

# TO BLOG OR NOT TO BLOG: A PRIMER FOR LAWYERS

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In today's digital world, there are many ways to increase your name recognition in the marketplace. However, you want to make sure your time is spent on activities most likely to succeed and generate results. Measuring the results from blogging isn't just about clients in the door, but in your ability to educate and influence people using clear and concise substantive content.

## SHOULD YOU BLOG?

If your law firm has a blog, you are most likely blogging already, being asked to submit a blog post a few times a year to feed the firm's blogging machine. In the scheme of lawyer marketing, blogging is a relatively new marketing strategy, taking hold with lawyers only in the past five years or so. If you are wondering if you should consider starting a blog or adding content to an existing blog, consider:

- Do you have specific subject matter expertise?
- Do you know who your target audiences are (clients and referral sources)?
- Is writing fairly easy for you?
- Are you interested in leveraging your work product?
- Are you looking for a way to get known in the marketplace?
- Are you looking for marketing activities that leverage your time and promote your knowledge?

If you answered yes to more than three of the questions above, you should consider blogging.

## WHY DON'T MORE LAWYERS WRITE BLOGS?

Most lawyers I work with overthink the process of writing a blog post. Many feel a "good" blog post must be well researched, fact checked and chock full of citations and case references. Because of this belief, they can never find the time to blog. I wouldn't either if I perceived blogging to be commensurate with writing a law review article. So let's bust that myth.

## TIPS FOR WRITING THE PERFECT BLOG POST

- **Keep Your Readers in Mind.** Write with a focus toward those you want to attract as clients and referral sources.
- **No Law Review Articles.** As a guideline, your blog post should be between 400-600 words.

- **Refine Your Message.** Don't try and cover too much. If you have more content than you need, consider a two-part blog post.
- **Make Your Posts Timely and Relevant.** Focus on a topic that affects a lot of people significantly. This is the media definition of newsworthy.
- **Write Within Your Key Areas of Focus.** Write blog posts on topics you want to become known for in the marketplace.
- **Make the Complex Simple.** The greatest writers I know can take extremely complex subjects and boil them down to simple, digestible concepts that your readers will understand.
- **Educate and Inform.** Use your blog post to showcase your knowledge. Your goal is to give your readers new information that will be helpful to them.
- **Develop a Catchy Title.** Your blog title should be no more than six words. Have fun with the title!
- **Leverage Your Own Advice.** When your clients call you with general legal questions, consider turning those topics into blog posts.
- **Categorize Your Blog.** Categorize your blog by your name and by the specific category of your topic (i.e., disability discrimination or medical malpractice or child support).
- **Write Blogs on Search Phrases.** Hopefully if you have a website, you have Google Analytics working in the background. Review the words and phrases people use to find you online, then write a blog post on the most popular search phrases.

## HOW TO WRITE A BLOG POST

After you have reviewed the tips above, use this format to create your blog.

- **Title:** You are trying to pull people in so they want to read your blog post. Make it interesting!
- **Introductory Paragraph:** Introduce your blog topic by discussing why the topic is timely and relevant, who will be impacted by your topic, how they will be impacted and the overall relevance of the topic on the lives and/or businesses of your readers.
- **Second Paragraph:** Provide more details on the significance of the topic and identify some steps your readers can pursue to take action. This is where you educate your readers on what they should be thinking about as a result of your topic.
- **Conclusion:** Pull it all together. Create a strong and compelling closing argument, which nails the key com-

munication points you are trying to get across, and gives readers a next step.

## I'M BLOGGING. NOW WHAT?

Don't let your blog posts just sit on your website. They need to be leveraged across many different mediums including:

- **Add Blogs to Your Biography.** Add a blog post feed to your website biography so your bio becomes a micro-site just for you that features your blog posts, other articles you have written, presentations given, awards received, community activities, and more.
- **Promote on Website.** Feature your new blog posts on the home page of your website.
- **Include on Practice Area Pages.** Make sure your blogs appear on relevant practice group pages.
- **Promote on LinkedIn.** Don't be shy! When you publish a blog, let your contacts know. Write a short blurb on the blog topic and post it with a link to the blog. Encourage your friends to share it!
- **Include in Client Communications.** If you or your firm sends a regular communication to clients, make sure a brief summary of and link to your blog post makes it into the communication.

Blogging is an excellent way to build your name recognition and awareness in the marketplace. Don't overthink the process. Simply follow the tips and ideas above and you will be on the road to increasing your credibility and value as an experienced, knowledgeable lawyer; one who can simplify a seemingly complex topic and actually make it interesting.



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