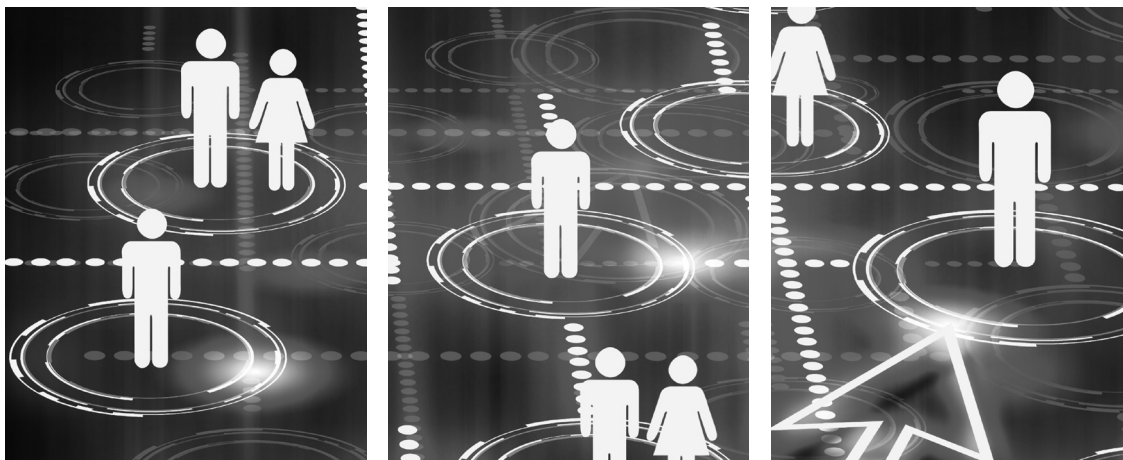


Social Media Marketing for Law Firms

DAVID LAUD



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Executive summary

SOCIAL MEDIA has burst onto the scene as the 'essential' new communication, networking and marketing tool for businesses and professionals. But many law firms and lawyers remain sceptical about the real value to be gained from online interactions. Indeed, some feel that these fast-paced sites and the sometimes informal nature of their content are not an appropriate platform for professional, business communication.

Others, however, who have dipped a toe into the social media pool, claim great success, whether in the form of new clients, stronger relationships, more engaged teams or new opportunities.

Whichever camp you fall into, social media cannot be ignored. This report introduces the key social media tools and explains how they can be used in your firm, taking into account the risks and obstacles that may be encountered along the way. The report examines in detail the appropriate use of Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook as part of the law firm marketing mix and suggests essential applications to help you make the most of these three platforms.

Written by a law firm chief executive with extensive social media marketing experience, this practical guide offers many tips and insights that will help the reader to understand and maximise the opportunities that social media present.

Chapter 1 provides a brief history of social media and introduces the major sites. It discusses the similarities and differences

between the platforms in terms of use, behaviour and trends.

Chapter 2 examines the importance of social media as a marketing tool for law firms – in particular, its role in client communication. The tough challenge of overcoming initial scepticism is discussed, with tips and scenarios provided. Guidance is offered on how to create a profile on each major platform and grow your network.

Of course, there is little use in launching into the world of social media without first being clear what you wish to achieve from it. Chapter 3 emphasises the importance of reviewing the firm's business plan to ensure that any social media initiatives support the firm's overall aims. The next step will be to create a project plan to ensure the initiative meets its goals, which will include deciding which platforms are most suitable for what the firm wishes to achieve. Social media's integration and interaction with other, more traditional marketing activities is discussed.

Chapter 4 poses the important question: what does social media marketing success look like? Tools and apps are introduced that will help you to ensure you are reaching your intended audience and being heard by the right people.

Acknowledging that social media usage, and indeed web use generally, does have its risks, Chapter 5 gives advice on how to mitigate various risks, including damage to the firm's reputation, reduction in staff productivity and loss or leakage of sensitive information. A sample communications and

equipment policy, that can be adapted for use in your firm, is provided.

Chapter 6 walks the reader through the steps of putting carefully laid plans into practice, including tips on overcoming common obstacles to success. Two crucial elements of success – time management and team management – are discussed.

Chapter 7 looks to the future and suggests how firms can keep abreast of the fast-moving world of social media and technology.

Part Two comprises six case studies from law and accountancy firms in the UK, US and Australia. These demonstrate how firms are using social media as a marketing and communication tool and illustrate the benefits that firms and lawyers are seeing from their social media initiatives.

Part Three, the appendices, lists useful sites and applications and includes a jargon-buster glossary.

About the author

DAVID LAUD is the chief executive of Samuel Phillips Law Firm, a chartered marketer and a fellow of the Chartered Institute of Marketing. In addition, he is a mentor to business executives and runs his own marketing consultancy and smartphone application company.

His early career saw him spend ten years with global travel company Thomas Cook where he headed the project team to build a new money transfer product, Moneygram. Following this successful launch, David joined US telecoms giant AT&T as head of marketing for the 'Systemedia Division'.

For the past 16 years, David has worked closely with the legal sector and has featured in articles in *The Lawyer* and the *Law Society Gazette* where he is also a book reviewer.

His interest in social media started with the need to keep up with two teenage daughters on MSN Messenger, Facebook and Myspace. Over time, David identified, as many have done, the potential of the medium and now manages a variety of accounts that include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Vimeo, Foursquare, Instagram, Flickr, Tumblr, Quora, Qype, Audioboo and WordPress. He is also part of the beta testing group currently reviewing and making use of Google+.

Despite business interests and social media taking a large part of David's time, he still finds a spare moment to take part in the odd run. To date he has completed 11 half marathons and is scheduled for his 12th before the end of 2011.

David is married and lives in the north east of England with his wife, Jo, and three children.