



Google's most recent game changer is their focus on localization. Here's a closer look at what it means for your law firm and your practice.
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LAW FIRM MARKETING WEB DESIGN

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HOW LOCAL ARE YOU? Google wants to know

As you partner with your Web marketing company to discuss your strategy for online localization, you want to consider not only how local you are, but how local your online network is.



BY LISA M. VAUGHN, PRESIDENT, CONSULTWEBS.COM, INC.

How do you become a Tiger Woods? Practice. How do you become Google? Ditto.

Tiger Woods is well-known for his obsessively demanding workout routine. He is continually observing results and making appropriate adjustments, and it is that same level of deliberate practice that keeps Google at the top of their game. They are continually experimenting with different strategies that can provide the most relevant search results. The shifts in rankings that we all observe are nothing more than Google

practicing its swing. One of Google's most recent game changers is their focus on localization – the linking of search results to the user's physical location.

Location-based relevancy is playing an increasingly important role in Web marketing strategies. While the geographic focus of your search engine optimization strategy is critical to accurately target your potential client(s), geography also influences the success rate of your pay-per-click advertising, link initiatives, online press releases, and other Internet marketing campaigns. Let's take a closer look at one facet of your Web visibility campaign: Google's Local Business Listings.

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Consultwebs.com, Inc., is delighted to announce its 10th anniversary. Dale Tincher founded Consultwebs.com in 1999 in Raleigh, North Carolina. Sometime later, Consultwebs decided to focus on law firms in order to leverage its expertise and experience to provide maximum value for its law firm clients.

Programming Manager Magnus Simonarson and President Lisa Vaughn joined Consultwebs.com in 2001 and we have since grown to 20 employees, approximately 20 subcontractors and more than 300 clients. In 2007, we opened a second office in Central Kentucky. We are proud to have performed Web design, Web marketing (including search engine optimization) and consulting engagements for leading organizations including the American Bar Association and some of the leading law firms in the United States.

We are committed to continuing to add the highest quality team members and continuing to provide the highest level of response and support. We are truly thankful that we have wonderful clients and work that we enjoy. Most of all, we are thankful for the opportunity to serve you.

How Local Are You?

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Over the last year Google has more closely integrated Local Business Listings (LBLs) in the search engine results page (SERP). The originating data source for this group of business listings, also referred to as “the 10-pack,” is Google’s Local Business Center (www.google.com/local/add) which offers inclusion at no charge. Beware: some companies are charging for these “free” business listings and marketing them as Google’s “yellow pages.” With a little bit of effort and Google’s free tools, you can put together an effective business listing yourself, or ask us to handle it for you at no charge!

The key to expanding your online visibility with a free Google LBL is to include as much detail about your law firm as possible. Google allows you to upload photographs of your office, describe your practice areas, and share an overview of your firm. Be certain to specify where your offices are located and what primary geographic areas you serve — this will also help to boost your localized relevancy for improved online visibility.

Creating a detailed Google LBL is step one in your response to the shift toward localization. Your law firm’s inclusion in relevant, local Web site directories can also help further associate your Web site with your locale. There are several business directories that we recommend you list with: HG.org, AVVO.com, Yahoo’s Business Directory, Bing Local, MerchantCircle.com, CitySearch.com, Yelp.com, and other quality business directories that can help drive relevant traffic to your firm. Most quality directories charge \$199 - \$499 per year for inclusion. We strongly recommend that you implement a diversified strategy and purchase listings in numerous quality directories.

As you partner with your Web marketing company, think locally. Talk with us about strategies to enhance your local relevancy. Our team can work with you to implement any of the above ideas and help you reach more potential clients in your community.



Lawyer Marketing Associations

BY DALE TINCHER, CEO, CONSULTWEBS.COM

Interested in joining a law firm marketing group? Following are expert tips on how to evaluate an association to make sure it meets your needs.

I have heard several lawyers say that they get so busy running their practices and trying cases that they cannot find time to market and seek ideas. Some of our clients who are in similar practice areas and are in different (non-competing) cities have found a solution. They have joined or started marketing groups and have found them very beneficial. They comment that they attend the marketing group conferences and come away reenergized and with new ideas.

