

MARKETING GUIDE

2015

FAMILY LAWYER MAGAZINE

Marketing Your Family Law Firm

Best Marketing Tips and Strategies

Priming your Practice for Success

Reputation Management

Family Law Websites 101

Social Media and Online Marketing

Get More Referrals

Branding your Family Law Firm



www.FamilyLawyerMagazine.com



Our Clients Strongly Recommend Divorce Marketing Group



**Steve Mindel, Family Lawyer, Managing Partner
Feinberg Mindel Brandt & Klein, California**

A Divorce Marketing Group client of 14 years

“Divorce Marketing Group has been the driving force in developing our strategic marketing plan which has grown our firm from 6 to 15 attorneys. We could not have done it without their guidance and support. As the Managing Partner of our firm, I personally recommend Divorce Marketing Group to many of my colleagues throughout the country. Divorce Marketing Group really understands how to market family law firms.”



**Joy Feinberg, Family Lawyer, Partner
Boyle & Feinberg, P.C., Illinois**

A Divorce Marketing Group client of 16 years

“They will help you grow your business into the future before you even know what the future is. I cannot give a greater endorsement of any business than Divorce Marketing Group. They are client-focused marketing professionals whom you can count on.”



**Catherine Hendrix, Family Lawyer, Partner
Lester & Hendrix, LLC, South Carolina**

A Divorce Marketing Group client of 2 years

“Our law firm Lester & Hendrix has been involved with the Divorce Marketing Group family for about two years now. We were extremely pleased with the product that DMG helped us establish through our website and through other marketing suggestions for our firm. Any time we reached out to them, Dan and Martha made themselves available to us with helpful suggestions and tips, and they even have taken over some of the responsibilities that we had to maintain prior to becoming involved with them. We have been nothing but pleased with the result that we’ve gotten from our association with Divorce Marketing Group, and I highly recommend them to anyone who is considering their services.”



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About this Special Marketing Guide for Family Lawyers

Is your Family Law Practice Primed for Success?

Failing to plan is planning to fail; do you have a plan to secure the future of your family law practice? Answering these seven questions will let you know whether you're on the road to a successful future; if not, here are seven ways to help you get on track.

Whether your family law practice is doing well or if business is down, there are a number of actions you could be taking today to secure the future of your family law firm. In this article, I'll highlight seven items that are critical to the future success of your practice. (These tips do not include your skills as a lawyer – I assume that you will continue to update your legal knowledge and skills.) Answer "yes" or "no" for each item; if you answer "yes" fewer than four times, you need to get into action now or the future of your firm could be in jeopardy.

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1. Do you embrace technology? Yes ___ No ___

You don't want your prospective clients to think you're behind the times. If your firm isn't using the latest technology, software, and devices, it could be perceived as passé or obsolete. Changing this perception will be much more difficult and expensive the longer you delay, so embrace the best and most innovative technology and client-management tools now. They can improve your effectiveness and efficiency when it comes to serving your clients as well as marketing and managing your law practice.

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2. Is your website mobile-friendly? Yes ___ No ___

About 30 to 50% of visitors to a website are viewing it from mobile devices – and that percentage is growing. Approximately 65% of the family lawyer websites I examined while writing this

article were not optimized for mobile devices. Use your smartphone or tablet to check your website now; is it a responsive site that automatically adjusts to display well on mobile devices? Is it legible? Can visitors call, email, or locate your office on a map from their smartphone with just one touch?

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3. Are you adding content and resources to your website on a regular basis? Yes ___ No ___

Most family law firm websites provide very little in the way of information or resources that would be helpful to prospective and current clients: they provide basic information about the firm and the lawyers and that's about it. If you question the need to add "extra" information, here's why you should do it:

- If potential clients don't find the information and answers they're looking for on your website, they'll go elsewhere – and possibly hire the firm that did address their burning questions on their website, instead of hiring you.
- Your website will become more effective at attracting traffic because Google prefers websites that regularly add new and relevant content. Plus, a content-rich site is likely going to be passed along from one friend to another friend.
- Most, if not all, of your prospective clients will visit your website before contacting you; "extra" content will inform and impress potential clients with your knowledge and differentiate your firm from all others. It will help you convert prospects into clients.
- Writing a regular blog lets your personality and expertise shine. Your posts will also tell people where you stand on issues and what it would be like to work with you.



I strongly advise against purchasing the service of having weekly blog posts written for your firm and added to your website automatically. Ethics aside, these mass-produced blogs are seldom relevant to your prospective clients, and they cannot represent your voice or your firm's expertise and image properly. How could they? The writers know nothing about you or your firm: they take a generic topic and "spin" multiple versions of the same post and add them to their various family lawyer clients' websites.

You need to have a strategy in place to keep yourself top-of-mind with those who refer business to you. If not, you are jeopardizing the future of your practice.

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4. Do you nurture your referral sources on a regular basis? Yes ___ No ___

Many family lawyers get a significant amount of their new business from referrals – yet very few are in regular contact with their referral sources. If you're doing nothing to nurture and grow your referral sources, and you're relying solely on people remembering you when it comes time to recommend a family lawyer, you're jeopardizing the future of your practice. You need to have a strategy in place to keep your firm top-of-mind with those who refer business to you. Here are a few easy and effective ways to nurture your referral sources:

- Produce, purchase, or lease a custom eNewsletter with relevant content and send it to your referral sources every month.
- Try to take potential referrers to lunch, dinner and/or social events on a regular basis.
- Participate in associations and join networking groups that could bring you closer to quality referral sources. I know a family lawyer who joined a Rolls Royce Club, for instance. Groups can be in-person or online through LinkedIn, Meetup, etc.
- List germane professionals on your website – and let them know you've listed them.
- Ask current referrers for recommendations for other professionals to add to your network.
- Be a referrer! It goes both ways.

.....
5. Are you constantly expanding your skills? Yes ___ No ___

In the future, the number of attorneys making their living as litigators will increase while the number of transactional lawyers will decrease; this shift is already happening because technology is making it easier for people to use online legal services for their divorce. You should consider developing your litigation skills as well as your non-legal skills (financial, conflict management, mediation, collaborative, etc.) to prepare you for a changing divorce landscape.

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6. Are you visible through social media? Yes ___ No ___

Professionals who recognize the importance of social media – and learn how to use it effectively – have a huge advantage over their peers who fear or disdain it. The three most important networking websites for professionals are LinkedIn, Facebook, and Google+.

If you lack the time, interest, or skills to create and maintain this kind of social-media presence, consider outsourcing it to a trusted marketing company to create excellent and complete profiles for you and your firm.

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7. Are you working at heightening your profile online and offline? Yes ___ No ___

Some attorneys have worked hard to establish themselves as experts in the field of family law by becoming Board Certified or a Specialist. Increasing your legal skill-set will pay dividends for your clients, but you also need other strategies to demonstrate your expertise, manage your reputation online and offline, and stand out from your competitors in order to secure new business. Here are a few actions to take:

- Google your name and see what the search results say. You are your search results. Are there any pages with bad comments, poor ratings, or inaccurate information about you? Do you show up on the first page of Google search results? Can you be found on Google at all?
- Send regular press releases to local media about divorce-related news, changes in legislation, etc. Become the go-to person when they're looking for a quote.
- Provide information and resources to professionals and groups. Give seminars, teleseminars, or webinars to financial professionals and divorcing individuals.
- Contribute to your community. Sponsor a charity golf or tennis tournament, or a battered-women's shelter, or a fathers' support group. Let your interests and beliefs guide your choices. ■



Think Like a Business Owner

What if Mercedes-Benz were to launch a Family Law Division? Why you need to look at your firm like a business owner and consider the power of branding and marketing.

The Impact of Marketing and Branding

In the U.S. only lawyers are allowed to have an ownership interest in, or be managers of, a law firm. The United Kingdom had a similar rule barring non-lawyer ownership, but in recent years firms have been able to take a limited number of non-lawyer partners. The reasons behind this rule is a topic for a separate discussion, and one we won't get into here. Rather, for the sake of argument, I am interested in approaching this as a hypothetical to have you thinking about your firm like a business owner. What if non-lawyer ownership of firms was allowed in the U.S.? What if Mercedes-Benz could launch a Family Law Division?

You might say to yourself: How would Mercedes-Benz compete with me? They know cars, not the law. The truth is that it is not as far-fetched a concept as you may think.

IKEA Wind Farms

Many known brands have leveraged their brand loyalty and branched outside of their "core" business. They know they can command almost instant interest and market share, despite the industry already being filled with well-established brands.

For example, IKEA, one of the world's biggest furniture retailers, has economy hotels and restaurants in Sweden and is partnering with the Marriott Hotel to create another 150 hotels in Europe. IKEA has also partnered with a Swedish construction giant to build affordable homes. It doesn't stop there. In 2012, Ikea launched its own beer, and in November of that year added Canada to its list of countries where they own wind farms. IKEA also partnered with SBAB to create the bank, Ikano, which operates in ten countries.

What Mercedes-Benz Family Law Division Could Offer

Mercedes-Benz has invested heavily not just in engineering, but also in marketing. Whether you own a Mercedes-Benz or not, you likely “know” the brand means luxury, innovation, reliability, quality product, and service. Were Mercedes-Benz to open up a Family Law Division, this same brand quality would likely be a given in the eyes of those seeking a lawyer for their divorce.

