A Crash Course in Legal Marketing

Hi, I’m Jacob!
- Managing Partner at Tingen & Williams, PLLC
- Adjunct Faculty at UR
- jacob@tingenwilliams.com
- (804)-477-1720

Hi, I’m Andrew!
- Content Marketing Specialist at Tingen & Williams, PLLC
- M.A. in English from UVA
- andrew@tingenwilliams.com

Tingen & Williams, PLLC
- We’re a Richmond-based firm practicing in the areas of immigration, family law, criminal defense, personal injury, and business law.
- https://tingenwilliams.com
- @TingenWilliams
A Quick Look at What I’ll Cover

- Part 1: Legal Marketing Basics
- Part 2: Intermediate Legal Marketing
- Part 3: The “Gathering Leads” Marketing Strategy
  - Part 3(a): Local (and Legal) Business Listings
  - Part 3(b): PPC and the Client Lever
  - Part 3(c): SEO and Content Marketing
  - Part 3(d): Referrals and the Client Cycle
- Conclusion
- Q&A (~15 Minutes)

My 4 Main Goals for this Presentation

1. Make a distinction between “legal marketing” and “business development.” (Part 1)
2. Make a case for why a balanced strategy is optimal in the legal marketing space. (Part 1)
3. Explain several intermediate legal marketing topics. (Part 2)
4. Promote the “Gathering Leads” marketing plan strategy. (Part 3)

What is Legal Marketing?

- “Legal marketing” is a broad term that refers to the multi-step process of attracting, converting, and serving clients in a way that results in a net profit for your firm.
- “Legal marketing” is a philosophy that combines two professional practices.
- “Legal marketing” can be broken down into two phases: marketing strategy and business development.
What is Legal Marketing

- “Marketing strategy” refers to the careful, measured process of attracting leads to the firm.
- “Business development” refers to a broad range of targeted initiatives for qualifying and converting those leads once they step through your door.

What is Business Development?

“Business development is the creation of long-term value for an organization from customers, markets, and relationships.” — Scott Pollack (some guy on Forbes)

What is Business Development?

- **Customers (Clients)** – Aligning and developing your business to better match and serve your target audience.
- **Markets** – Exploring new sources of income to promote continual growth.
- **Relationships** – Identifying, developing, and leveraging new relationships that can lead to long-term value and profit.

Legal Marketing v. Business Development

- **Attorney perspective:** “Legal marketing is part of my business development plan.”
- **Marketer perspective:** “Business development is part of my marketing plan.”
How is Business Development Different from Legal Marketing?

There are three types of attorneys in the current job market:

- Attorneys with clients
- Attorneys who work for attorneys with clients
- Attorneys who have no clients

Business development is how you go from being an attorney with no clients to an attorney who works for the attorneys with clients.

Legal marketing is how you transition into being the attorney with clients.

It also distinguishes you from the attorneys who have no clients (generally, these are the attorneys who failed at both business development and legal marketing).

Key Industry Terms You Should Know

- Audience -> Lead -> Client
- Call to Action (CTA)
- Client Funnel
- Conversion
- Conversion Rate
- Landing Page
- Return on Investment (ROI)
- Key Performance Indicator (KPI)

- Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
- Search Engine Marketing (SEM)
- Pay Per Click (PPC)
- Pay Per Lead (PPL)
- “Your Money Your Life” (YMYL)
- E.A.T.

Understanding the Client Funnel

The client journey generally includes five broad steps:

1. Awareness
2. Consideration
3. Conversion
4. Loyalty
5. Advocacy
Examples of Client Funnels

Navigating the Online / Offline Divide

- Offline methods include:
  - Client care
  - Networking events
  - Referrals
  - Reputation building
  - Physical marketing materials

- Online methods include:
  - Website optimization
  - Organic SEO
  - Local SEO
  - PPC
  - Email marketing
  - Legal directories
  - Online reviews

Redefining the Lawyer Experience

- Invert the client funnel to attract quality leads:
  - Start with revenue needs for firm
  - Define minimum number of needed clients
  - Estimate conversion rates to calculate needed leads
  - Use lead calculation to calculate required audience
Redefining the Lawyer Experience

1. Revenue needed to break even = $10,000 / mo.
2. Clients needed to hit revenue target = 5 clients at $2,000 each
3. Estimated conversion rate from all leads = 10%
4. Leads needed: \( L = \frac{5}{10\%} = 50 \) leads
5. Estimated conversion rate from audience = 0.5%
6. Audience needed: \( A = \frac{50}{0.5\%} = 10,000 \)
7. Create a marketing plan to reach an audience of 10,000 people.

