

Crucial website strategy priorities to boost business for SME law firms

Gary Shaw, commercial group director at Accesspoint, on website strategy for SME law firms and top tips for leveraging your digital presence to grow your business.

The legal marketplace is certainly crowded right now and, with every firm offering a great service to clients, standing out is becoming increasingly hard – especially for SME firms. It's been clear for all to see over the last year that just having a good website is no longer enough and that simple-yet-effective methods, such as word-of-mouth marketing, won't give your firm the boost it needs to thrive in today's legal industry on their own.

With the workplace moving into a 'virtual office space', your website should be a well-functioning, client-centred and effective tool for finding opportunities and winning new clients, and should also provide a high-quality, joined-up approach to work. The big question is: where does your firm start?



Digital first impressions count

Firstly, the overall look of your website is very important and it needs to represent your brand, communicating what your firm is about. Then, it also needs to capture the attention – instantly. Think about how your site could be aesthetically pleasing without being cluttered and also incorporate colours and images that reflect your overall brand and way of thinking.

Furthermore, the functionality of your website is just as crucial. We often see SME firms shy away from the many possibilities an innovative, modern-day website could offer, and they instead opt for a traditional and sometimes outdated website layout, which acts merely as a 'shop window' for clients.

This could perhaps be a result of having a static, rigid website template, which is usually much harder to customise on-the-go and adapt in future. An effective website should have a flexible template that can be moulded to suit current market demands and host the various integrations clients expect, providing them with a seamless online experience – from fast payments to quick responses.

Put process at the heart of your digital lead generation machine

Once an adaptable template is in place, we encourage firms to establish new ways to maximise marketing opportunities and minimise the time spent on manually following up on website leads. Effective web forms and

tracking software that take a joined-up approach to your workflow and that can optimise cross-selling opportunities should instantly be integrated to your site.

For example: forensic tools are currently available which allow your firm to monitor and track the digital journey of a client, from clicking on a Google advert or Facebook post right through to the completion of their case – providing your firm with valuable insights and demographic data that can all be delivered straight into your practice management system.

Additionally, incorporating web forms into your site will allow you to quickly follow up potential leads and effectively establish contact with them remotely. Try exploring different integrations that allow you to engage with visitors immediately, as this could increase the chance of turning prospects into clients.

Drive traffic to your law firm's virtual door

It's also crucial for SME firms not to overlook the power of effective SEO. Without it, any resources and costs going into your website will become void if no one is able to find it. A mistake commonly made by firms is assuming that, because your website is full of content, it should automatically rank highly on search engines.

It's not wrong to think content helps, but merely adding any old thing to a webpage and hoping it generates traffic is a recipe for disaster. Your SEO strategy must be well thought-out and possibly worked on by a legal marketing specialist, as many search engines are configured to detect websites that just house lots of keywords without any meaningful content.

When content takes an authoritative stance and proves that the owner knows what they're talking about, it demonstrates true value to the person searching and can help take your site up in the search rankings.

Make sure your site is always working in your favour: not only should the content on every page be high quality, but it should also appeal to the lowest common denominator by using common, everyday language. Avoid using complex words and legal jargon that only lawyers can understand and find a balance between showing your expertise and appealing to your wider audience. If the content on your website is not clear, concise and effective, it's likely you won't be getting your message across and visitors who do land on your page will quickly lose interest.

On this new marketing journey for the legal industry, SME firms can no longer afford to take a back seat. Perhaps now is the time to think ahead and consider exploring new and innovative marketing ideas.



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- GS, Commercial Group Director