



STATE OF ONLINE LEGAL MARKETING

2019

Insight & Best Practices for Navigating
Legal Marketing in a Digital World

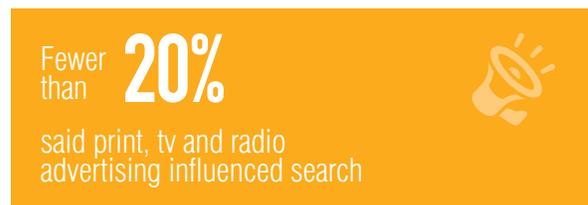
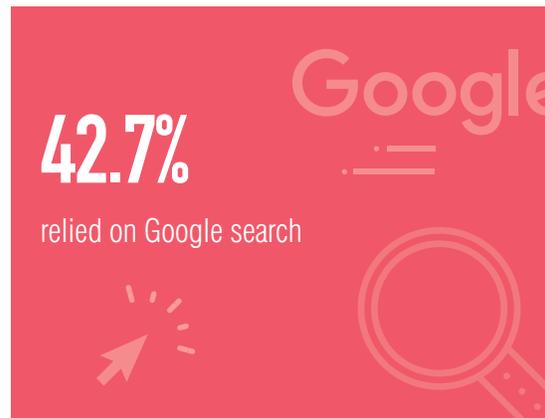
If you've invested resources building a website to support your legal practice, you might be spending money on digital marketing efforts such as search engine optimization (SEO), pay-per-click advertising (PPC), social media and more, as well as traditional forms of advertising (TV, radio, billboards and print ads). All of these are aimed at generating leads that turn into clients. But no matter how the prospective client reaches you – whether web form, live chat, an inbound call, a referral – it's important to establish your practice as a helpful resource.

So, how are members of your profession using online tools to market their firms and develop client relationships? How and where do they generate leads? Are phone calls still valuable, or would your prospective clients prefer a text message? Does a lack of online reviews impact whether or not clients hire your firm?

TO HELP YOU NAVIGATE THE WORLD OF ONLINE LEGAL MARKETING, Martindale-Nolo surveyed attorneys in the spring of 2019, gaining insight from nearly 1,000 respondents across the United States about how they use digital marketing strategies to connect with potential clients. And while communication preferences may have changed, one thing has stayed the same – the client experience remains paramount to success.

ARE YOU MISSING OUT ONLINE?

According to a recent Martindale-Avvo study, [“Hiring an Attorney 2019,”](#) consumers tapped a wide variety of resources to assist them in locating an attorney. And while family/friend referrals were high on the list, online review sites and resources dominate their efforts.



WHAT'S THE PREFERRED ADVERTISING MEDIUM FOR ATTORNEYS?

- 69% of surveyed attorneys felt a strong online presence helps them build their practice.
- While over 60% of those surveyed felt they could attract high-quality clients through online advertising, only 40% stated online advertising (lead generation, SEO/SEM, social media) was their most important form of advertising.
- In fact, social media outranked SEM in importance – most likely due to cost and complexity of launching and monitoring an SEM campaign through Google and other pay-per-click programs.

Lead Generation Services (Includes Pay Per Lead & online directory services such as Nolo.com, Lawyers.com, Avvo, etc.)



SEO



Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.)



TV/Print



SEM (includes Google Adwords or other pay-per-click campaigns)



Other (includes client referrals, word of mouth)



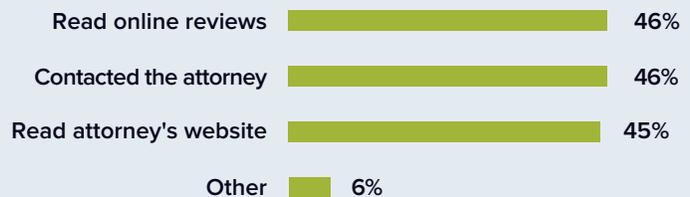
What Is Your Best-Performing Advertising Medium?

