

THE RAINMAKER INSTITUTE

A Guide to Marketing Your Law Firm on Facebook

By Stephen Fairley

According to current research, social media now drives more traffic (31.2 percent) to the websites of people and organizations that post on social media sites than any other channel, including search. Facebook dwarfs all other social networks for driving that traffic, accounting for 25 percent of all website traffic coming from social media.

For solos and small firms, the goal of social media is lead generation and business development, pure and simple. How you develop and maintain that is by building targeted relationships, providing solid content and consistently adding value. Some of the attorneys we have worked with at The Rainmaker Institute regularly receive 50- 100 or more new leads every month just from efforts online, social media engagement and Facebook pay per click.

So how can you take advantage of what Facebook has to offer for law firm marketing? Keep reading!

The Latest Facebook Updates

Widely recognized for its reach and success in keeping people connected with friends and family, this social media behemoth has woken up to the opportunities that come from connecting businesses to their target markets and is taking steps to elevate the experience for everyone, including law firms.

A few months ago, Facebook announced that it was making changes to its News Feed algorithm that would result in showing more feeds from user's friends and family members and fewer items from companies and institutional brands.

This is in direct response to Facebook users saying they want to see more content from the people and places they are already connected with and less from people or companies they don't know or care about.

What this means for lawyers' marketing on Facebook is this: if you are currently doing all your posting under your law firm's umbrella, consider making more posts under your own name. That doesn't mean you should abandon your firm's Facebook page, especially if you've built up a good following. Just consider posting more – or sharing more posts from your firm page – under your own personal page.

I do both and have been doing so with positive effect for some time. We have a Rainmaker Institute page and another one for legal marketing, but I have my own personal page as well. The Rainmaker page keeps things pretty much strictly business, but I often take posts from there that I think will be of interest to the people who follow me on my personal page and share those on my page. My personal page has both business and personal items as well as shared posts from other pages that I find interesting, thoughtful or humorous – even though they usually do not directly relate to my business or even the legal space.

Here are some of the new Facebook features and how to use them for marketing your law firm:

Messenger Platform. More than 900 million people around the world communicate via Facebook Messenger. It was the fastest growing app in the United States last year and now, Facebook has opened up messaging to all businesses to enable them to communicate to customers in a new way. Using Messenger “bots,” companies can offer automated subscription content, customized communication as well as live automated messages with clients/customers who opt in. This new tool also supports sending and receiving text and images. This is essentially a shift from public to private social media.

Live Video. Facebook has been spending a lot of time enriching the video experience on its site and it has paid off – users are watching more than 100 million hours of video every day on Facebook! Businesses are now able to stream Facebook Live broadcasts from a number of devices. Using this tool, your next presentation could go much further than you ever thought possible with Facebook Live.

Video Profiles. You can now bring your profile to life on your law firm Facebook page by using Facebook's Profile **Expression Kit**. Repurpose the videos you've created for your website and YouTube for your Facebook profile to connect more power-fully with potential clients.

Instant Articles. This is a wonderful way to extend the reach of your blog or newsletter content and get more engagement from your audience on Facebook. Instant Articles are better than mobile Web articles because they load much faster while accommodating video and image zoom. Facebook has been beta-testing Instant Articles for almost a year and their research says they receive 20 percent more clicks and are shared 30 percent more than mobile Web articles.

How to Grow Your Facebook Audience

BuzzSumo recently analyzed 500 million Facebook posts to discover what types of posts create the most engagement. Use this data to plot your posting strategy and you will likely see an uptick in the number of likes, comments and shares your posts receive:

1. **Schedule evening posts.** Posts published between 10 p.m. and 11 p.m. ET receive 88% more interactions than the average post.
2. **Use images.** Posts that use an image receive 179% more interactions than the average Facebook post.
3. **Pose a question.** Posts ending with a question receive 162% more interactions than the average post.
4. **Use video.** Videos are the most shared post type on Facebook, averaging 89.5 shares per video. There are an increasing number of free and lowcost tools that make creating short, ad-type videos on Facebook a breeze. I recently started playing around with slide.ly and found it very easy to use.
5. **Post on Sundays.** Posts published on a Sunday receive 52.9% more interactions than the average post. Fewer companies are posting on the weekends, yet more consumers are reading posts on the weekends.
6. **Keep posts brief.** Posts with 150-200 characters performed the best, averaging 238.75 shares.
7. **Post directly to Facebook.** Posting with a third-party tool results in 89.5% less engagement than posting directly to Facebook.
8. **Link to longer content.** Posts that link to long form content (2,000+ words) receive 40% more interactions than linking to shorter content.

