

How Facebook can still be an attorney's 'best friend forever'

Getting results from Facebook will take some work and a little patience

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* This article first appeared in Inside Counsel Magazine on December 19, 2014: <http://bit.ly/1x5iqmo>

The Changing Face of Facebook

Yes, it's true. Facebook has undergone major modifications over the past year, largely in an effort to try to get business users to spend money on "pay-per-click" advertising. Nevertheless, Facebook remains the single most powerful *free* online marketing tool, and it should still be the cornerstone of any attorney's online campaign.

According to internet marketer, [Zephoria](#), there are over one billion mobile active users of Facebook and 864 million people log onto this website every single day. One in five page views of all internet content are on Facebook, and these visits involve the exchange of over 4.75 billion pieces of content daily. And while some may believe that only teenagers post on Facebook, statistics show that 29.7% of Facebook's users are in the 25 to 34 age bracket. No wonder then that 42% of marketers report how important Facebook is to their campaigns.

If you build it, will they come?

Let's face it, the question every attorney wants answered is, "Is Facebook worth the effort?" And the short answer is, "Yes." But, getting results from Facebook will take some work (but not too much) and a little patience.

Remember, a Facebook Business Page doesn't cost a dime, and it can produce many tangible benefits, including the following: 1) Facebook can help get your name out to prospective clients by improving your overall [online presence](#), 2) Facebook can lead to referrals through "friends" and "followers" and, 3) Facebook can serve as a supplement your main website and other marketing campaigns by allowing you to quickly and easily share *fresh* information.

And in addition to its free components, Facebook now provides paid [advertising](#) mechanisms which allow you to bump up your exposure. For example, you can pay to "promote" your website, "manage" ad campaigns, and "boost" individual posts. But the best investment for an attorney is to simply put a little time into maintaining a Facebook page that is attractive to one's colleagues and potential clients.

The bigger the net, the more fish you can catch!

Facebook's EdgeRank algorithm uses a ranking system that is based largely on popularity. The more people who visit and interact with your site with clicks, comments and "likes," the more

prominence your posts will gain, meaning that more of your friends and followers will see your updates. Therefore, content is the all important ingredient to success. Here are some ideas to improve the effectiveness of your Facebook Business Page:

1. **Put the “social” back in social media.** The main reasons that Facebook has become so popular is *not* because it is a good advertising medium. People love this site because it is an easy way to keep in touch with friends and family, and share things that make people smile. Therefore, attorneys should strive to post information that is truly helpful and even fun. And when you receive a question or comment, respond promptly.
2. **Encourage interaction.** If you truly hope to attract new visitors, your Facebook page will need to do more than provide links to government websites and announce employee promotions or birthdays. Try asking for comments and opinions about a current event, or take a poll about a recent legal development.
3. **A picture is worth a thousand words.** Obviously, a law practice will be more concerned about maintaining the dignity of its site than the average teenager (so no “epic fail” videos), but even the most staid firm should strive to use photos, images and videos liberally. It is because Facebook Business Pages often lack these elements that they fail to get visits, much less “likes.”
4. **Delete dormant pages.** If you set up a Facebook page years ago and forgot about it until now, you should either begin updating it immediately, or delete it entirely. If a potential client accesses a page that has lain dormant for some time, they may get the negative impression that yours is not a tech-savvy practice, or worse, that you are not accepting new clients.
5. **Use the “Event” feature.** Facebook has a handy way to make announcements that can be used to let your clients and others know about your upcoming seminars, podcasts, parties, etc.
6. **Pay it forward.** Probably the best way to get people to “follow” or “like” your site is to do the same for others. If you take time to engage other people’s Facebook pages you will likely be rewarded by them returning the favor.
7. **Beware of tunnel vision.** Be careful not to narrowly limit the topic of your posts. Just because you are trying to attract people to your intellectual property practice does not mean that you should *only* post announcements from the USPTO. People who want patents may be interested in anything to do with technology or business, so you might post links to interesting articles or videos about a new invention, a tech company going public, or how to crowdfund on Kickstarter.
8. **Keep an eye on your results.** Facebook provides a useful “Insights” feature that allows you to monitor *what* is working (and not working) on your Page as well as *who* is engaging with your page.
9. **Customize.** Now, more than ever, you can create an identity that is your very own on Facebook. You can easily change banners on your Timeline, modify the content of Profile, alternate between identities when engaging other sites, switch views between

your different Facebook pages, and much more. You can also select different audiences for your various posts by adjusting your [privacy settings](#).

10. **Go mobile.** To get your posts distributed, you must not only become more active on Facebook, you must also make your posts easily consumable on Facebook's mobile app. Fortunately, most tablets and smartphones are able to load images and videos as good as most laptops, but one should still beware of graphic-heavy and long-winded posts.

A "friendly" word of caution

Attorneys need to be more prudent with their posts than the average Facebook user because professional responsibility and advertising rules may apply. Therefore, it is wise to take the following precautions:

- Refrain from making statements that are misleading, contain confidential information, or that promise expected results.
- Be careful when inviting others to be "friends" on Facebook as such contact may violate ethics rules if the other party is, for example, a judge or a represented party.

The California Rules of Professional Conduct

For a better understanding of what constitutes a "communication" within rule I-400 of the California Rules of Professional Conduct (i.e., a communication that will invoke rules pertaining to legal advertising), read [Formal Opinion No. 2012-186](#), of the State Bar of California Standing committee on Professional Responsibility and Conduct. Of course, if you live outside of California, you should check the rules of your home state. But, keep in mind, the internet knows no boundaries.

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