

Social Media for Lawyers

Social media is rapidly changing the way people communicate, share news and how customers interact with businesses. Like any professional organization, all law firms can benefit from using social media. Although it does require a devotion of time, social media is a cost-effective way to reach potential clients, strengthen relationships with current clients and market your firm in today's economy. With so many social media sites to choose from, we recommend that lawyers begin by developing a presence on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Avvo](#), [JD-SUPRA](#) and [NYLawyerPages](#).

LinkedIn — [LinkedIn](#) is the most widely used business networking site. This professional networking giant can be a powerful tool for connecting with current clients and attracting potential clients, which makes it the perfect social media site for lawyers. To get started, create a profile and begin making connections with personal contacts, email contacts and other attorneys. Next, it is crucial to ensure that your profile is optimized, make use of LinkedIn's advanced search and join LinkedIn groups and answer questions. To learn more about using LinkedIn, please read our article, "[Making the Right Connections with LinkedIn](#)." You can also click [here](#) for an example of an attorney's LinkedIn profile.

Profile Optimization — Before you do anything further on LinkedIn, it is essential to make sure that your profile is fully optimized. This will help your profile get found more easily and show up higher in search results. To secure 100% profile completion and optimization, complete all profile information, include a recent photograph of yourself and change your personal URL to include your name. We also recommend that you include your Twitter handle (if you tweet) in your profile and make use of the three URLs you are allotted on your profile. For example, you may include your law firm's website, personal website and blog. To complete your profile, you must also give and request professional recommendations. It is important to save these recommendations for future reference and to consider displaying them in a "Testimonials" section of your website.

Advanced Search — Begin by asking yourself: Who is my ideal client? Using LinkedIn's advanced search engine, you can search for users based on their industry, location, language and more. With an upgraded LinkedIn profile, you can also search based on someone's groups, seniority level, years of experience and more specific criteria. This tool can help you micro-target users in order to connect with your intended audience, whether they be potential clients or other attorneys.

Join LinkedIn Groups and Answer Questions — Joining industry-related groups will strengthen your LinkedIn presence and rapidly build your popularity on the site. Attorneys should seek to join groups based on their practice areas and location. To get your name out, it is important to participate in group discussions when appropriate and take advantage of the Answers section on LinkedIn. Here, you can answer any questions on your practice area and demonstrate your expertise in your field. This will help to strengthen your reputation and increase your likelihood of receiving referrals and recommendations through LinkedIn.

Facebook — Most Americans use [Facebook](#), making it a perfect tool for reaching consumers and the general public. Maintaining a presence on Facebook can help attorneys reach potential clients and build relationships with current clients. To begin, set up a custom Facebook fan page with your law firm's name and logo. The more content and multimedia you can add, the better. For example, add any photos you may have of your firm and attorneys as well as videos. Through your fan page, you can inform your audience of news, upcoming events, new articles and more. It is important to update the content of your page regularly and to respond to any comments, requests or invitations in a timely and considerate manner. For more information on using Facebook, please read our article, "[10 Steps to Getting the Most Out of Facebook](#)." You can also click [here](#) for an example of a law firm's Facebook fan page.

Twitter — As a law firm or individual attorney, you can use [Twitter](#), an immensely popular microblogging tool, to quickly share information with an interested audience, build relationships and accept feedback from followers. Because of Twitter's viral capabilities, with every tweet you post, there is the potential to reach millions of global users. To begin, create an account with your law firm's name and logo so your profile will be distinguishable and easy to find. Search for followers by submitting your email contacts and use the search engine to follow other attorneys, firms, referral partners and prospects. Use your Twitter feed to share news, upcoming events, articles and other information with your targeted audience. When tweeting, always add links that direct your followers to further information. Since Twitter limits users to only 140 characters, it helps to use a free link shortening service such as [Bit.ly](#). These links should drive traffic to your firm's blog, website, social media sites or interesting articles that will be of value to your audience. You should also periodically re-tweet other users' tweets that you and your audience would be interested in. For more information on Twitter, please read our article, "[Secrets to Twitter Marketing](#)." You can also click [here](#) for an example of a lawyers' Twitter profile.

Avvo — [Avvo](#) provides a ranking system for lawyers and allows for reviews by clients and other attorneys. The best part is that you can claim your profile on Avvo for free. Once you have claimed your attorney profile, it is crucial to add a profile picture. This alone will increase your number of profile clicks by up to ten times. Next, check that you've completed all necessary information on your profile, such as your practice area, experience and more. The more information you give, the better opportunity prospects will have to find you. To maintain an active and successful Avvo profile, you can also answer users' questions and participate in the community forums and message boards. Click [here](#) for an example of an attorney's Avvo profile.

JDSUPRA — This legal website is focused on helping attorneys and law firms build their online platform and portfolio. After you join [JDSUPRA](#), you can create an online portfolio of your articles, newsletters, court filings and presentations. When you post these materials on JDSUPRA, the content is pushed to Google, Google News and over 90 other major networks. This could provide a serious boost to your search engine rankings. To ensure further optimization, be sure to use relevant keywords to help these search engines index your articles correctly.

The Public Relations and Marketing Group's NYLawyerPages — [New York Lawyer Pages](#) provides important resources for the public by allowing them access to a database of attorneys who practice in the field in which they need assistance based on geographic area. The website also provides a valuable marketing opportunity for attorneys. We recommend that you list your firm online with [New York Lawyer Pages](#) in order to promote your practice and further increase your Web exposure. You can submit a listing, summarizing what your firm does and the practice areas in which you concentrate. Law firms or attorneys are searchable within the [NYLawyerPages](#) website by the name of the attorney or firm, practice area, zip code, city or county. All entries will be optimized and indexed by all major search engines. You also have the opportunity to post articles and news releases from your firm that you may wish prospective clients to know about. All Basic Listings are free of charge. A monthly fee can be paid for Featured or Front Page Spotlight Listings.

It is important to keep in mind that social media is a long road of communicating and doing business, not a campaign. Social media marketing requires commitment and long-term support in order to maintain your profiles and stay active. Although these sites are free to set up, you may want to hire someone to maintain your social media presence to ensure your success. For example, [The Public Relations and Marketing Group](#) can devise a marketing and communication strategy and select social media tools that can help you best achieve your goals and reach your target audience more effectively. Whether you need help with setting up a Facebook page or completing a LinkedIn profile, PRMG will always adopt an integrated approach to social media and ensure that it complements your traditional public relations and marketing efforts.

For more information, please feel free to contact us at (631) 207-1057 or johnzaher@theprmg.com.