

Social Media Guide for Lawyers

Welcome to Martindale-Avvo's guide to social media for legal practitioners.

Whether you're looking to build the social profile of a law firm or just yourself, this guide will show you the benefits of social media, how to create your profiles, who to follow, and how to gain followers.





Why Social Media?

Brand Management

Have you ever looked up your firm online? What are people saying about you and where are they saying it? There's a good chance some of these conversations are happening on social media. Owned channels like a blog or social media accounts are a good way to help manage your presence and engage with people discussing your brand online.

Maybe you've joined a few social networks but you're not sure what to do next. Or you haven't even started creating a social media profile. Either way, this guide will give you the best practices and resources you need.

Lead Generation

Your social media profiles can be a great place to have discussions and share ideas, with the added opportunity of allowing you to promote your firm. They act as your online business card, storefront

and elevator pitch all in one place. When set up optimally, potential clients, referrals, and job seekers can spend a minute on your profile and get a good idea of what you're all about. From there they can visit your website, call or email you.

Engagement

Engagement on social media is measured by the number of times people like, share, or comment on your posts. Use your profiles as a way to connect with colleagues, clients, potential clients, and those interested in the information you're sharing. Ask your followers questions and respond to their comments and messages quickly to earn trust.

Social media is a two-way form of communication. Joining a conversation or engaging with social content from your followers can help you connect with new people and expand your overall reach.

Create Your Profiles

Now that you understand why having a social media presence is important, it's time to create your firm's social profiles. The process differs for each social network, but here are a few things to keep in mind:

Audience

Not every business needs to be on every social network. The goal for social media marketers is to be where your audience is most active. Facebook and LinkedIn are great places to start because they are two of the most popular social media networks for adults.



Facebook

Facebook is the world's most popular social media platform with 2.45 billion active monthly users worldwide. In the U.S. users 65 and older are the fastest growing demographic, while only 51% of teens between 13 and 17 use Facebook.

The network reaches 83% of high income earners (\$75,000+), which is more than LinkedIn, which only reaches 49%.

This means that an active Facebook presence can provide your business the opportunity to reach a large portion of the adult population, improving your odds of finding new clients who may be a good fit for your firm's specialty and may have the ability to pay for your services.

Sources:
<https://www.searchenginejournal.com/social-media/biggest-social-media-sites/#close>
<https://sproutsocial.com/insights/new-social-media-demographics/#LI-demos>

LinkedIn

LinkedIn hosts 310 million active monthly users (160 million in the U.S.) and remains one of the top platforms for professionals to network. Users are well educated with 51% of those in the U.S. having more than a college education.

This is a great place to reach new clients and connect with colleagues and position yourself as an expert in your practice area. With features such as business pages and user groups focused on a wide array of topics, you can easily promote your services on LinkedIn, while also keeping tabs on the latest best practices.



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<https://www.searchenginejournal.com/social-media/biggest-social-media-sites/#close>
<https://sproutsocial.com/insights/new-social-media-demographics/#LI-demos>



Active Users

330
million
active monthly users
worldwide

Twitter

Twitter is the second most popular social network in the world with 330 million active monthly users, although most of those users are outside of the U.S.

Twitter is often used as a source for breaking news, and can be a good place for discussion on the topics that matter most to your followers. Tweets on the platform are limited to 280 characters, which means brevity is key, but many law firms use Twitter with great success to promote their business and interact with potential clients.

Sources:

<https://www.searchenginejournal.com/social-media/biggest-social-media-sites/#close>
<https://sproutsocial.com/insights/new-social-media-demographics/#LI-demos>

Instagram

Instagram, a platform where users share images and videos, boasts 1 billion users worldwide. This visual platform is a good place for brands and influencers to connect with consumers.

Businesses can use video/image posts, Instagram Stories, and Highlights to give a more in-depth look at the people who work in your firm. Keep in mind that 18-24 year olds are the most active on this platform, so you'll need to determine why you want to reach this demographic. You'll also want to stay up on trends and tailor content that is likely to attract them.

Sources:

<https://www.searchenginejournal.com/social-media/biggest-social-media-sites/#close>
<https://sproutsocial.com/insights/new-social-media-demographics/#LI-demos>



Active Users

1
billion
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If you decide to create a Twitter account, that platform does not distinguish between business and personal accounts.



For more information on social media image sizes, check out Sprout Social's always-up-to-date image sizes guide.

<https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-image-sizes-guide/>

Stay up to date with any rules pertaining to advertising and ethics on social media as set by your state bar association.