The Five Inverted Funnel Goals

1. Positive Experience
2. Referrals
3. Culture
4. Audience Targeting
5. Mass Marketing

Basic Elements of a Legal Marketing Plan

- Local Business Listings
- Google Ads and other PPC and PPL Solutions
- Website and Content Marketing (SEO)
- Referral Strategy
- Traditional Marketing?
  - Billboards
  - Commercials
  - Other Shotgun Approaches
How to Create a Balanced Marketing Strategy

- Take a client-centered approach, then support that approach with data.
- Invest your time and money wisely.
- Outsource and delegate your pain points.
- Measure each and every aspect of your firm.

Part 2: Intermediate Legal Marketing

Welcome to Legal Marketing 201

Disclaimer: This is where you hire an SEO

Understanding the Importance of E.A.T.

- E.A.T. stands for:
  - Expertise
  - Authority
  - Trustworthiness
- Connecting E.A.T. factors to YMYL restrictions
  - Ethical legal marketing
  - Identifying yourself as a subject-matter expert
  - Avoiding attorney-client relationships
- “We could have been killed, or worse....expelled!”
Identify and Rectify Friction in Your Funnel

Ask yourself one simple question: "Why do people hate working with attorneys?"

Example answers:

- "Hiring an attorney is too expensive."
- "Attorneys never pick up the phone / it’s hard to contact them."
- "I never know what’s happening in my case."
- "Is it really worth it to hire an attorney?"

Implement Lead Tracking and Data Recording Best Practices

- Identify firm and personal KPIs
- Track ROI on all marketing and business development efforts (within reason)
- Implement popular tracking solutions that follow ethical best practices:
  - Record online data with Google Analytics and Google Tag Manager
  - Record offline data by keeping notes on your appointments, consultations, and clients
  - Purchase practice management software?
Power Up Your Practice with Schema and Metadata

- “Schema.org is a collaborative, community activity [and vocabulary] with a mission to create, maintain, and promote schemas for structured data on the internet, on web pages, in email messages, and beyond.” — Schema.org
- Basic schema examples:
  - Organization / LocalBusiness
  - Person / Place
  - Offer
  - Review / AggregateRating

Using schema.org to power up your Organic and Local SEO
- Rich Snippets
  - Article
  - Breadcrumb
  - FAQ
  - How-to
  - Sitelinks Searchbox
- Local SEO

Schema Example

1. Find (or make) a template or a code generator that meets your specific requirements.

2. Fill in the template with the required information.
3. Copy / paste the snippet into the body of the page, then test it in either the Structured Data Tool or the Rich Results Tool.
Level Up Your Online Presence: Schema + E.A.T.

- Leverage structured data to boost your E.A.T. score.
- Use plugins to automate the Schema process.
  - Yoast
  - Author box example
- Review the Quality Rater Guidelines for YMYL sites
  - “We have very high Page Quality rating standards for YMYL pages because low quality YMYL pages could potentially negatively impact a person’s happiness, health, financial stability, or safety.”

Quality Rater Guidelines

- “Understanding who is responsible for a website is a critical part of assessing E-A-T for most types of websites.” (4.3)
- “YMYL websites demand a high degree of trust, so they generally need satisfying information about who is responsible for the content of the site.” (4.3)
- “High quality pages...need enough expertise to be authoritative and trustworthy in their topic.” (4.5)

Part 3: The “Gathering Leads” Marketing Strategy

Welcome to Legal Marketing 301

Create a Marketing Plan that Compliments Your Business Plan

- Anything is better than nothing
- Remember the marketing pillars
  - Local business listings
  - Google Ads, PPC, and PPL
  - Website and Content (SEO)
  - Referral Strategy
  - Traditional Marketing
- Play to your strengths (SWOT)
- Find a niche
- Develop an Agile methodology
- Find cheap tools, upgrade when they break
Create a Marketing Plan that Compliments Your Business Plan

- Focus your marketing on gathering leads. Focus your business development on nurturing those leads into paying clients.
- Attorneys are weird. Think like a client:
  - Focus your plan on client-first practices.
  - Adjust your business model to fit the audience in your local area.
  - Take steps to identify and eliminate points of friction in your firm’s case management process.