By simply extending some of the services it currently offers its automobile customers to family law clients, Mercedes-Benz would reinforce its reputation and provide solid reasons to be the law firm of choice. For example:

- **Financing** – Extend credit to clients over 60 months at 1% annual interest rate. After all, legal fees for a divorce can cost more than a Mercedes.
- **eBills** – Clients could pay 24/7 online, by phone, or automatic monthly withdrawal.
- **An App** – To monitor the progress, manage payments, and contact the lawyer.
- **Insurance** – Mercedes-Benz could also take care of insurance for spousal and child payments.
- **Express Service** – Clients could drop in with no appointments and would be guaranteed they would not wait for more than 15 minutes to see a lawyer about their case.
- **Hotel Upgrade** – For clients who need to move out of their matrimonial home in a hurry.

How Mercedes-Benz Would Market its Family Law Division

If Mercedes-Benz wanted to, they could have a network of law offices through their dealerships, giving them national prominence fairly quickly. They have 17 million fans on their Facebook page, and a huge budget for print, radio, TV, and online marketing. Unlike a lot of “highly qualified” family law firms, Mercedes-Benz is likely not going to be shy about advertising their Family Law Division and its lawyers. By the way, I don’t think they will have issues recruiting good lawyers who want to focus on lawyering without the need to worry about bringing in the business or billing their clients.

Mercedes-Benz knows that a Mercedes is an emotional purchase, not just a need. They have mastered the ability to provide an experience for would-be owners of their product. One of their print advertisements has this headline: “If you don’t enjoy your money, your ex-wife will. The ultra-luxurious S-Class. Spoil yourself.” Hiring a family lawyer for a divorce or any other family law matter is making an emotional purchase at a highly emotional time. You can count on marketing-savvy companies such as Mercedes-Benz to know how

to create the experience these prospective clients can relate to.

How Would Your Family Law Practice Compare to Mercedes-Benz?

More and more people are researching online to find family lawyers. If you were to ask individuals from your city what comes to mind when you name your law firm, or for that matter, one that has been around for 30 years, it’s likely there would be little to no recognition of either name, service level or reputation.

Isn’t it ironic that a divorcing person could potentially have a clear expectation of a firm that does not exist – such as Mercedes-Benz Family Law, LLP – and no idea about what a firm that has been around for 30 years does? This is the power of branding and marketing.

A Paradigm Shift: Embrace Marketing

Your firm will not become a household name overnight, but it could some day, and you do have to begin somewhere. For most family law practices, the first step is to have a paradigm shift in how they perceive the business of family law. You are not just practicing law; you are running a business, and this business needs to be marketed. Appropriate and strategic marketing can build trust and position your firm as one that’s associated with quality. Once you have made this shift, you will then want to do the following:

- **Define Your Business Goals** – The first step to defining your market and brand is to create clear business goals, a clear mission statement, a clear set of procedures, policies and strategies.
- **Define Your Brand** – Think of ways to differentiate your firm from other family law practices. Who are your preferred clients? What benefits can you offer them? What else could you do for your clients that would ensure they have the best experience possible? What are your main marketing messages?
- **Craft Your Marketing Plan** – You could do this with a website; social media; a blog; advertising; getting your expert opinions and articles published through podcasts, videos, and publications; keeping top-of-mind with your referral sources; and garnering testimonials and industry designations.
- **Craft Your Reputation, Online and Offline** – It is probably easier to manage your reputation offline than it is online. You are your search results. Make sure you Google your name regularly to see what others see, and take action if you cannot be found easily or if your reputation is tarnished.
- **Find Powerful Partners/Affiliates to Create/Enhance Your Brand** – Think of who can enhance your reputation as an authority in family law, or hire a marketing agency to help you do that. ■

Marketing Experts for Family Lawyers



“If you spend time and money on marketing, you will produce results. When you combine time, money, and our expertise, you will produce much better results.”

– Dan Couvrette, CEO, Divorce Marketing Group

100% Focused on Marketing Divorce Professionals to Produce Results

Divorce Marketing Group is the only marketing agency that is 100% dedicated to helping family lawyers and divorce professionals grow their practices. Among the hundreds of clients we have worked with are: family lawyers, QDRO specialists, mediators, business valuers, forensic accountants, CPAs, CDFAs, therapists, private investigators, and real-estate professionals. They range from solo practitioners to medium and large firms.

We have been promoting divorce-industry professionals to separated and divorcing individuals since 1996. Given our long, successful history in this niche, we understand the divorce market better than any other agency in North America. We can help you grow your practice by reaching divorcing people and divorce professionals with a wide range of innovative and effective products and services.

Attract Quality Clients + Secure and Develop Your Referral Sources

We will present your practice in the best light possible, telling your unique story in exactly the right way to attract the type of clients you desire. Our products and services will also keep you “top of mind” with the referral sources you wish to nurture and develop.

Let our Experts Create and Implement a Custom Marketing Plan for you

If you are like most of our clients, you are very busy doing what you are good at – but you may have neither the time nor the expertise to market yourself effectively. We will custom-design and implement a marketing program for your practice based on your business objectives and budget.

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We Offer a Wide Range of Marketing Products and Services

OUR CLIENTS RAVE ABOUT US

We are the only marketing agency that specializes in promoting family lawyers and divorce professionals. As a one-stop marketing firm, we offer a wide range of highly essential products and services designed for the successful growth of a family law practice.

Some of our clients have been with us for 18 years because they find us to be responsive, creative, and affordable marketing experts. We are big enough to offer the complete range of marketing options you need and small enough to always be there for you.

OUR PRODUCTS

Divorce Magazine & DivorceMagazine.com

Published since 1996, it is the only magazine that targets people who need your expertise. Digital editions are available for every state. Print editions are available for CA, IL, and NJ.

With 4,000+ pages, DivorceMagazine.com is the most comprehensive divorce-related website in North America – and a great place to promote your practice.

Divorce eNewsletter

Our monthly eNewsletter for divorcing people will keep you top-of-mind with your clients and professional referral sources on a regular basis and make your website a better resource for visitors to revisit and recommend to others.



Family Lawyer Magazine



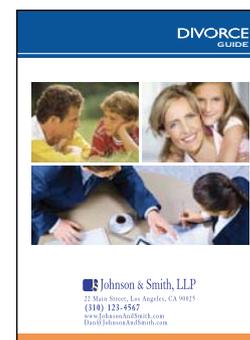
Divorce Magazine



DivorceMagazine.com



Divorce eNewsletter



Divorce Guides

Ten Divorce Guides

Each *Divorce Guide* contains 32 pages of professionally-written and designed articles. They can all be customized with your firm's branding and can be added to your website or given out to your clients and prospective clients.

Family Lawyer Magazine & Website

Published twice a year and sent to 30,000+ family lawyers in every state, *Family Lawyer Magazine* can help enhance your reputation as an expert and generate referrals for your practice. FamilyLawyerMagazine.com is the go-to website for everything family lawyer.

OUR SERVICES

Website Design & Content

We know what divorcing people need and we can provide you with relevant content you cannot get anywhere else.

Smartphone Specific Website Design

Make your website smartphone friendly, or you could miss out on new business.

Online Reputation Enhancement

Many websites display profiles, ratings, and comments about you that may be undeservedly negative. We can help.

Podcast and Video Promotion

Be found on Google.com, Youtube.com, and iTunes with videos and podcasts.



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Designing your Marketing Plan

Having a solid marketing strategy and action plan is essential to your overall marketing success. Below are four basic steps we recommend you take to design your Marketing Plan.

STEP ONE: Define the prospective clients you desire

Clarify what makes your firm unique, and the benefits of choosing your firm, by asking and answering a series of questions, such as:

1. Who are your target clients? Are they average families or high-net-worth individuals? Entrepreneurs or professionals? Are you looking to target mostly women or men?
2. What distinguishes your practice from others? Is it your experience and areas of expertise? The responsiveness and outstanding service you provide, or the competitive rates you charge? Does your firm excel at alternative dispute resolution, or is it more experienced in litigation? Does your team of attorneys possess any specialized knowledge, training or qualifications?
3. What are the benefits to your prospective clients in choosing your firm?

STEP TWO: Compose your positioning statement

A positioning statement is a short statement that captures what you do, who your clients are, and why they choose to retain your service. An example of an effective positioning statement is as follows: “We are a leading family law firm in X State with more than 50 years of experience in preserving the assets of high-net-worth individuals involved in complex divorces and family law disputes.”

STEP THREE: Develop your strategy

Your marketing strategy should focus on your potential clients, and should always strive to answer these questions:

1. What specifics do you have to support the claims made in your positioning statement?
2. Where will you reach your target clients and referrals? Will you find them online, offline, or both?
3. How should you speak to your prospective clients? Should your tone and manner be business-like, or a little friendlier and less formal?
4. What is the best way to engage your prospective clients: text, audio, video, or all three?
5. What is your marketing budget? Marketing isn't a one-time activity; it is ongoing, so you must budget accordingly.

