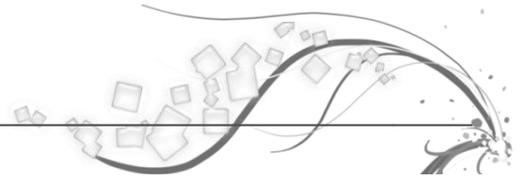


## The benefits of social media for law firms

May 2013

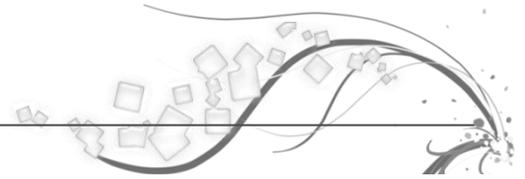




## **The benefits of social media for law firms**

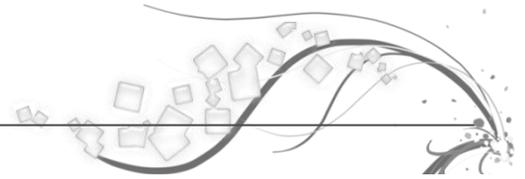
This guide is for anyone in a law firm who is unsure about social media. It outlines the most important benefits of embracing these new marketing channels.

Business Tendrils is a social media company that understands the specific needs and concerns of practising solicitors and helps many legal businesses to compete and succeed online.



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## Why should our firm use social media?

Here's why:

### **To get found and get chosen**

The point of being online is to make sure you are *found* before your competitors. And once you're found, you need to make sure that your online activity is compelling and frequent enough to get you *chosen*.

**Attorneys who use Twitter to share relevant information brand themselves as subject matter experts.**

**Bob White, Partner  
Source: Mashable**

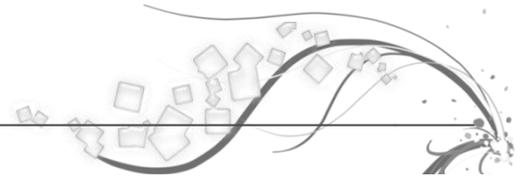
We recommend that you start by doing a geographical search of your firm's services online to gauge local competition. You'll find a list of similar businesses to your own and some will appear more than once – the content and quality of their websites will vary but you can learn a lot from their approaches.

Your aim is to be *found* at the top of the list or to appear on page one of any relevant search – and appearing several times on different websites with valuable information will undoubtedly boost your chance of being *chosen*.

### **For direct word of mouth and referrals**

Many law firms win clients through face-to-face referrals from people they've worked with before. The online version of this is more direct – all recommendations are linked back to whoever gave them and these recommenders can be contacted by anyone wanting to know more about the experience of working with you.

Genuine recommendations get seen by a vast online audience who can in turn refer you to their connections – social media opens up the widest market for any of us who have genuine and powerful endorsements.



## **To win business from your ideal clients**

Your ability to target your most attractive clients is one of the key strengths of social media marketing. As a law firm you'll know who you want to work with – expert use of social media will give you access to them.

## **To reach thousands of great people**

By being active online, you'll get in front of so many more people and businesses than in the 'real' world. On top of this, carefully targeted marketing cuts down on time-wasting by making sure that you're only seen by businesses who might genuinely need your services.

The cost of reaching so many people has never been lower than it is today. An online advertising campaign is like a high-end peak-time TV commercial that only gets seen by your chosen audience – at a fraction of the cost you'd pay to get it aired on television.

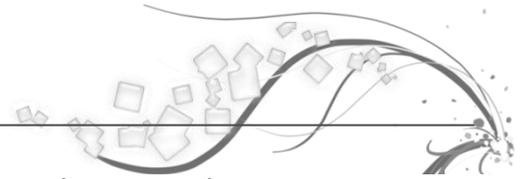
## **To future proof your firm and your work**

Do you remember doubting the value of having a website or being suspicious about online banking? Social media has had its cynics but is now considered to be the marketing powerhouse of any ambitious business. Your competitors are embracing it and they're busy talking to all the clients you've got on your wish list.

Don't be left behind.

## **To get the content right then just click and deliver**

Law firms already spend a huge amount of money producing legal briefings, research data, market material and white papers – the stuff we call 'content'.



Most businesses struggle to produce valuable content because they don't think it's worth spending money to get it right but we can't overemphasise how important it is to get your messages straight and clear before you deliver them. There's a world of difference between good writing that excites people and bad writing that confuses them and switches them off.

Once you have the perfect content, social media makes sure that everyone understands your value because it will be showcased to tens of thousands of interested businesses and individuals within seconds.

## **To fast track into news and important information**

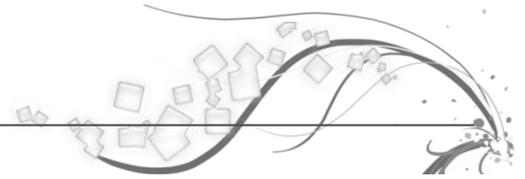
Online social media applications can be incredibly powerful if you know what information you want to find out there.