Page or Profile?

Most social networks distinguish between pages for businesses and profiles for individuals. When creating accounts for your business, you will want to create a business page on Facebook, a company page on LinkedIn, and/or a business account on Instagram. This prevents your account from being flagged for spam and helps separate business activities from your personal account. It also allows you to communicate important information like location, hours of operation, and areas of practice. Having a business page on Facebook also means clients can leave reviews of you and your firm, which can be helpful when trying to attract new clients.

Images

Most social networks require users to have a profile photo for their account. For solo practitioners, a professional headshot will suffice. Larger firms can use their logo as their profile picture.

You can also select a cover photo for most social networks, which acts as a banner on the top of your profile. Take the time to select a high-resolution cover photo, as it will make your profile look more professional. Your cover photo could be anything from a photo of your office or locale, to a photo of your staff, or even a mashup of those elements to go along with your firm's logo, a relevant quote, or a particularly strong review.

Who to Follow

Now that you've created your profiles, the next step is to begin following other people and businesses. The best accounts to follow on social media belong to one of three categories:

The World You Know

Start by building connections with state or local legal associations, news, and business associates. Here are a few suggestions to get you started:

- State or Local Bar Associations
- Your Professional Memberships
- Law Schools/Colleges (your own or ones you are affiliated with)
- Local Chamber of Commerce (even if you are not a member)
- Local News Stations
- Regional News Stations
- Lawyers you know and work with

Following accounts like these will allow you to get information (updated laws, local news) that you can use to start sharing with your followers. Share or create your own posts and be sure to add your expertise or thoughts on topics that matter to your audience. This will allow you to present yourself as an expert in the field to your followers (or potential followers), while also serving as a way to connect with established thought leaders on the platform who can help you grow your following.

The Competition

This might sound like a bad idea, but there are good reasons why you should follow your competition on social media. Here's what you should look for:

- **Who are my competitors targeting with their social media messages?**
 - WHY: To find out the audience they are trying to capture.
- **What are my competitors posting about on social media?**
 - WHY: To find out what they are sharing. What type of content is getting good engagement (likes, shares, comments) and what's potentially missing the mark?
- **Where are my competitors posting on social media?**
 - WHY: To find out if they are posting exclusively on their page or are they using communities or groups.
- **When are my competitors posting on social media?**
 - WHY: To find out when they are posting and monitor engagement based on different post times.

Tip: There are free and paid social media management tools that can help you optimize send times to increase engagement.
- **Why are my competitors posting on social media?**
 - WHY: To find out their end goal. Are they posting just to fill their page or are they posting valuable content to their users? Are they posting about relevant topics that you might be missing on your page?

Look Who's Talking

The next step is to find out who is interested in your brand or topics related to your areas of practice. The goal is to attract users who are already engaging in discussions about topics you can contribute to on social media.

This is why following the competition is so important. You can determine where there are gaps in their posts and add your own unique insights that they may be overlooking or have not even thought to add. This can help you differentiate yourself from the competition, while also allowing you to build your reputation as a thought leader.

**Remember,
your profiles were
created to promote
your firm or business.
Refrain from following
accounts or posting
about topics that are
more personal
in nature.**

Attracting Followers

It isn't enough to just create your social media profiles. The firms that succeed at social media take time to grow an audience and build a relationship with them. The following steps will help you grow your followers:

Invite Your Existing Contacts

You'll likely find that among your contact list of clients, prospects, and business colleagues there are strong advocates for your firm. These existing contacts should be the first people you invite to like or follow your page.

Many social networks make it easy to invite people you already know. For instance, LinkedIn can import your email address book and invite those contacts to connect with you. If you're already friends with someone on Facebook, you can use the "Invite Friends" feature to invite them to like your page. Twitter and Instagram also have similar features allowing you to invite friends from your email or other online contacts.

For the rest of your contacts, try sending a one-time email announcing your new profiles and gently asking for likes. Be careful not to email more than a handful of people at a time, or your emails could get flagged as spam.

Promote Your Page

You should add links to your social media profiles on all the other places you discuss your business. Link to your social profiles from your website, add links or social buttons to email signatures, add social buttons in the footer of your business newsletter, and invite people to find you on social media in your next ad campaign.

Your new profiles might have a long URL address that's hard to remember. Try changing it to something memorable. Make sure you're consistent in the naming of your business if you create more than one profile.