STEP FOUR: Define and implement your action plan

1. Create lists of specific media, collateral materials, and the service providers you will use for your website, videos, blog, social media pages, e-newsletters, firm brochures, etc.
2. Determine dates for when you will need to complete the design of your website, advertisements, and all related items and projects.
3. Set a dollar amount for your budget and for each item on your list.
4. Decide who in your firm will be responsible for executing the different components of your marketing strategy.
5. Set target dates for when you will analyze and review your results.
6. Set time aside to plan and implement your marketing program, and treat that time to be as important as the time you would spend working on client cases. ■

Our Clients Strongly Recommend Divorce Marketing Group



Randall Kessler, Family Lawyer, Partner
Kessler & Solomiany, Georgia

A Divorce Marketing Group client of 5 years

“*Divorce Magazine/DivorceMagazine.com* has been a wonderful resource for us and our clients. **Their articles are timely and relevant and the exposure we and our peers get through these publications has been tremendous.** I am so glad we have been involved with *Divorce Magazine/DivorceMagazine.com*.”



Patricia Carter, Family Lawyer, Partner
Short Carter Morris, LLP, Texas

A Divorce Marketing Group client of 6 years

“Short Carter Morris has been using the marketing services of Divorce Marketing Group for six-plus years. **Their marketing products and services are 100% focused on the subject of divorce and their intimate knowledge of the subject is evident** in the monthly e-newsletter and nine unique divorce guides they make available to our firm.”



Jay Frank, Family Lawyer, Senior Partner
Aronberg Goldgehn, Illinois

A Divorce Marketing Group client of 15 years

“Our firm has worked with Dan, Martha and Divorce Marketing Group probably for close to 15 years now and we are very, very satisfied. They have been absolutely terrific. **We’ve gained exposure in *Divorce Magazine* that has helped our name-brand and provided some referrals as well.** Dan and Martha have given us some internal marketing tips that we’ve used to great success. It’s been a wonderful association and we’re looking forward to another 15 years.”



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Branding your Law Firm

Branding defines your practice and is the foundation for your reputation – what you will be known for. When used consistently, it helps your prospects and referral sources remember who you are, what you do, and why they should choose or refer clients to you.

Effectively branding your firm takes planning and a clear strategy that is implemented on an ongoing basis, and over time. Branding is an essential part of marketing. Effective branding makes your firm look more professional and helps you to be remembered and retained.

Branding defines your practice and is the foundation for your reputation – what you will be known for. When used consistently, it helps your prospects and referral sources remember who you are, what you do, and why they should choose or refer clients to you. You are in business and successful businesses have a clear branding message; so should your firm. Think like Apple, Mercedes-Benz, Home Depot, or Tiffany & Co.

Tips to Effectively Brand your Firm

Branding begins with a clear marketing positioning statement for your practice – who your target clients are, what you do, how you are unique, why divorcing people should choose you over a competitor – and then consistently expresses that statement in powerful messages and images across all of your marketing materials.

To brand your law firm, you will want to create: a logo, a tagline or slogan, specific colors, and an overall look and feel. Once created, your branding should be applied consistently to all of your marketing materials, including:

- Business card, letterhead
- Firm brochure
- Divorce Guides
- Social media pages
- Website(s)
- Videos
- Blog
- Advertisements
- eNewsletter
- Podcasts

Branding in Action

On the right, you will find examples of how you can apply your branding consistently across all marketing materials. ■

Your website



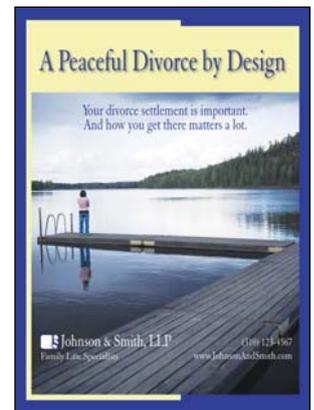
Your ad in a magazine



Your blog



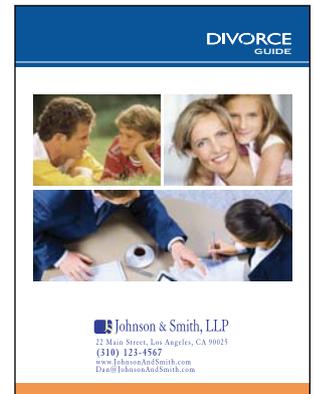
Your firm brochure



Your eNewsletter



Your Divorce Guide



Our Clients Strongly Recommend Divorce Marketing Group



David Griffin, Family Lawyer, Partner
Rutkin, Oldham & Griffin LLC, Connecticut
A Divorce Marketing Group client of 2 years

“We’ve been working with the folks of Divorce Marketing Group for about two and a half years now. **We undertook a fairly cautious approach when we decided that we wanted to work with someone to help us do our marketing, our choice has turned out to be absolutely fantastic.** Divorce Marketing Group has been responsive, creative and really helpful in terms of us putting our best foot forward in reaching the clients that we hope to reach.”



Virginia Dugan, Family Lawyer, Partner
Atkinson & Kelsey, P.A., New Mexico
A Divorce Marketing Group client of 2 years.

“Our firm Atkinson & Kelsey has been most fortunate to being associated with Divorce Marketing Group. **We have looked for a change in direction, a change in marketing, and we have used the expertise of Divorce Marketing Group to help us chart a different direction that we want to go in.**”



Alison Leslie, Family Lawyer, Owner
The Law Offices of Alison Leslie, New Jersey
A Divorce Marketing Group client of 10 years

“**As a solo practitioner I need a marketing firm I can trust to handle all of my marketing needs and Divorce Marketing Group has done that and more for the past ten years.** They look after my website, promote my firm in *Divorce Magazine* (print and digital editions), on *DivorceMagazine.com*, and provide me with a monthly electronic newsletter and *Divorce Guides* I can use to promote my firm.”



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Family Lawyer Websites 101

Merely having a website that offers basic information about your firm is insufficient if you want to stay relevant and competitive. Your website will likely influence whether a prospective client contacts you, and might influence whether they choose to hire you – or not.



If your website is a few years old, or if you don't currently have one, you'll want to consider the following factors as you prepare to redesign or build your website.

Develop the plan

Before diving into details, take a step back and ensure that your website designer understands your practice, your business objectives, your desired prospective clients, your positioning statement and your branding strategy. Once your webmaster understands what your objectives are they should recommend the best way to accomplish them.

I recommend you read the articles, "Designing your Marketing Plan" (on page 10) and "Branding your Law Firm" (on page 12).

See your website through your prospective clients' eyes

Prospective clients are interested in more than reading a firm overview and the lawyers' biographies. They want to know whether you will meet their full needs, which covers both their objective needs and their emotional ones. Of course, they have a need for a family lawyer, but they are also making an emotional decision during a highly emotional time. The graphics, pictures, and information displayed on your website must address and appeal to their needs.

Contrary to common belief, the website is not about your law firm; it is about serving the interests of visitors and prospective clients. So a website that keeps saying how great your firm is, or how great your lawyers are, is weaker than a website that speaks to client needs, and how your firm satisfies those needs.

If your biography is full of initials and all the titles you have accumulated, help visitors understand how these titles could be relevant to them. For example, if you are a Super Lawyer, explain what that is, how you got it, and how it will help your clients.

And how many pictures of your boardroom, or your office building, do you think visitors to your website (who are going through a divorce) are really interested in seeing?

You should expect to have input into the look, feel, and functionality of your website but don't base all of your decisions on your own personal preferences because your biases could negatively affect the chances of you reaching your best prospective clients, (i.e. if you feature bold colors and strong images on your website you might put off a good prospective client who likes a more toned down approach).

Make your website visitor-friendly

Visitors to your website need to be able to see immediately where they should go to get what they want. Keep in mind that website surfers are generally impatient. Use conventional navigation so they do not have to learn how to use your website.

Your prospects and clients are not lawyers, so keep the jargon away from your website. Try talking to your prospects and clients in first person. Use "we" and "you and your spouse," instead of "the parties" and "the file". Your prospects and clients likely do not relate to "the parties" or "the file"; that's jargon.

Most lawyers are skilled writers – but not when it comes to writing website content. The text on your web pages needs to be direct and impactful. Visitors will glance at the page they land on and decide in two seconds or less whether to read more or leave – it's critical that your main messages are delivered effectively and efficiently on a consistent basis throughout your website.

Your website design isn't visitor-friendly if the visitor can't tell where they should go to get what they want immediately – perhaps because the navigation buttons are not self-explanatory or they are laid out differently from page to page. Also, your website may look great on the big screen in your office, but have you checked out how it looks on a tablet, laptop computer, or TV?

Make sure your website has plenty of top-quality, relevant content

You might have heard the expression "Content is King" regarding websites. The saying should be, "Relevant and Interesting Content is King." We've seen websites that

Cont. on page 16

We build better websites. Period.

Attract clients and search engines with a better website

Not all websites are equal in their ability to attract the right kind of clients and referrals – nor are they all search-engine friendly.

We only build websites for family lawyers and divorce professionals

We create effective and resource-rich websites that enhance your credibility and image. To ensure visitors will return to your website, we will enrich it with our top-notch divorce articles, *Divorce Guides*, and a monthly divorce eNewsletter.