Several good marketing groups are available. Two groups, with which we have the most familiarity and can recommend based upon our experience, are PILMMA and Atlas Lawyers Group. PILMMA, short for Personal Injury Lawyers Marketing and Management Association, was started by Ken Hardison of Hardison & Associates. The Web site for PILMMA is PILMMA.org. The other, Atlas Lawyers Group, was started by Chris Munley of Munley, Munley & Cartwright. The Web site is atlaslawyersgroup.com.

The marketing group attendees are usually from different parts of the U.S. They come together three to four times per year to share information and to listen to presentations by attending attorneys and high-quality vendors. The attendees share successes, ideas that have failed, good and bad vendors, personnel issues, personal situations and more. I have been pleasantly surprised at how willingly experienced lawyer marketers share information with attorneys who have less marketing experience. The

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groups also set aside time for attorneys to socialize and talk privately. Many of the attendees have started referring cases to each other. A side benefit is that the meetings are held at places family and friends can enjoy. Recent event sites include Palm Beach, Florida; Phoenix, Arizona; and Orlando, Florida (Disney World).

Some comments on the Web sites from members of these two groups include one participant who said: “I didn’t think I would come away with a lot of new ideas and strategies, but boy was I wrong! The information was fresh and cutting edge. But even more, the tips and advice I got from the other attendees at the conference was worth the price of admission alone. I’ll be at the next one!” Another said, “I wish I had done this 10 years ago. I could have grown my practice much faster, and made a lot fewer costly mistakes along the way.” Still another said, “I certainly have saved

myself hundreds of thousands of dollars and years of learning.” Another said, “As a result of the conference, I went to my New York office, notes in hand, for a full day meeting with my key staff and started to implement many of the great ideas I came away with.”

Some ways to evaluate lawyer marketing associations include reviewing the Web sites, ensuring that the group has been in place for at least one year, asking for a member list to see if the participants are ones with whom you are comfortable, calling members to see if they felt their investment was a good one, asking for example materials from a prior convention, and asking if the group receives referral fees from participating vendor sales. Asking if the group receives referral fees will separate sales pitches from meaningful instruction.

Which group should you join? In my opinion, you should join them both. Why allow your competitors to pick up the ideas? The investments are reasonable and attendees will tell you that the information they receive has made and saved them significant amounts of money.

We invite you to visit the Atlas Lawyers Group Web site (www.atlaslawyersgroup.com) and PILMMA Web site (www.pilmma.org).

Disclaimer: Consultwebs.com, Inc., has no ownership in any lawyer marketing associations. Consultwebs.com, Inc., does not pay or receive any referral fees from any lawyer marketing associations.

FEATURED CLIENT: Schwartzapfel Partners

Consultwebs.com team members enjoy long-term relationships with our clients. For our summer issue we put the spotlight on the N.Y. firm of Schwartzapfel Truhowsky Marcus P.C. We asked partner Steven J. Schwartzapfel what he likes about working with Consultwebs.com:

“ The people—the people on all levels. The people make the company. They have experience, a proven track record, integrity and honesty. Everyone at Consultwebs is at the top of their game. We have worked with other companies but despite the façade they presented they didn't have the people, the experience or the skill that they promised. At Consultwebs you don't just make promises, you deliver results.

There is also client service. CEO Dale Tincher invested his time with us from Day 1, illustrating his commitment and willingness to look at the prospective client as a long-term relationship even from the start. That's unusual in this day and age. We are getting value for our investment. We look at Consultwebs.com as our partner and they look at it the same way. I am looking forward to dominating the Web over the next year for those areas of most importance to our firm.

Simply throwing money at your Web marketing doesn't guarantee returns. Consultwebs.com truly has partnered with us like an in-house arm of our company. ”

Consultwebs.com Video Receives Glowing Review From Law Firm Marketing Professional

Consultwebs.com recently released a new online video, "How To Choose or Evaluate An SEO Consultant" video. We're proud to have received a glowing review from law firm marketing expert Larry Bodine, JD.