The Facebook Pay-to-Play Strategy

Facebook ads are a tactic that many companies have used with good results without a big cash outlay. With Facebook ads, you should have a free offer (webinar, ebook, etc.) to promote your firm and call interested prospects to take action. You should then use Facebook's Ad Manager to narrow the target audience for your offer.

Here are four distinct ways attorneys can zero in on their ideal target market for Facebook ads:

1. Life Events

Many legal practice areas correlate to certain life events. For example, an estate planning attorney may want to engage with high net worth individuals who are newly engaged or newly married for asset protection services. Divorce attorneys can use this to tout the benefits of having a prenup. Since most people tend to post major life events on their Facebook timelines, there are a lot of life events to choose from, including what I just mentioned above. Doing a quick search in the Facebook Ads Manager, I found the potential audience for an estate planning attorney in Phoenix is 220,000 individuals aged 26-65 with a net worth over \$1 million who are either newly engaged or newly married.

Another example is a family law practitioner who wants to target newly separated individuals who may need a divorce attorney soon. According to the Facebook Ads Manager, the potential audience of separated individuals in Phoenix with a net income of more than \$100,000 is 160,000.

2. Custom Audiences

Imagine being able to reach people who contacted your law firm but did not sign up, or to reconnect with old clients you have lost touch with. Perhaps even people who visited your website, but did not contact you. This is the power of Facebook Custom Audiences. It's an advanced feature that allows you to import an existing contact list (think of your former clients and prospects who haven't signed up yet) into Facebook and then target ads directly to them. You can also create a Custom Audience based on visitors to your website and people who have engaged with your content on Facebook.

Once you have uploaded your contacts, Facebook has additional targeting options so you can target ads by income, zip code, job function, net worth, marital status, interests and more. This is an incredibly powerful targeting tool tailored to law firms that have a good handle on their ideal target market.

3. Lookalike Audiences

Once you have created a Custom Audiences list on Facebook, the site has a feature called Lookalike Audiences that will target other people who are similar to those in your Custom Audiences list.

To create a Lookalike Audience, Facebook examines the common qualities (e.g., age, gender, location, interests, likes, psychographics) of the people in your Custom Audience and then finds other people in the region you specify who best match the qualities of your Custom Audience. You can use any of the Facebook targeting options to narrow your Lookalike list.

4. Layer Targeting Options

One of the most powerful features of Facebook ad targeting is the ability to layer targeting options on top of one another to create a highly specific audience. For example, some of the categories include ethnicity (African-American, Hispanic-Bilingual, Hispanic-English dominant, Hispanic-Spanish dominant, Asian-American, etc.), household composition (empty nesters, grandparents, new parents, new teen drivers, veterans, working women, etc.), moms ("green" moms, moms of grade schoolers, moms of high schoolers, new moms, soccer moms, stay-at-home moms, etc.) industries and many more.

Using Facebook's robust audience identification tools, we have found that Facebook ads typically outperform Google ads and are significantly cheaper to boot.

Just like any social media network, the lion's share of the attention goes to those who interact frequently – and genuinely – with followers and fans. Knowing how valuable and limited your time may be for social media marketing, you need to make efficient use of it to obtain the maximum benefit. These tips can help you do just that.

Two-time international bestselling author, Stephen Fairley is CEO of The Rainmaker Institute LLC, the nation's largest law firm marketing company specializing in marketing and lead conversion for small to medium law firms. Over 18,000 attorneys nationwide have benefited from learning and implementing the proven Rainmaker Marketing System. Over the last 16

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