YOUR REFERRALS WILL SEE YOU BEFORE YOU SEE THEM

While nearly 45% of attorneys surveyed cited referrals as one of the best-performing advertising methods, only 36% of consumers hired the attorney to whom they were referred by family and friends.*

Why? Even if most your business comes from referrals, those that have been referred to you are still looking at you online first. Ensure they see the best possible you by updating your online directory listings (such those on Nolo.com, Avvo.com and Lawyers.com) and claiming your Google business listing so you can control your digital existence.

Did you research or contact the attorney you were recommended?



 **PRO TIP:** Claim your profile in high-ranking directories and review sites.

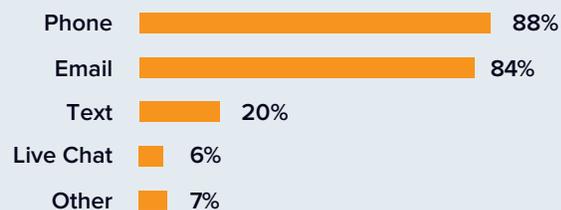
*Martindale-Avvo, "Hiring an Attorney 2019: Legal Consumer Choices; Client Expectations"

THE POWER OF TECHNOLOGY

The buying habits of consumers have changed dramatically over the past decade as the convenience of online shopping has conditioned most people to make purchases from the safety of their computer screen.

But we're no longer limiting online experiences to a laptop. The computer is still the primary device, but not the only device. Smart phones and other mobile devices have moved online search and shopping to new levels. The days of telephone-only client communication are obsolete. And text messaging is taking over – 81% of Americans regularly text and 32% of those texting closed a business deal via text**. But only 26% of the attorneys surveyed regularly communicate with clients via text or even live chat.

Is your preferred communication method keeping pace with technology and consumer preferences?



Which communication methods does your firm use when contacting an online prospect?

Matching the consumer's preferred method of interaction – whether performing information gathering or scheduling an initial visit – can build credibility and trust before you ever meet face to face. Regardless of the communication method, however, speed and persistence are key to converting prospects into clients.

 **PRO TIP:** Utilize all contact methods to maximize customer contact success.

**Statistic Brain Research Institute.

LEAD RESPONSE TIME MATTERS

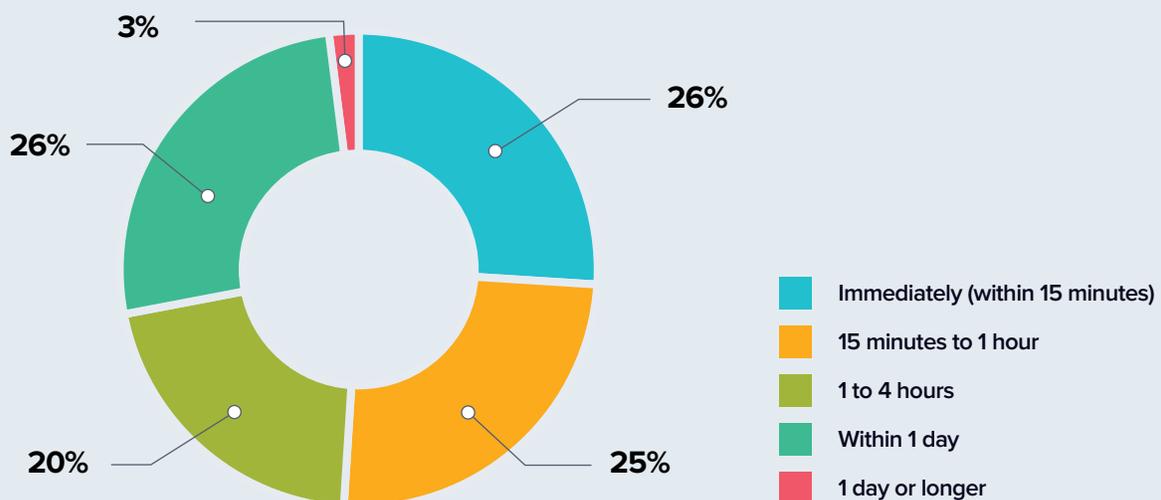
We live in a world of instant gratification, seeking answers in 24/7 time. As a result, consumers have come to expect an expedient response to their online inquiries.