When Bodine needs advice on search engine optimization, he turns to Dale Tincher of Consultwebs.com in Raleigh, N.C. Bodine considers Tincher to be "one of the top Web site designers and SEO experts in the business."

Bodine's take on Consultwebs.com latest SEO video: "Spend 10 minutes on this video and save yourself thousands of dollars," he says.

Pointers Bodine says he gleaned from the video:

- Many companies claim to provide high search engine results, but you should test them. Check their list of clients; if they don't have any online, move on.

- Type the vendor's top clients into Google to check their search engine ranking. If the top clients aren't on page one of the search results, move on.

- Type the vendor's own targeted search terms in Google and see how well they do for themselves. Type "law firm Web consultant," "law firm SEO consultant" or "law Web

marketing consultant" into Google. If vendors can't get good rankings for themselves, move on.

- Call the vendor's clients and see if they're getting higher rankings and leads from their Web site as a result of the SEO optimization. If not, move on.

Bodine says law firms should "find a company that knows what they're doing, and enjoy checking your Weblogs for all the new traffic."

We couldn't agree more. In Consultwebs.com's 10 years in the SEO business, we've developed the trust and respect of dozens of law firms.

To see the video for yourself, visit: http://www.consultwebs.com/Choosing_Evaluating_An_SEO_Consultant_video_review.htm. Then call Consultwebs.com to find out how we can help improve your law firm's search engine rankings.



What you need to know about... social networking

BY AARON PHELPS

Social media is about community and building relationships. When a potential client walks into your office with only second-hand knowledge of your firm, you and your staff go to great lengths to start building an effective relationship with that person. Even if this lead doesn't produce business, the person will remember the smiles, the handshakes, and the advice given. When a former client's friend or family member needs legal services, those gestures may well bring you a referral.

While your social media profile or blog doesn't have to be as personal as shaking someone's hand, it often can have the same effect on a potential client. How? With more and more people turning to the Internet for news, entertainment and even employment, they will also use the Internet for their initial experience with the law firm they choose for representation.

Remember that social media is about building relationships. Such sites as Facebook, Twitter, Bebo, and many other social networking sites are designed to make friends and keep them in the loop about what is going on in your life or your business. Did your firm just land the largest settlement in the county? Has your receptionist finally had her baby and you care enough to mention it? These things can mean a lot to a potential client when they are sizing you up. Potential clients need to understand that your firm has real people, that you are approachable and that you will be there when they need you most.

Keep in mind that social networking sites aren't just for making relationships. They also direct people to your main site with an initial contact already established, and they help SEO by providing quality links that people will follow when they need your legal advice.

What social media encompasses is rapidly expanding. There are sites that focus on social news (digg), video (YouTube), social bookmarking (delicio.us), and wiki articles (Wikia).

Learn more about social networking and how Consultwebs.com can connect your firm with these online communities. Follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/consultwebs or contact us online at www.consultwebs.com.

Consultwebs' New Marketing Consulting Team Members

Consultwebs.com is pleased to announce two new team members in Marketing Consulting.

David Deigert received his undergraduate degree at Michigan Technological University and Lake Superior State University, and did graduate work at East Kentucky University and the University of Kentucky. He enjoys camping, hiking and ice climbing. **Tanner Jones** is a graduate of Berea College in Kentucky, where he completed a B.S. in Business Administration. While enrolled, he was the recipient of the Wilson and Ellen Best Evans "Above and Beyond the Call of Duty" Award. Tanner is enthused and eager to see how he can grow with Consultwebs.com. "When a company cares this much about its employees, and even more so its clients, success inevitably follows," he said.



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Ethics Tip: WATCH THE WORD 'SPECIALIST'

When writing copy for your Web site, be careful about using the words "specialist" or "specialize." The reason: many State Bars have specialization certification programs. In those states you typically must complete one of those programs before holding yourself out as a specialist in a particular practice area.