Fixed fee pricing – with no surprises

If you are paying hundreds of dollars a month for your website, give us a call. We can save you thousands of dollars a year, every year.

Our clients rave about us

“I recently switched to Divorce Marketing Group to host and revise my website from a well-known legal website designer and host, and the difference is dazzling. Not only is it costing me much less for my website than before, in a very short time the cost of paying for the new and better design and set-up will end and I will be left with a great website and a lower overhead. Great job.”

– Sandra Rosenbloom, Collaborative Attorney and Mediator,
www.RosenbloomLaw.com

“You’ve been extremely patient, responsive and knowledgeable – all things that are a big plus for two type-A attorneys with zero marketing savvy.”

– Melanie K. Reichert, Attorney
Broyles Kight Ricafort, P.C., www.bkrfamilylaw.com

“I would like to express my gratitude to you and your design team for the patience and commitment to excellence you have displayed. I truly believe your team has created a unique design that displays and promotes a professional yet caring image for my business. I have not once regretted my decision to employ your company to handle my web design! Bravo!”

– Rae Jean Shore, Attorney
Liberty Legal, www.libertylegalinfo.com



Family Law Firm in Indiana



Family Law Firm in California



Family Law Firm in New Jersey



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receive new content daily or weekly, but it's not created for clients – it's created for professionals or other lawyers. Unless one of your website objectives is to be a resource to other professionals, don't accept this kind of content, even if it's free. Adding useful information and resources to your website on a regular basis will:

- bring more people to your website;
- increase chances of them returning to your website;
- enhance your image and credibility; and
- increase the chances they'll contact and retain your firm.

Having useful information on your website will increase the chances of people forwarding your website to others, and the chances of getting referrals. Include a "Resource Center" on your website. Practical and regularly-updated information on your website invites visitors to return and to recommend your website to others. Adding useful information to your website on a regular basis also helps establish you as a thought-leader in family law.

You need a responsive website

Have you noticed that your own website or other websites do not display well on an iPad or a smartphone? Perhaps the pages are cut off, or they have been reduced to fit the small screen on your mobile device – and now the text is illegible? In order to read text on these websites, you have to enlarge sections of the page and scroll left and right. Unfortunately, this is quite common – and it is really frustrating to visitors. With 30 to 40% of people viewing websites on mobile devices, you need to address this issue immediately.

You can check out your website on various devices and see if your web pages are all reduced to fit the screen

size, making the text smaller or not legible. If that is the case, you do not have a responsive website. Try this simple test on your desktop: bring up your website, reduce the size of the window, and watch to see if your website adjusts itself to display the content properly or if your web pages just get cut off. If the content is cut off, then you do not have a responsive website.

Check out the image below that shows you how a responsive website displays differently yet legibly on different devices. Do not settle for a generic version that strips off all design, logo, pictures and your law firm's branding. If that is how your website shows up on a smartphone, you do not have a responsive website, you have what we call a "lazy" smartphone version of your website that shows only the text from your web pages. All the money you spent on designing your website is not captured for the mobile audience, and your website will look no different from many other websites that have this "lazy" version.

You may also want a Smartphone-Specific Website

While a responsive website displays well on a smartphone, a website that is built specifically for smartphones can encourage visitors to call you, email you or text you right from the Home Page with just one touch. And why not – they are holding their smartphones in their hands! Read more about this on page 18 in the article "Is Your Website Really Smartphone-Friendly?"

Make sure your website is optimized for search engines

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is a big topic – much too big to handle as part of this short article. You need to deal with website designers who understand this subject inside and out, as it is complex and ever-changing. ■



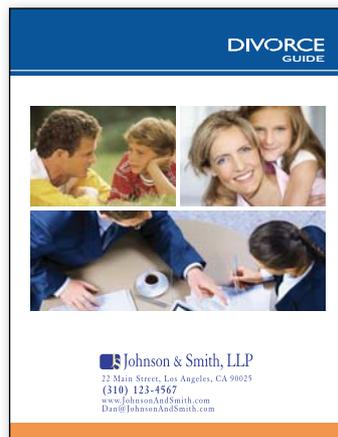
Enrich your Website with these 10 Divorce Guides

Lease Our Divorce Guides

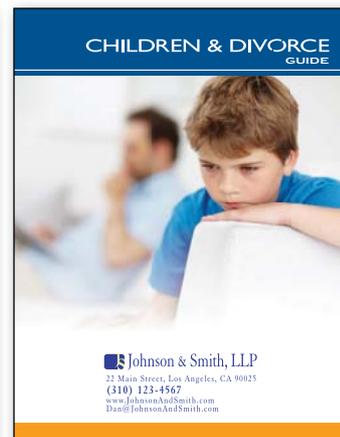
Professionally written and designed, these *Divorce Guides* can help you generate new business and referrals. These 32-page, full-color magazines offer useful articles to help your clients prepare and recover from divorce; at the same time, they promote your firm with contact information on the cover and a full-page profile of your firm inside. All ten are available as PDFs, and the *Comprehensive Divorce Guide* is also available as a printed magazine.

Offering these *Divorce Guides* on your website will differentiate you from your competitors, keep your firm top-of-mind, and encourage your clients and prospective clients to revisit your website – increasing the chances that your firm will be remembered, recognized, and retained.

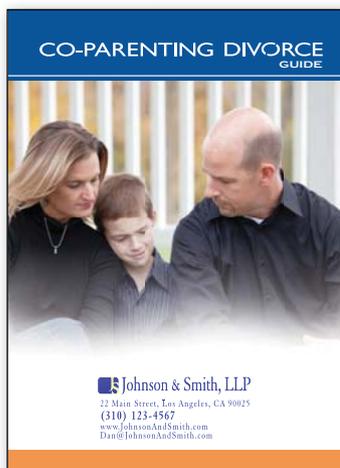
Comprehensive Divorce Guide



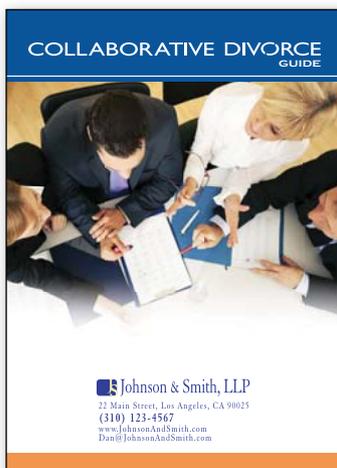
Children & Divorce Guide



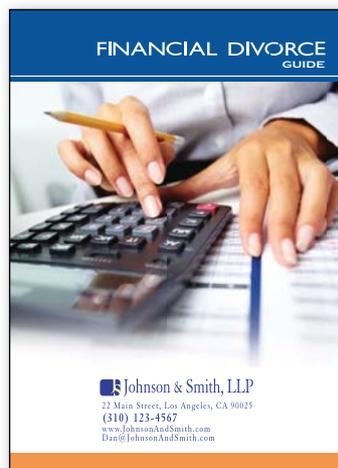
Co-Parenting Divorce Guide



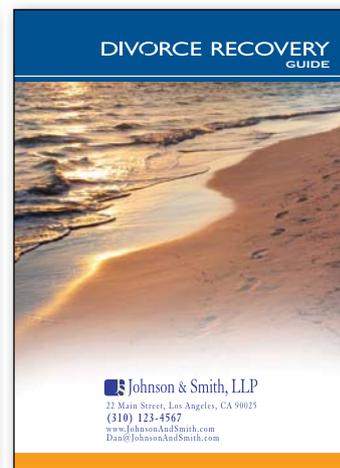
Collaborative Divorce Guide



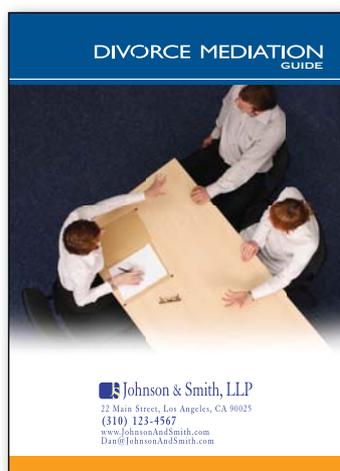
Financial Divorce Guide



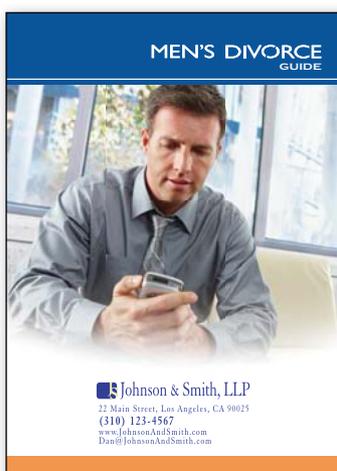
Divorce Recovery Guide



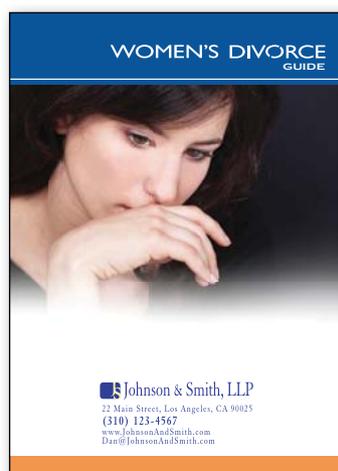
Divorce Mediation Guide



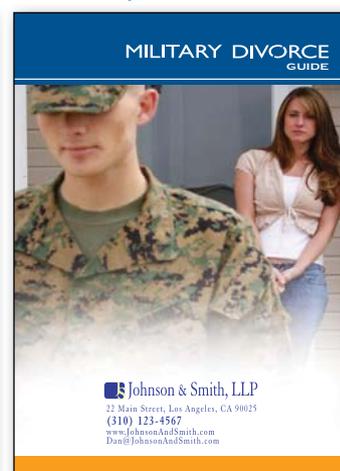
Men's Divorce Guide



Women's Divorce Guide



Military Divorce Guide



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Really Is your Website Smartphone-Friendly?