Where Do Clients Find Attorneys?

- Referrals
- Advertisements (PPC)
- Local Listings (Google My Business)
- “Free” Attorney Directories (Justia, Avvo, etc...)
- Paid Legal Directories (Lawyers.com)
- Firm Website
- Blog or Informational Article

User Intent in Local (and Legal) Business Listings

- There are four general search types:
  - **Informational** – How, what, who, where, why, guide, tutorial, resource, ideas, tips, learn, examples.
  - **Navigational** – Brand names, product / service names, direct search, long-tail keywords.
  - **Commercial Investigation** – Best, top, review, product / service attribute, comparison, “near me.”
  - **Transactional** – Hire, buy, “[City] + [Service] + [Role],” cheap, price, cost, practice area / service.

- These search types act as entry points into the client funnel.
User Intent in Local (and Legal) Business Listings

- Your strategy for reaching the first page should target a specific user intent category:
  - **Informational** – Ebooks, blogs, video guides, “How to…” resources ("How to file for divorce in Virginia")
  - **Navigational** – Platform-targeted strategies, leapfrogging, keyword busting ("uncontested divorce guide youtube")
  - **Commercial Investigation** – Google My Business and directory listings, “Cost” and “Length” guides, review stuffing ("How much does a divorce cost?")
  - **Transactional** – Landing page optimization, PPC and PPL, Google My Business optimization ("Richmond immigration attorneys")

Tip: Make a Keyword List

1. Identify your “ideal client”
2. Identify the client’s “pain points”
3. List these pain points as short, 2-5 word phrases
4. Use word association (and intuition) to find related keywords and gaps in your list
5. Plug these keywords into a keyword index (ahrefs, Moz, Ubersuggest)

Finding the Right Directories

- After you have your keyword list, start plugging all of the keywords into Google, and take note of what directories show up.
  - Justia
  - Avvo
  - Superlawyers (must be nominated)
  - Findlaw
  - Yelp
Part 3(b): PPC and the Client Lever

How to Print (or Burn) Money for Your Firm

PPC Basics: The Client Lever

- A well-executed PPC campaign should work like a vending machine
- Attorneys can use PPC in three different ways
  - Rocket launch strategy
  - Exploratory (established firms)
  - Lead buffer
- Inexperienced law firms and lawyers should not use PPC
Why You Shouldn’t Use PPC in Your Marketing Plan (Without Help)

- PPC has one of the longest (and most costly) conversion percent chains out of all the normal marketing methods
  - Impression -> Click -> Landing Page Conversion -> Reception Conversion -> Attorney Conversion
- Each step requires optimization and fine-tuning to be profitable (i.e. messing up one ruins everything)

Example Using My Google Ads Profitability Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Revenue</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Profit</th>
<th>Impressions</th>
<th>Clicks</th>
<th>Uniques</th>
<th>Conversion Rate</th>
<th>Leads</th>
<th>Clients</th>
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<td>$50.00</td>
<td>$50.00</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>

The Solution: Just Hire Someone

- PPC strategies are best left to SEM professionals
- Search engine marketing is prohibitively expensive, far more than you might realize
  - “Divorce lawyer near me” is ~$20.00 to $26.00 per click
  - “Car accident lawyer” is ~$170.00 to $207.00 per click
  - “Immigration attorney” is ~$8.00 to $10.00 per click
- PPC variant: Pay-Per-Lead (PPL)
  - Leveraging legal directories into a Pay-Per-Lead strategy
What is Content Marketing?