This isn't a new phenomenon. As early as 2011, a [Harvard Business Review article](#) noted that while professionals were turning to the internet to generate new business, most of these companies were not responding fast enough to convert interested parties into clients.

SPEED IS KEY.

Lead quality is highest when potential clients are looking for a trusted advisor. This is the case whether your leads come from a pay-per-lead program, website or even live chat. When you fail to follow up quickly, you make it easy for your competition to close in on your prospects.

How soon do you follow up on an incoming lead?

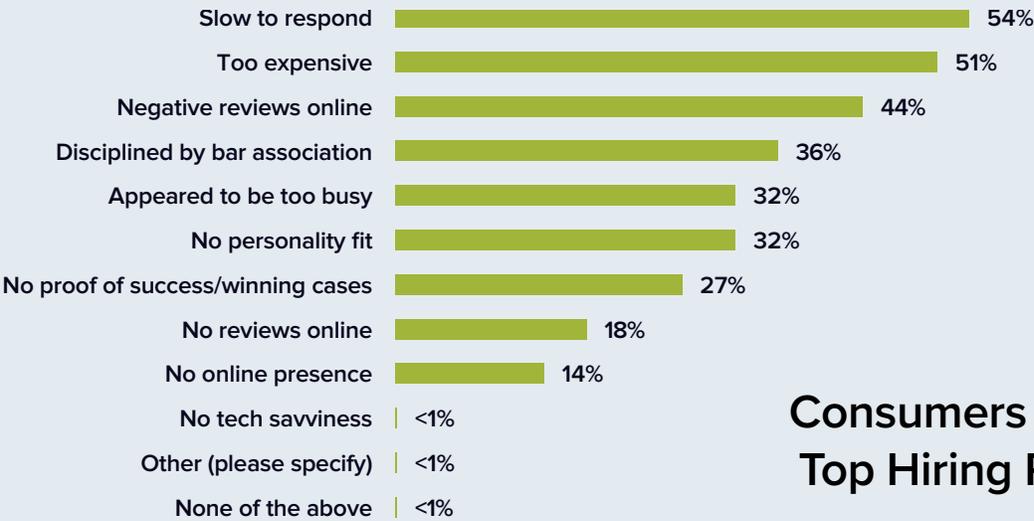


 **PRO TIP:** Implement automated response systems or work with providers that offer these features to expedite your response time, especially if you can customize.

FIVE-MINUTE RULE

A study by LeadResponseManagement.Org suggests you are more likely to turn a lead into a client if you contact them within the first five minutes. They examined data collected over a three-year period from six businesses, focusing on one question: when should companies call web-generated leads for optimal contact and qualification? The results were interesting: when a team member followed up on leads within the first five minutes – as opposed to the first 30 minutes – they were **100 times** likelier to make contact with the lead. What’s even more striking is they were **21 times** more likely to convert the lead.

This is reinforced by the Martindale-Avvo study, “Hiring an Attorney 2019,” which uncovered at least a dozen reasons why consumers bypassed one attorney and hired another. Number one on the list? Slow response time to their legal assistance inquiry.



Consumers List Their Top Hiring Red Flags

Keep in mind – potential clients have done their research and formed a strong opinion about the attorney with whom they would like to work. Many consumers contact three or more attorneys before making the decision to commit. Staying accessible to potential clients shows them you are serious about earning – and keeping – their business. And it may give you that edge to grab the clients your competitors didn’t reach in the first five minutes.

PRO TIP: Send leads to multiple recipients in your office, or using auto responders requesting a call with an add-to-calendar link.