It only takes days (and a nominal fee) to build a true smartphone-friendly version of your website – so why hinder the success of your law firm by settling for outdated technology?

The number of Americans accessing the Internet using smartphones is on the rise. In 2014, more smartphone manufacturers started offering larger screens (up to 6.5" tall) to make surfing on-the-go easier. One report forecasts that in 2015, 182.6 million Americans will have smartphones, and that number will increase to 220 million by 2018^[1].

Your Prospective Clients are Smartphone Users

A 2014 study shows that smartphone users are educated and affluent^[2]:

- 71% of smartphone owners have more than a college education.
- 81% of smartphone owners' annual household income falls into the highest bracket of the survey: \$75,000+.
- 58% of American adults have a smartphone; 74% of those aged 30–49, 49% of those aged 50–64, and 19% of people 65 and over own a smartphone.

You likely have a smartphone and keep it within reach so you can receive email and search online wherever

you are. Chances are your prospective clients – including those referred to you by their friends and families – are using their smartphones to check out your firm's website. It stands to reason that you and your law firm will be judged based on what they see. Yet most family lawyers we have talked to have never visited their own websites on smartphones, nor have they ensured their websites are really optimized for smartphones.

Three Not-So-User-Friendly Smartphone Websites

When we ask family lawyers to check their own websites using their smartphones, the majority of them are surprised and dissatisfied by what they see; this is because most of them do not have websites that are specifically designed for smartphones. Instead, what they have are modified versions of their websites that generally fall into one of these three categories:

I. An illegible website that is frustrating to use (Exhibit 1).

This website has been shrunk to fit the small screen of a smartphone, and as a result, it is totally illegible. To be able to read the content, a visitor has to enlarge the text and scroll from left to right as well as top to bottom. Navigating through the website and finding that all important "Contact Us" page is difficult – and should a visitor manage to find the phone number, they have to write it down and call you later! Clicking on the wrong tab/link is inevitable when they are so small. This frustrating experience is an invitation for visitors to leave your website instead of calling or emailing your law firm to set up a consultation while they have their smartphones in their hands.



Exhibit 1



Exhibit 2



Exhibit 3

Note: Exhibits 2 and 3 were created to illustrate this article; they are not actual websites.

2. A bland-looking website that bears little resemblance to the desktop version (Exhibit 2).

This is a generic-looking smartphone version that is stripped of all the branding, pictures, logos, colors, and design the law firm has spent time and thousands of dollars on. All you see is an unmemorable website with pages of text in a legible font size. Also, it is not clear to a visitor that there are other pages or how to find the other pages on the website. Companies that provide this kind of website may claim the website is smartphone-friendly because the text is legible, but this is dated technology. A website that is really smartphone-friendly has a lot more to offer than this.

3. A smartphone version of a “responsive” website (Exhibit 3).

A “responsive” website adjusts itself to display all the content of a web page according to the device the visitor is using – be it desktop, tablet, or smartphone. The text is legible and most of the design elements are retained, but this smartphone version has a downside: it neither encourages nor makes it easy for a visitor to call or email you with just one touch. It also does not direct visitors to the most important pages they need to visit while they are “content snacking” on the go.

What is a True Smartphone-Friendly Website?

If you look at Exhibit 4, you will see a website that is specifically designed for smartphones.



Exhibit 4

The website in Exhibit 4 has distinct advantages over the other three options:

1. It is action-oriented and clearly invites visitors to contact your law firm.

This well-designed smartphone-friendly website makes it really easy to call, email, or text you, or find your office with just one touch. Visitors do not need to guess where they have to click and what they have to do; they do not need to find the navigation bar or the “Contact Us” page before they can reach you. This design helps your website generate more clients for your law firm.

2. It clearly displays and directs visitors to the pages you want them to visit.

At a glance, visitors can see tabs that invite them to click and read the “Firm Overview”, “Partners”, “Practice Areas” pages, etc. With this design, you can drive traffic to select pages you deem most important to convert visitors into clients. Smartphone users are “content snacking” and you need to be strategic with your offering of information to make your first impression count.

3. It retains your branding and design.

This smartphone-friendly website shows the attorneys’ picture, the firm’s logo, and their tagline. It also retains the colors and design elements from the desktop version of the website. This way, should the visitor go to your website on another device, they will have familiarity and know they have come to the right place. Don’t settle for a generic version (as seen in Exhibit 2)!

4. It is thumb-friendly.

With big tabs like the ones in Exhibit 4, there is no chance of hitting the neighboring tab by mistake and ending up on the wrong page – a small but crucially-important detail for delivering a satisfying experience to your visitors.

5. It is legible.

You can get a True Smartphone-Friendly Website in a Week

Even if you don’t like your current website, or you are tied up by a multi-year contract that does not allow you to change your website and/or provider without a penalty, you can still get a smartphone-friendly website now. It only takes days to build one – and for a nominal price. So why hinder the success of your law firm by settling for outdated technology that does not keep pace with today’s smartphone users? ■

[1] www.statista.com/statistics/201182/forecast-of-smartphone-users-in-the-us

[2] www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheets/mobile-technology-fact-sheet

Marketing Strategies: Exceed, Distinguish, Connect

Strategies to help you stand out from other family lawyers.

Exceed your Clients' Expectations

1. Pay attention to your clients' total needs – not just the outcome.

Family law cases are seldom easy, and clients are rarely completely satisfied with the overall experience; even if you achieved all their realistic goals, most clients will feel like they had to give up too much and didn't get enough in return. Also, most family-law disputes are at least somewhat acrimonious, which can leave a bitter taste when all is said and done. Although you need to focus on producing the legal results, you should try to ensure that your clients are receiving the psychological, practical, and financial support they need during and after the process. Be prepared to offer the names of trusted professionals in complementary fields: from mental-health and tax professionals to real-estate agents and movers. As an added bonus, some of these professionals may become a great source of referral business for you.

2. Become a helpful resource to your client.

Create a valuable "Client Information Package" that includes practical information and resources to help them handle their issues. Your package should include much more than the forms they will need to fill out: it could also include a list of informative websites, articles, books, CDs, and referrals to professionals who can help them deal with the challenges they face. Of course, you should make these resources available on your website as well.

3. Set up meetings with other divorce professionals who can help your client.

You can help your clients by setting up introductions with realtors, mortgage brokers, investment advisors, and other service providers. You then become your clients' trusted source of referrals. Always give more than one referral and encourage your client to check all referrals given.

Distinguish yourself as an Expert

1. Write articles to establish yourself as an expert or "thought leader" in your field.

Getting your articles published can help establish or enhance your leadership position in your field. For example, you can become a guest contributor on *DivorceMagazine.com*, *FamilyLawyerMagazine.com*, *Huffington Post*, *Avvo*, etc. If you want more divorce cases with business executives, write articles about how employee stock options or corporate pension plans should be divided. You can send your articles to legal publications and websites such as the ABA's *Family Advocate Magazine* and *JDSupra.com*, and you should also send them to local magazines and newspapers as well as referral sources who might be interested in featuring your articles on their websites. You can repurpose your articles for your blog, podcasts, and videos, highlight them on your Facebook and LinkedIn pages, and circulate/promote them through Listserv, Q&A forums, or SlideShare.net.

Cont. on page 22

Get More Referral Cases

Stay Top-of-Mind with your Referral Sources

If your referral sources remember you, you will get more cases from them. It is that simple. Sending a monthly eNewsletter is one of the best ways to generate referrals from and stay top-of-mind with your referral sources such as: current clients, prospective clients, other divorce professionals, colleagues and former classmates.

Three Great Solutions from Divorce Marketing Group

We provide the following solutions to family lawyers, making it simple for them to send out a monthly eNewsletter.

1. Lease our Divorce Magazine monthly eNewsletter.

Each month, you will receive *Divorce Magazine's* eNewsletter, which contains five quality articles that cover a wide range of divorce-related subjects, including: legal, financial, children, co-parenting, divorce recovery, etc. You can easily incorporate the articles into your monthly newsletter.

