

LEGAL MARKETING RESULTS FROM LASSO PRODUCTIONS

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Does your legal website marketer have a conflict of interest?

In the world of advertising, most agencies do not represent competitive clients at the same time. Obviously it would be difficult for a single ad agency to create and implement advertising and marketing for both Coke and Pepsi without a conflict of interest. Lawyers, of course, should be familiar with this concept as they are ethically bound to avoid any conflicts of interest when representing their own clients. So with that said, why in the world would thirty-five competing law firms in the same city all be represented by the same website/internet legal advertising marketer?

This has got to be one of the most mind boggling phenomena in advertising and marketing history. I am referring to legal internet marketers such as FindLaw, Einstein Law, Lexus Nexus and others. Upon a quick review of lawyers in Atlanta, Georgia, I found that at least thirty-five rival personal injury plaintiffs' law firms have websites designed and hosted by FindLaw. FindLaw states that they'll "make your law firm stand out from the crowd". Join the crowd is more like it! All these law firms are seeking the same potential clients with nearly identically structured websites that utilize the same search engine optimization strategies! Plus they are paying thousands of dollars a month for ridiculously overpriced website design, hosting and internet marketing services. Law schools might want to add Marketing 101 to their curriculums!

This same scenario is being played out among competing law firms in every major city, not just Atlanta. Even law firms with websites created by other companies, are paying for a listing on FindLaw. Every time you refresh the page or return to an additional search for lawyers on FindLaw, the listings rotate like a roulette wheel - talk about a crap shoot! This isn't like the yellow pages where you simply buy the ad space, or in this case a piece of cyberspace. These legal internet marketers claim they are continuously utilizing search engine strategies to make sure their law firm clients are getting the best rankings. Well just how in the heck do you avoid conflicts of interest when you represent thirty-five rival law firms? Obviously, FindLaw and others have done an extraordinary job of hyping the necessity of online legal marketing and advertising. Granted, a presence on the web is important for all law firms. But there is a limit to the return on investment and there are far more efficient and cost effective ways to reach potential clients.

Here's a quote from a recent FindLaw blog: "Much like the shipwreck survivor floating out there in the ocean waiting for the Coast Guard to find them a site sits and waits to be discovered by search engines." This perfectly illustrates one of the major problems with internet marketing. Rather than putting your advertising in front of the masses with media such as television, your advertising, i.e., website, is sitting somewhere waiting for the masses to come find you.

Advertising on media such as television, cable, and radio, you can promote your web address and refer viewers/listeners directly to your site. This creates more direct referrals to your website thus reducing dependence on search engine rankings and advertising. In fact, web statistics for one of my television advertising law firms showed that 80% of visitors came directly to the website via bookmark or by typing in the URL. Of numerous "paid for" internet listings such as FindLaw, Yellowpages, and ExpertHub none produced more than 2% of visitors. Of course the real problem isn't the number of visitors; it's the exorbitant cost per response.

I have an Einstein Law, price sheet that list their basic website hosting rate to be \$1,495 per month. If you want free monthly website corrections, email accounts and Stats, the rate is \$2,995 per month! And this doesn't include the website itself. For a custom web design you'll need to pay an average cost of about \$1000 per page or 20 pages for \$16,000! You can add Flash for \$4,000 and up! Wow! I design, host and maintain websites, and on average the costs and labor involved isn't enough to command such hefty rates. I can create some super nice television commercials for that kind of money and my client could take the money they save on inflated hosting fees and buy airtime.

Lawyers spend billions of dollars a year on advertising and marketing. Unfortunately, that brings out all sorts of businesses and services who are looking for a slice of that pie. Some are doing great work for lawyers but many are relentless sales people who do not have the law firm's best interests in mind. A lawyer who tries to deal directly with these people can be unknowingly led to part with far more money than the return on investment is worth. I have over twenty-five years of experience in legal marketing, advertising, branding, media placement and multi-media productions. Someone like me can sort through the hype, look at the big overall picture and then implement strategies that will utilize a law firm's advertising and marketing dollars as effectively and efficiently as possible.



Greg Wolske has over twenty-five years of experience in creating and implemented highly successful advertising and media placement strategies for personal injury and medical malpractice attorneys. His websites: www.legalmarketingresults.com www.lassopictures.com