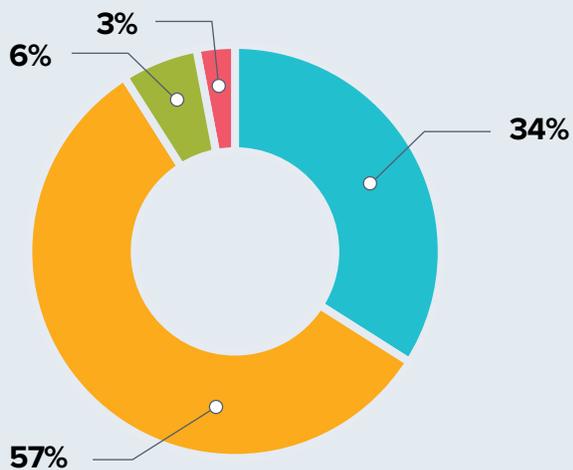
APPLY SHAMPOO INSTRUCTIONS

We've all read the instructions on the back of a bottle of shampoo: lather, rinse, repeat.

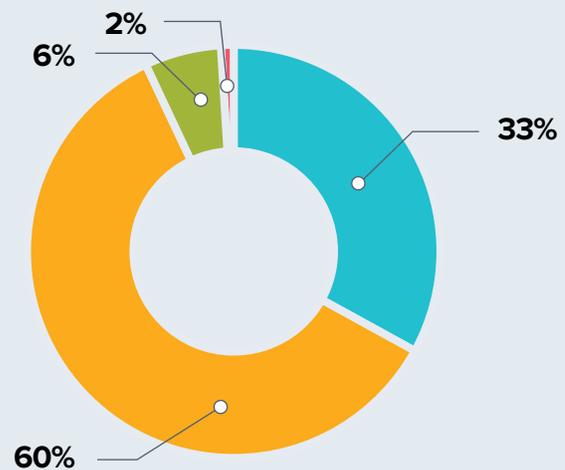
Why not apply similar directions when contacting a lead?

Prospects move on if you don't follow up. So, if you don't try to reach prospects repeatedly, or if you don't make multiple attempts to reach a prospect, you're losing business. And that often includes contacting the prospective client more than once.

How many times does your firm attempt to contact a prospective client?



How many contact attempts do you make before you give up?



Once 2 to 3 Times 4 to 6 Times 7 to 15 (or more) Times

KEY TAKEAWAYS



Dedicating your marketing budget to a single channel won't net the results you need. To be found (as well as hired), your marketing tactics should encompass a variety of digital and traditional marketing tools.



Only 40% of surveyed attorneys said online advertising (lead generation, SEO/SEM, social media) was their most important form of advertising, but 47% of consumers use online review sites and directories to make a hiring decision.



Connect with consumers the way they want to communicate with you. Don't shy away from texting, live chat, social media and other methods of interacting and engaging with prospects.



Response time matters – remember the five-minute rule. Enough said.



Worried you're following up "too much"? Remember: the prospect reached out first. Persistence is required.

Find out more about



Martindale-Nolo offers a highly-targeted Pay Per Lead service that helps attorneys and law firms achieve the quality and volume of leads they need to grow their practice. Every month, we receive over 120,000 consumer requests to speak with an attorney across 55 practice areas from our network of websites, including high-traffic domains like Nolo.com, AllLaw.com, Disability Secrets.com and other practice-specific sites.

CONTACT US TODAY AT 1.877.317.9160 TO GET STARTED

**REACHING OVER
25 MILLION
CONSUMERS PER MONTH**

Martindale-Avvo comprises some of the leading players in the online legal marketing space, including brands that have been trusted for generations: Martindale-Hubbell, Avvo, Captorra, Martindale-Nolo and Ngage Live Chat. We provide comprehensive legal marketing solutions including real-time lead generation, online legal profiles, live chat and website services. Our network of resources, including Martindale.com, Avvo.com, Lawyers.com, Nolo.com and other top-ranking destinations, attract over 25 million consumers per month – making us the largest legal network online.

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