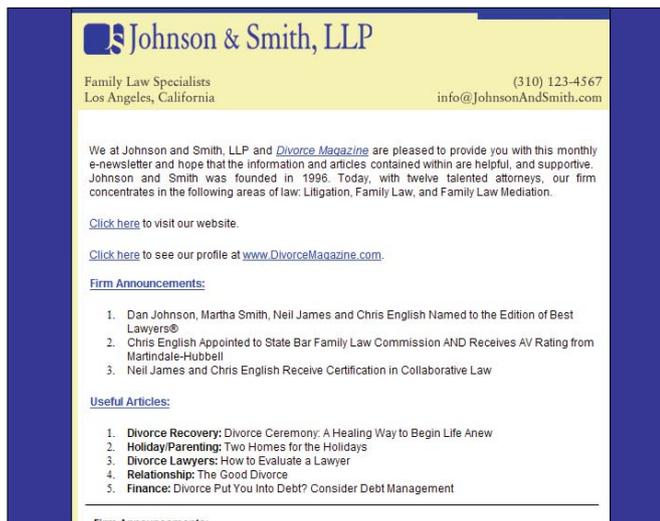
2. Design an eNewsletter Template that Echoes your Firm's Website Design.

We will create an eNewsletter template that allows you to include firm announcements and these articles. We will set you up with a service provider and give you a tutorial on how to use the template to send out the eNewsletter.

3. Add the eNewsletter on your Website EVERY month.

These articles will become a resource to your website visitors and their contacts. Either Divorce Marketing Group or your webmaster can add the monthly eNewsletters to your website.

An example of a eNewsletter template



How the eNewsletter appears on a website



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Typically, clients consult many sources before choosing a family lawyer, including family, friends, and the Internet. They may also reach out to professionals they know and trust – from therapists to financial advisors. Each of these sources represents potential touch-points for you, and you should regularly remind them of the type of work you do.

2. Get involved with Bar Association activities.

It is important to be involved with your local, state, and national bar associations for the purpose of adding credibility and connecting with your legal colleagues. While you always want to maintain an excellent relationship with your fellow family lawyers, keep in mind that members of the family law section are, for the most part, your competitors. Nurturing and developing relationships with lawyers in other practice areas is more likely to produce referral business than networking with other family lawyers.

3. Find or create public speaking engagement opportunities.

Offer yourself as a speaker at professional conferences, and to support groups and community groups. You can enhance your chances of getting speaking engagements if you write articles and send them to professionals of influence (bar association leaders, for example) and follow up to offer yourself as a speaker. After your presentation, remember to mention the event on your social media pages, blog about it, include it in your eNewsletter, add the speech to your website, send out a press release about your speech and email the attendees and other professionals the link.

Stay Connected with your Referral Sources

Typically, clients consult many informal and formal sources before choosing a family lawyer. These sources include: family, friends, peers and internet searches. They look to an array of trusted contacts that can include: lawyers (who may or may not practice family law), therapists, family counselors, clergy, spiritual counselors, financial advisors, family doctors, trusted colleagues, and so on. Each of these sources represents potential touch points for you and they should all be regularly reminded of the type of work you do.

Developing a referral network is a very cost-effective way to attract new clients. Prospective clients who come from referrals are more likely to retain your services because the referral is based on trust. You need to have a strategy in place to stay top-of-mind with your

referral sources and to make it easy for them to remember you and the expertise you provide. Here are some suggestions:

1. Send thank-you notes and gifts.

When appropriate, send a thank-you note to professionals who refer potential clients to you. Do this regardless of whether the prospective client chooses to retain your services or not.

2. Be a referral source.

Don't wait for people to ask you for referrals, offer them. Become known as a source for referrals and information. Refer people without having an expectation of getting a referral in return because at a minimum, your clients will be glad you connected them with a top quality professional and you will become known as a family lawyer who knows all the best people and resources. Include other professionals in the Resource Section of your website.

3. Host a networking event.

Put together a session for you and other divorce professionals such as therapists, financial planners, accountants, realtors, and insurance agents. Use this opportunity to meet, mingle, and exchange information. This can be a daytime coffee, lunch, or an after-work get-together. This session can be in person, on the internet or over the phone. Perhaps one of the attendees could be a guest speaker for the event.

4. Attend functions for divorce professionals.

Family lawyers are often welcome at functions and seminars hosted by divorce professionals who are not lawyers. They could become valuable referral sources. The more you become known and the more you understand their interests, the higher the chances of you becoming a speaker at their seminars or a contributing writer of articles that will be valued by the group.

5. Ask for referrals.

It sounds far too simple, but many family lawyers simply do not ask for referrals! They either assume that a referral will be given, or they just overlook the opportunity. Do not make either of these mistakes. ■

Our Clients Strongly Recommend Divorce Marketing Group



**Sharon Numerow – Certified Divorce Financial Analyst, Founder,
Alberta Divorce Finances Ltd., Alberta, Canada**

A Divorce Marketing Group client of 6 years

“I am fortunate to have discovered the services of Divorce Marketing Group. They are very experienced, extremely knowledgeable and always attentive and responsive. Both my business growth and increased industry exposure are directly related to the marketing program they have developed for my firm. Unlike other marketing firms, DMG focuses exclusively on marketing divorce industry professionals which is a key reason for not only choosing to work with them but surely for the successes I have realized as a result.”



**John Harding, Family Lawyer, Principal
Harding & Associates Family Law, California**

A Divorce Marketing Group client of 6 years

“Harding & Associates Family Law has been a client of Divorce Marketing Group for more than six years. **DMG is an essential component of our law firm’s marketing and its people are trusted advisors.** We look to DMG for marketing advice, website and blog content, client eNewsletters, printed advertising materials and publishing opportunities that bring invaluable credibility and attention to our practice.”



**Melanie K. Reichert, Family Lawyer, Partner
Broyles Kight & Ricafort, P.C., Indianapolis**

A Divorce Marketing Group client of 2 years

“You’ve been extremely patient, responsive and knowledgeable – all things that are a big plus for two type-A attorneys with zero marketing savvy.”



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Online Reputation Management for Family Lawyers

The unflattering and/or insufficient information about you online is bound to raise concerns among prospective clients who Google you. Here's how to enhance your online reputation.

By now, most family law firms and lawyers have websites and use them to shape their reputations. But your online reputation is not completely based on the marketing materials you produce or the blog posts you've written. In fact, even if you do not have a website and are not active on the Web, you may still have a questionable reputation. Your reputation can be tarnished by inaccurate information, negative comments, and poor ratings posted on websites which you may or may not be aware of. Whether justified or not, once negative information makes it online, it is there indefinitely and needs to be dealt with as soon as possible. Most of the family lawyers I work with rely a great deal on referrals, and a less-than-desirable online reputation can do a lot of harm. Let's take a look at some possible scenarios.

What's the Status of your Online Reputation?

- 1. Having "no reputation" can create a "bad reputation".** You may think that having no information about you online means that you have no online reputation; thus, you are on neutral ground. But this is not necessarily the case. To some, not finding any online information about you may mean: "This lawyer must not be keeping up to date. How is it possible that he or she has no website or at least a page for me to refer to before I decide to call him?" This kind of reputation will hurt you, and you may never know it, because potential clients simply will not call your office.
- 2. A case of mistaken identity.** If you have a common name, a Google search may produce many pages of information about people with whom you share your name. Depending on how much "Google power" your webpages have, information about you may not show up on the first few pages of search results. When this happens, you could end up with "no reputation," or be misidentified as another lawyer.
- 3. You have a good reputation online.** It is ideal if your Google search returns webpages with positive things about you. This could include pages you and your law firm have created, such as your website, blog, Facebook page, Google+ page, your firm's Google Place page, and articles you have written for publication, etc. In other words, search results



produce the content that you control and reflect your excellent reputation. Most importantly, this is content that you can always change. There could be other online pages about you, such as those of bar associations and charities for which you volunteer.

- 4. There is "bad stuff" about you online.** Some webpages, which you have not created, may contain poor reviews or comments about your services. This might be a simple one-page website created by a disgruntled individual with the sole purpose of letting the world know what a bad lawyer you are. This same disgruntled person could have posted on social media pages or websites that allow Internet users to rate lawyers, such as LawyerRatingZ.com, Avvo.com, Google Places, or even worse, on RipOffReport.com. Your online reputation can be destroyed in just a minute or two and can result in damage to your practice when these negative comments appear on the first few pages of search results.

It is difficult for anyone, including a prospective client, to know whether the comments are justified. In fact, a lawyer who does a good job for a client may end up getting negative comments and ratings from a disgruntled ex-spouse who has a different point of view. Online comments can be used as a "virtual assault" on your reputation and can be posted by anyone at any time. (For more about this, read "Have you Googled your Name Lately?" on FamilyLawyerMagazine.com.)