- Content marketing is the process of creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a particular audience, with an end goal of converting members of this audience into paying clients.
- Create valuable content -> Leverage content to achieve a desirable result (usually measured as a KPI)

The Content Marketing Cycle

1. Research: Find a topic that you fulfill the E.A.T. requirements for.
2. Creation: Write organic content that seeks to satisfy user intent for that topic.
3. Publication: Publish your content on your blog and relevant platforms.
4. Analysis: Define KPIs for content and track how it performs.
5. Optimization: Make changes to content using data from analysis.
The Content Marketing Spiral

1. Creation
2. Optimization
3. Upgrade
4. Evergreen
5. Skyscraper

Keyword Research and Optimization Basics

- Write for the reader
- Find your niche and target high-value long-tail keywords

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-Value Long-Tail:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- “Virginia reckless driving ticket out of state”</td>
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<td>- “Consequences of a Virginia marijuana conviction”</td>
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<tr>
<td>- “Likelihood of confusion in trademark law”</td>
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<td>- “Filing for divorce in Virginia”</td>
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An Example from Our Firm

- Our top 10 articles provide $14,641 in traffic value per month
- This metric shows the equivalent value of the organic search traffic, should that traffic have been acquired via PPC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Traffic 1</th>
<th>Value 1</th>
<th>Keywords 1</th>
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<td>10</td>
<td>422</td>
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</table>

Content Marketing is More than Just Articles

- Short blog posts (~300 to 500 words)
- Long-form articles (~800 to 2,000 words)
- Skyscraper posts (~2,500 to 10,000 words)
- Ebooks and lead magnets (~10,000 to 30,000 words)
- Video content (video SEO)
- Podcasts (audio SEO)
- Custom visuals and graphics (image SEO)
- Unique resources and tools
- Anything else that provides “value”

Advanced Topic: Google Darwinism

- There are hundreds if not thousands of “ranking factors” in the Google algorithm
- These factors are grouped into several different “groups” for ease of understanding
- Google calculates a score (“bid”) for every page using these ranking factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Topicality</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Speed</th>
<th>Entities</th>
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<th>Struct. Data</th>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>307.2</td>
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</table>

Scores for the arbitrary “Page A” for search query “X”
Candidate Result Sets Compete for Page 1

- After the bidding finishes, these pages will then compete with bid arrays in other mediums
  - Images
  - Videos
  - News
- Google will then return the top 10 results from the entire data set to provide the “best” solution for a specific query

Why Does This Matter?

- The legal space is behind the curve when it comes to rich data and alternative formats
- Pairing a unique format with a particular niche could present an opportunity for massive growth in certain practice areas
- It shines a light on the best practices that other firms are using (or ignoring) so that you know whether an opportunity for growth is available
Part 3(d): Referrals and the Client Cycle

Cultivate a “Positive Experience”

The Client Cycle

- The “marketing funnel” is going out of style in favor of a “marketing cycle”
- This is because people are being silly and taking the “funnel” part literally
  - The funnel represents the “whole” of your marketing plan, it’s a top-down view meant to help you organize your thoughts
  - Leads can shift around inside the funnel
  - Clients (“those who have converted”) can bring leads into any stage of the funnel

The Client Cycle: Goals

1. Positive Experience
2. Referrals
3. Culture
4. Audience Targeting
5. Mass Marketing

The Client Cycle: Endgame

Step 1: Awareness
The client recognizes they have a problem, and choose your firm as a potential solution.

Step 2: Interest
The client expresses interest in hiring your firm, and begins to review your qualifications.

Step 3: Decision
The client makes a decision on whether to schedule a consultation. This is the transition between marketing and culture.

Step 4: Action
After speaking with you about their case (and seeing your firm first-hand), the client hires you and you resolve their case.
Conclusion

Wrapping Things Up

Key Takeaways

- The Basic Elements of Legal Marketing
  - Local (and Legal) Business Listings
  - PPC
  - Organic Search and SEO
  - Referrals
- E.A.T. and YMYL
- Focus on a Niche
- Develop a marketing strategy, implement it in your business strategy
- Make a budget
- Focus your marketing on gathering leads, focus your business on nurturing leads

Why This Matters

- You need to make the transition between thinking of yourself as a worker and thinking of yourself as a service-based professional.
- Viewing your practice through a different lens.
- You need to build a flexible personal brand to market yourself to future employers.
- It can help you better understand your firm’s marketing efforts when you do get hired.
- It’s nifty information to know.

Things I’ve Skipped Over

- Social media marketing
- Email marketing
- Specific ethical considerations
- Remarketing and retargeting
- Large-scale video marketing
- Legal directory strategy
Questions? Comments? Concerns?

Blogs to Follow:

- Ahrefs
- The Moz Blog
- MarketingProfs
- Mailchimp Blog
- Backlinko
- Unbounce
- Hubspot
- Search Engine Journal

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