Post Engaging Content

If you can get your audience highly engaged with your content, they'll share your posts and suggest that their friends like or follow your pages. This increased reach can translate to even more engagement (comments, likes, and shares) for your profiles. This can also help grow your audience over time.

Stay Active

You've created profiles, followed accounts relevant to your business, and earned some followers. Now for one of the most important rules of social media — stay active. As you focus on building your social media presence, make sure to post and comment consistently. Keep your profile up to date with any information your followers should know. Here are some tips to get started:

The A.R.T. of Social Media for Lawyers

An effective social media presence is one that helps you achieve your business goals, which might mean bringing in new clients. Consider these three concepts that we like to use the acronym A.R.T. to describe:

You are an **A**uthority on the law

You are **R**eputable

You are **T**rustworthy

First, you become an **Authority** by commenting on the law - this can be through shared posts, original posts, or linking back to articles or content on your website. Use data and precedents to support your comments. Sharing valuable content provides a benefit to your audience while showcasing your knowledge. Share and comment on news articles relative to your area of practice and location or write a comment on a recent change in the law. Don't feel like you need to own every topic. Also, remember your audience. If you're speaking to consumers who are clients and potential clients, the tenor of your post and the language you use may be quite different than what you would write about the same case on a post being read by your peers and other attorneys.



Sending Invitations From Your Mobile Address Book

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How Do I Invite Friends To Like My Page?

[LEARN MORE](#)

How Are Usernames and User IDs Used on Facebook Profiles?

[LEARN MORE](#)

Secondly, you become **Reputable** from your customer reviews, your published works, and good standing with the bar association. How do you expand on your reputation? Two potential ways are: Get additional client reviews on your profiles, and [get peer and client reviews on Lawyers.com, Martindale.com or Avvo.com](#). Show potential clients how well people hold you in their regard.

And finally, you become **Trustworthy** by responding to your clients and showing that you understand their needs.

Content

Between client meetings and court appearances, what lawyer has time to sit down consistently and write about things going on in the world related to their practice? Your time is precious, and you'll need to find a balance between creating content yourself and sharing content from trusted sources. Mixing curated and created content is a good way to maintain a consistent posting schedule without feeling burnt out.

Creation

Content marketing is creating and distributing your own valuable, relevant, and consistent content. For platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter you should try to incorporate different types of posts into your schedule. That includes using videos, linked posts, and images/graphics. This helps your feed look fresh and keeps your followers interested.

Curation

Producing consistent, quality content is the biggest challenge any marketer today faces, no matter what industry they are in. Curating content from sources outside of your firm offers a possible solution. It involves finding and sharing other people's content on the web and presenting it in a meaningful and organized way on your pages. Be sure to add value to the content you share. Accompany your shared posts with a short comment, explaining how the linked material relates to your business or why your followers should care. This demonstrates your expertise to potential clients and distinguishes you from other attorneys who may link to the same content.

It's important to note that when sharing other people's content you should acknowledge and tag them so they receive proper credit. In addition to being the right thing to do, it can also help you increase reach and followers.

Martindale-Avvo offers [Social Starter](#), a tool designed to help you build your social media authority on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Google My Business. Engage potential clients by automatically sharing articles about your areas of practice to your profiles.

BONUS!

Optimizing for Keywords

Search engines run on user-generated queries that contain keywords to help them solve a problem or find information. Because of this, keywords drive a lot of digital marketing efforts. If you have a recently updated website, you likely have some search engine optimization strategies, including keyword research. Those keywords can also be helpful to you on social media.

Including keywords in your profile (in the about section or headlines) can help increase the visibility of your profiles. Incorporate keywords in a natural way that maintains coherent and engaging sentence structure. Remember, search engine optimization is about helping human users.

Talk to your site administrator about the SEO strategy for your site and how you can further optimize your social media profiles.

Looking for more?

If you're looking for more tips and best practices on marketing your firm, keep up with our Martindale-Avvo blog. Our section on [social media for law firms](#) or [law firm marketing](#) covers everything from social media rules to SEO strategy, and how to create compelling ad campaigns.

For law firm marketing solutions contact us [Martindale-Avvo.com](https://www.martindale-avvo.com) | **1.800.880.7036**.

Martindale-Avvo™

Martindale-Avvo is the largest legal marketing network helping attorneys grow their practice through exposure to 25 million consumers monthly. We drive prospects to attorneys with real-time lead generation, online legal profiles, live chat, website services, and lead intake and management tools.

OUR LEGAL MARKETING NETWORK