Enhancing your Online Reputation

- 1. Create social media pages for yourself and your firm.** Start with the free and most powerful ones. If you have not created social media/networking pages (LinkedIn, Google+, Google Places, a Facebook personal or company page, Twitter, Pinterest.com, Xing.com – just to name a few), simply register and complete a page/profile with information about you. There are no fees, and you can update the information at any time. These are pages you control. You don't have to sing your own praises. For most of them, all you need is a 400-word factual profile about you and your firm. Google loves Google features. A Google+ page will show up within days on Google search results.
- 2. Create your own blog(s).** Blogging about divorce and family law will help you demonstrate your ability and knowledge as a family lawyer. You can create blogs for free at WordPress.com, Blog.com, Blogspot.com, and Tumblr.com. These blogs will create pages with Web addresses that include your name, e.g., janedoe.wordpress.com, janedoe.blog.com, janedoe.tumblr.com, etc.
- 3. Create videos and promote them online.** You can create multiple short videos on divorce and other subjects related to family law that can be promoted for free through video sites, such as Youtube.com, Vimeo.com, and Dailymotion.com. These videos can feature you answering simple FAQs. Once created, you can also add these videos to enrich your website.
- 4. Work to enhance your ratings on lawyer rating websites.** There are things you can do to enhance your ratings on lawyer-rating websites such as Avvo. If you have an unfavorable rating on a website, you can ask other lawyers or clients to post positive comments about you. Most of the time, the latest ratings are displayed at the top of the page. The unfavorable ratings or comments can be pushed to the bottom of the page.

Be Proactive

Most of us tend not to worry about a problem until we have one. We are all busy and want to be smart about how we spend our time and money. By taking the steps I have outlined above, you can drive more traffic to your website or office, and establish a more prominent and positive online presence. At a minimum, monitor your name and your law firm's name by subscribing to Google Alerts, so that you may be notified of positive or negative comments as soon as possible. You can do so at www.google.com/alerts. Once subscribed, Google will send an alert to your inbox whenever it finds a new web page with your name mentioned on it.

Optimizing your Online Reputation

Having a good online profile and reputation is crucial.

Providing detailed information on an online profile can transform a prospective client's perception of you from a collection of impersonal data to a living, breathing person who could actually help them. ■

Perform an Online Reputation Audit through Google

You are your Google search results, so why not start there? Before you google your name, you must first clear your history on your browser so that your search results are not biased by the history of websites you have visited before. If you don't know how to do this, just google "How to clear the history on my browser".

Take note of where you are rated or commented on

You may find yourself listed on websites you expect to be on, such as your bar association, www.aaml.org (if you are an AAML fellow), or www.SuperLawyers.com (if you are a Super Lawyer). However, you will find you are also listed on directories and websites you have never heard of. You could be listed on local city directories, or lawyers' directories. On some of these websites, there may be a rating attached to your name or comments made about you. For example, www.LawyerRatingz.com allows visitors to rate a lawyer and leave comments, and www.Avvo.com provides lawyer profiles ratings on the lawyer in three different ways: AVVO's own rating system on a scale of 1 to 10; visitors rating on a scale of 1 to 5; and endorsements by other lawyers.

Improve the first ten websites where you are listed

To enhance your online reputation, we recommend that you take on at least the first ten search results/websites with your name on it and do a thorough review to ensure the information about you is accurate, complete and presented in the way you want to portray yourself. Depending on the website, you can update the information by either contacting the website or "claiming" the profiles and changing them yourself. There is not much you can do about the ratings visitors have given you, except to invite satisfied clients to rate you on those same websites. Since the AVVO rating is based on publicly-available information, it pays to ensure that you list your comprehensive achievements, industry recognition and work experience on your own website, other relevant websites AND by claiming your AVVO profile and doing the same there. This is a time-consuming task that you may or may not want to take on internally. ■

7 Reasons Not to Buy Mass-Produced Blogs



If you are thinking
of purchasing blog posts
written for you...



Think again!

A few marketing companies offer the service of writing and posting weekly blog posts to law firms' websites in their name or "on behalf of the law firm". This offer of adding fresh content regularly without needing the lawyers to spend time on writing them is very tempting. Because this service has been sold and purchased by hundreds (maybe thousands) of family law firms, these blogs have to be mass-produced; the onus is on your law firm to make sure each post is worthy of being on your website and good for business.

Several of our clients have tried and canceled the service, and we recommend you steer clear of mass-produced blogs for the following reasons:

1. You will not check the posts before they go live on your website.

You do not have the time to check for accuracy, relevance, and quality every week – saving you time and effort is why you chose this service in the first place! These posts often contain typos and poor grammar, and they are mostly generic and shallow.

2. Some posts promote services your firm does not offer.

The person who wrote these blogs does not know you or your firm: they have no idea if you practice mediation or collaborative law, focus on men's or women's rights, etc. Also, watch out for links built into the posts that take your visitors to websites promoting other lawyers.

3. These blogs do not showcase your expertise and knowledge.

How could they? They are written neither by you nor by anyone with expertise in your field. These blogs are created from stories or topics deemed to have general interest – celebrity divorces, for example – that likely have little relevance to your firm or prospective clients.

4. Your reputation is on the line.

At best, these mass-produced posts cannot represent your firm's "personality", so they cannot give prospective clients a sense of what you are like to work with or what you stand for. At worst, they could tarnish your reputation with improper grammar, typos, and inaccuracies. They may also quote articles written by other family lawyers as a source of information on subjects that you should know about.

5. There is nothing unique about the content.

The company trying to sell you this service might tell you that each blog post will be "unique". If a celebrity just filed for divorce, this story will be spun 20, 30 different ways so that it can be posted on your and other family law firm's website as "unique content". It is possible that no two posts will contain exactly the same sentence, but there are only so many ways to tell the same story.

6. Google might penalize you.

Google does not like duplicate content – and many of those blogs do contain some duplicate content. Google has issued warnings about creating articles for search engine optimization only, and will penalize websites that do so – resulting in low rankings and reduced traffic to those websites.

7. There are ethical issues.

Most visitors would assume that these blog posts are written by you or someone from your firm. Do you really have full disclosure regarding the blog posts' authors? Do you even know who wrote them? Some experts have questioned how ethical it is to have someone ghost-write a blog just for you – never mind buying a mass-produced blog and posting it on your own website. On some level, you already know this practice is not 100% ethical; do you know where your state bar association stands on the subject? ■

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Social Media & Online Marketing

The Internet is not merely the most convenient source of information for finding and comparing family lawyers, it is also a source of “social proof” that influences your prospective clients’ final decision. At a minimum, you are being “checked out” on the internet by almost every prospective client, so it is critical that you can be found and the information about you is positive.

Your website is a major piece of your online marketing strategy – but it’s only one piece of the puzzle. Having a functional, attractive, and optimized website is crucial, but it’s not enough to set you apart from your online competition. Aside from enhancing your website, you also need to participate on social media, and manage your reputation online. Since referral business is important, you should make sure you’re remembered (favorably!) by your referral sources as well as potential clients.

This article explores all strategies you should seriously consider and implement.

Your Website

Your website should not just be a pretty picture: it needs to contain valuable information and resources otherwise your prospective clients will go looking for it elsewhere. Merely having a website that offers basic information about your firm is insufficient if you want to stay relevant and competitive. Also, if your website was built a few years ago, you may want to consider redesigning it to take advantage of the latest technology, such as having a “responsive” design that adjusts itself so your website displays well on mobile devices. It is highly likely that 30 - 50% of your visitors are viewing your website through these mobile devices. In order to have a constant flow of high-quality clients, you must have a great website. Make sure your website looks professional and current: it is there to represent you when you are not there to speak for yourself. (See “Family Lawyer Websites 101” on page 14 for more information about planning and designing a website.)

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the leading social networking website for professionals in the world with more than 300 million users. You can increase your exposure and demonstrate your expertise by posting articles or blog posts in their Posts section and by participating in LinkedIn groups or by starting your own group. Do not only focus on groups

for lawyers and family law. For example, join the group “Marketing for Divorce Professionals”; you will get some useful marketing tips and be connected to other divorce professionals with whom you can network.

Facebook

Family lawyers are divided on the subject of promoting their services on Facebook. Some are for it and some are against it. For those who are against using Facebook, their concerns often originate either from witnessing indiscriminate posts divorcing clients have made that have harmed their cases, or from ethical issues and wanting to stay within the advertising guidelines of bar associations. We recommend that you have a company Facebook page because, with more than 200 million users in the U.S. and Canada, it is a promotion opportunity not to be missed.

Google+

This is Google’s social network. It offers the feature of grouping your connections into circles so you may have your posts read by only family members vs. colleagues vs. the public. Since Google loves everything Google, we have seen great search results from a Google+ page.

Press Releases

Press releases distinguish you as a “thought leader,” add credibility to your firm and potentially establish ongoing media relationships that will further enhance and differentiate your firm. Distributing a press release online is easy and affordable. You should also send them to your professional contacts and feature them on your website, your blog, your eNewsletter, and on your firm’s social media pages.

Electronic eNewsletters

Electronic eNewsletters are perhaps the most powerful and cost-effective strategic marketing tool that family lawyers can employ to keep them connected with both their clients and professional referral sources. However, most family lawyers have neither the time to write one or more articles a month nor the staff to produce a quality eNewsletter on an on-going basis. (Please see page 21 for more information about obtaining quality, divorce-related eNewsletters to send to your referral sources and enhance your website.)

Cont. on page 30

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How Does your Website Look on a Smartphone?