Use platforms to 'listen' to mentions of you, your clients and your competitors so you can share relevant information confidentially. This gives you the opportunity to serve your clients better.

News and the latest developments often appear on social channels like Twitter before traditional communication channels catch on – use it to stay on top of things and be in the know.

## **To drive traffic to your website**

This benefit applies to every type of business – if you feel your website gives you a great online presence, then bringing more traffic to it can only benefit the firm.



## Because people are looking online – for you

You know you are being searched for online using your name, your firm's name or the services you provide. If you are not there, your competitors will be and you will miss out on the leads you could have had.

If someone is searching for you by your name or your firm, they're likely to have heard about you already and they'll be in touch by phone or through your website. However, if they don't already know you they'll probably find your competitors through social media and contact them rather than you.

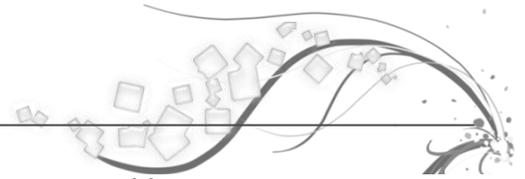
If people are searching for specific information - employment law for instance - they are likely to approach whichever firm gives them the most accessible and reassuring information. This means that if you fail to be clear and exacting your firm will be ignored. Valuable content and a clever use of keywords can dramatically affect your chances of being noticed.

**More than three-quarters of all people looking for a lawyer in the US did so online and Facebook was the most popular resource used by consumers in their searches. Lexis Nexis**

## To sharpen up marketing skills

Competition is tougher than ever and it's never been more important to stand out. If you want to see your profits soar you must embrace new marketing tools and skills.

Traditionally, legal firms have been suspicious of social media because they're afraid of the wrong kind of exposure in a heavily regulated world. Many have in-house marketing teams who are expected to understand new technology without training or support. Typically they'll use only some of the available online platforms with incomplete links and messy profiles – both of which will severely compromise a successful social media campaign.



The firm will generally not be aware of what they've missed because the marketing team only focuses on what they know. The risk of this is particularly high when marketing staff's experience of online platforms is limited to personal rather than business. What's more, the risk of having unqualified staff operating a social media campaign is magnified because of the legal industry's many regulations which can put off all but the most confident and expert users.

A training needs analysis and an online review report can resolve this stalemate and provide a robust social media plan – anything but the most skilled and comprehensive programme is likely to mean wasted opportunities and limited return.

## **To qualify leads more quickly**

By engaging online, a firm can qualify leads more quickly because of the amount of information, references and recommendations available – a huge cost saving for most businesses.

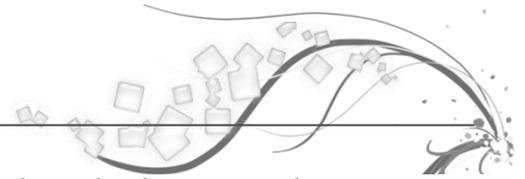
## **To engage with clients and get their attention**

Communicating with potential and existing clients through social media is less formal than email, not as intrusive as phone calls and a lot less time consuming than meetings. Engaging publicly with clients allows other interested parties to get involved but you must always be careful about confidentiality – any public engagement activity must be strictly in accordance with the SRA Code of Conduct.

For more on this see our document titled "[The SRA, The Law Society and Social Media](#)".

## **To improve recruitment**

Using online resources for recruitment allows you to handpick quality candidates based on recommendations and evident skills – making



social media a reliable and cost-effective way of finding the best people for your team.

## **To participate in discussions**

Forums and groups exist for you to debate and share opinions and experiences – a process that will introduce you to interesting contacts at the same time as boosting your knowledge and helping you to stay on top of topical discussions. Answering questions online will establish you as an expert and generate interest in your skills from group/forum members who are ‘listening in’ – very often these are people you’d have no other obvious access to.

## **To remove geographical restrictions**

Geographical criteria only matters as much as you want it to in the digital world – in reality you can choose to keep your profiles open to everybody or restrict them to dedicated locations. This isn’t possible for every kind of profile but the main thing is that you can build relationships globally if you want to.

## **To stand out from the crowd**

In today’s climate we must all find a way of making our differences clear. Social media is your chance to do this. Your presence online will give you a cutting-edge profile that confirms you as being expert about new technology and fully able to maximise its benefits. The potential of your business to develop is open ended.

Some firms actively publicise the fact that they outsource their social media marketing because this illustrates a serious commitment to the



process and a genuine belief that everything they are involved in should be done with the highest levels of professionalism and integrity.

## For more information

Call: +44 (0) 20 8144 8875

Email: [info@businesstendrils.com](mailto:info@businesstendrils.com)

Read these additional documents on our website:

**The SRA, The Law Society and social media**– Considerations and Recommendations (based on the SRA Handbook and the Law Society Practice Notes)

**Getting started with social media** – contains an example strategy and items that you can use to ensure a smooth implementation and future measurement of the returns for your social media effort.

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