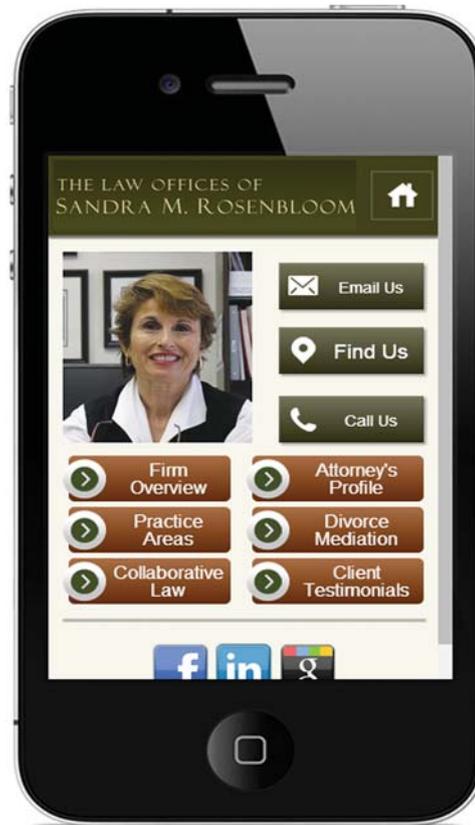
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Blogs

A blog is a relatively informal (yet, of course, professional) way of providing information and personal insights that are relevant and interesting for the readers. Such information can include event announcements, practice updates, legal tips, and more. Blog content should be keyword optimized to help with search engine rankings, and it should include other creative content, such as pictures/photos, videos, and audio podcasts.

You can have a blog on your own website or be an expert guest blogger on multiple highly-relevant websites/blogs. Being a guest blogger on multiple blogs gives you wider exposure and is less demanding than if you were to have your own blog which demands regular content.

If you do not have the time to maintain your own blog, do not be tempted into purchasing the service of having weekly posts automatically written for you and posted on your website because your reputation will suffer due to the poor quality of these blog posts. (See “7 Reasons Not to Buy Mass-Produced Blogs” on page 26.)

Videos

Many family lawyers have videos of themselves and their firm featured on their websites, and on other websites such as YouTube.com, Findlaw.com, and DivorceMagazine.com. Below are some suggestions if you are thinking of creating videos:

1. Ask yourself (or others) if you come off well in videos.
2. Make the videos short (about one minute) and ensure they look and sound professional.

3. Address subject areas that are most relevant to your current and prospective clients.
4. Showing your office, colleagues, and staff makes it easier for a client to imagine working with your firm.

Podcasts

Podcasts are audio files that you create and make available online. The advantage of audio podcasts is that they are much less expensive to create than videos. They are also easier to produce because you can refer to a script and sound very professional.

Pay-Per-Click Advertising

Pay-per-click advertisements appear when online users search a particular term (e.g., “San Francisco divorce lawyer”) on a search engine or website. You do not pay for it until someone clicks on your advertisement. It is a good way to generate traffic to your website and leads for your practice.

The Final Word

We have presented many options in this article. If you have already implemented some of these, congratulations – and you know there is more you can do. If most of these options are new to you, you will need to prioritize what to do first and realistically assess what you are going to take on internally and where you will need outside help because time, money, and expertise are three key factors that will determine how well these options will work for your business.

You can and should study what other family law firms are doing, and we encourage you to implement what is worth replicating and then look beyond. If they do not have a blog, it does not mean you don’t need one; it actually represents an opportunity for you to jump ahead of your competitors.

With the easy access to the internet and all the social websites available, a strong online presence is a necessity rather than a luxury. If your family law practice is to survive and grow, you need to be prepared to do the work to keep your website up to date and to utilize the latest technology to your advantage. Given how important referrals are to your business, you cannot afford to leave it to chance for your referral sources to remember you. To help you establish and distinguish yourself as an expert and a thought leader in family law you have to greatly enhance your reputation online through social media, videos, and podcasts. Because here’s the truth: a strong online presence is the present and the future, so you can get on board, or be left behind. ■

About this Special Marketing Guide for Family Lawyers

Family Lawyer Magazine is published by Divorce Marketing Group, a marketing company dedicated to helping family lawyers market their practices. We decided to create this special *Marketing Guide*, which is 100% devoted to the subject of marketing family law practices, for three main reasons:

1. Marketing is essential to the business of being a family lawyer. Our goal is to provide a roadmap that will help you establish an effective marketing plan for your firm.
2. Little or no time is devoted to the subject of marketing at most CLE events.
3. We want to introduce you to our broad range of marketing products and services, all of which are highly relevant for the success and growth of your firm.

The Internet has made researching family lawyers and legal options easy and convenient. Before selecting or contacting a family lawyer, divorcing individuals are doing their own due diligence, including Googling your name, even if you came recommended from a trusted source. Online, what your prospective clients see is a very crowded and competitive marketplace; one where it is difficult to distinguish the best and most-experienced family lawyers who provide great service, from the less-experienced ones whose services are mediocre.

As you read this *Marketing Guide*, you probably noticed some recurring themes about the complex and overlapping nature of marketing. You've seen references to your website, social media, your referral sources, distinguishing yourself from other family lawyers, etc. throughout each article. This is because successful modern marketing has many facets, all of which work together to create the complete picture of a thriving, trustworthy business.

Our 19-year history as a marketing agency for family lawyers and publishers of *Divorce Magazine* and *Family Lawyer Magazine* qualifies us to provide you with this *Marketing Guide*. We have worked with a large cross-section of family law firms – including successful ones that want to stay ahead of other family lawyers, firms that have lost market share to competitors, family lawyers who are starting their own practices, and law firms that want a one-stop marketing solution. We know your business – and the needs of divorcing people – better than any other marketing agency or publishing company.

We hope you found the information contained within this *Guide* to be of value to your practice and that you'll reach out to Divorce Marketing Group when you're ready to create a successful new marketing program for your firm.

About the Authors: Martha Chan and Dan Couvrette

Both Martha Chan and Dan Couvrette are expert marketing consultants to family lawyers and divorce professionals. They are the owners of *Family Lawyer Magazine*, *Divorce Magazine*, and Divorce Marketing Group, which is a marketing agency dedicated to promoting family lawyers and divorce professionals. Both of them are popular speakers and have presented at conferences and seminars attended by U.S., Canadian, and international family lawyers, CPAs, Certified Divorce Financial Analysts, and therapists.



Martha has been a marketer and consultant for more than 35 years and provided her marketing expertise to many fortune 500 companies. She was the Director of Strategic Planning and Development and Card Marketing for American Express. Over the last 10 years she has been focusing solely on marketing family lawyers and divorce professionals.



Dan co-founded *Divorce Magazine* in 1996; he is the Publisher of *Family Lawyer Magazine* and the CEO of Divorce Marketing Group. Prior to launching *Divorce Magazine*, he founded and published multiple magazines – including *Wedding Bells Magazine*. He has been marketing family lawyers and divorce professionals exclusively for almost 20 years and has been featured on numerous TV and radio programs and in publications across the U.S. and Canada.

They can be reached at 866.803.6667 or danc@DivorceMarketingGroup.com and marthac@DivorceMarketingGroup.com.

Divorce Marketing Group: a One-Stop Marketing Agency for Family Lawyers

We Know How to Market Your Family Law Practice

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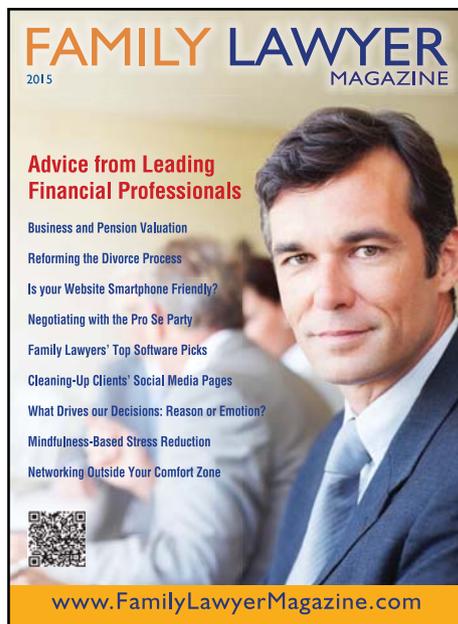
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5. Bring in the types of clients they want.
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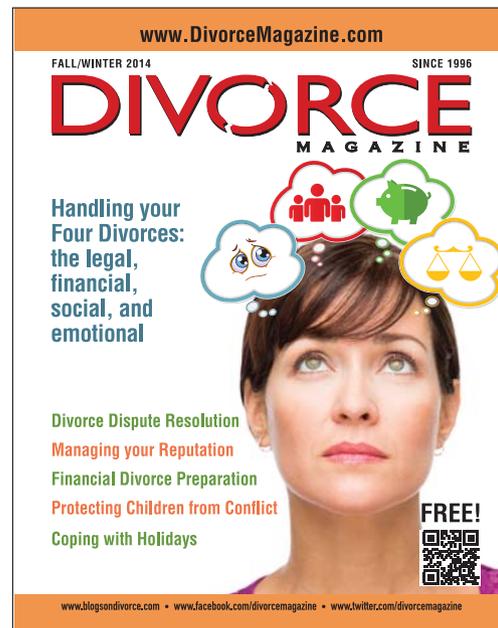
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