



LEGAL ACTION MEDIA LLC

EFFECTIVE CONTENT MARKETING **GUIDE**

FOR LAW FIRMS



legalactionmedia.com

For competitive law firms, there are two major factors that make the difference between generating more leads, and lead volume remaining stagnant.

The first of these is how dedicated you are to growth. Without the motivation to scale your practice, your firm is doomed to stagnate. The second thing that all growing law firms must learn is the importance of excellent web copy. Your copy needs to be fluid, compelling, and logically laid out to readers. It should sound conversational, yet authoritative, informative, and professional. It should not make false claims or exaggerate your services. And of course, your copy should be grammatically correct and error-free.

Your practice is not like a brick and mortar retail store. Your potential client cannot touch, feel, or physically examine your services. Because web copy is a reader's initial point-of-contact with your firm, it can make or break a conversion.

WRITING INITIAL COPY

In order to maximize the effectiveness of your website copy, you need to start by thinking about what makes your law firm different from the competition.

For each practice area or issue, you are competing with other firms for the same leads. You need to convince website visitors that you're the best firm for the job. This is where web copy helps you stand out.

To get started, make a list of your credentials. Highlight points that qualify you and separate your services from the rest. This can include prior experience, results obtained, client testimonials, and professional awards and recognition. The marketplace is crowded. Potential clients have many choices. Why should they choose you? In marketing terms, this is known as your Unique Value Proposition (UVP).

Use this list to develop a full-fledged landing page. Focus on readability. Avoid big words, long sentences, and legal jargon. Use bulleted lists and subheads to break up copy into short, topic-driven paragraphs. Remember: you aren't communicating with colleagues. Your website should be written at around an 8th grade level to ensure everyone can understand it.

Check out competitors' websites for inspiration--and differentiation. Marketers call this "competitor analysis." The strategy identifies opportunities and threats and helps you position yourself accordingly.

WRITE TO THE AUDIENCE

A common problem with website copy is that it fails to engage the audience. If you do not draw in your potential clients with compelling copy, you can't expect them to go deeper into the marketing funnel.

Think of copy as your elevator pitch. You have a few, precious moments with a potential client. You need your copy to be lively, interesting, and relevant enough to stimulate their interest. Every word counts and should be calibrated to have maximum effect.

It's easier to describe bad copy than it is good copy. Bad copy sounds off. It doesn't address the reader's concerns. It's unthoughtful and out of touch. Good copy is just the opposite. It speaks to the audience and lets them know you've been thinking about their problems. Good copy succinctly explains your services and why the reader should hire you.

Online attention spans are notoriously short. Users are very quick to leave a webpage that does not immediately give them the information they want. You might only have 5 - 10 seconds to make an effective pitch. Fluff, jargon, and generalities aren't going to produce a conversion. You must cut through the noise and get to the point.



LONGER VS SHORTER COPY

Effective copy doesn't necessarily mean shorter copy. In fact, research has found that people prefer more information rather than less.

When the content on a landing page is too short, readers are less likely to proceed through the website and less likely to take action. The longer the content, the more information the reader receives. This means they are more likely to get answers to their questions. The information you provide is a valuable service in and of itself. Skimping on information can weaken your position as an authority.

The reader will be more comfortable with fuller disclosures. They'll feel that your firm is more honest and forthcoming with legal knowledge. Comfort is important if you are expecting someone to hire you as their legal representative.

Longer content also provides the opportunity to include more keywords (those words people use in Google searches to find your page) without "stuffing," or having a keyword density that's too high. Longer pages tend to [rank higher on Google](#).

When in doubt, err on the longer side of content. Readers can always skim for the information they need, as long as the page is well organized. Again, the emphasis should be on high-quality, audience-relevant information. Adding more words just to have more length misses the point of why longer content tends to do better.



FOCUS ON READABILITY

Effective web copy involves a much different writing style than what lawyers use on a daily basis or learned in law school.

Readability--the measure of how easy a piece of content is to read and understand--is an important factor in Google rankings. A poor readability score can result in less traffic to your site and fewer conversions. If the average site visitor finds website content too difficult to read, they'll navigate away.

Readability formulas weigh factors such as sentence length, syllable density, and word familiarity. For example, the [Flesch readability score](#) calculates the average sentence length and the average number of syllables per word. A score of 90 - 100 indicates the content is easily understood by the average 11 year old student, while a score of 0 - 30 is appropriate for university graduates.

You know your audience best. Are they blue-collar working class men and women, high-net worth business people, or somewhere in between? Once you identify your audience and have written copy that you think will be readable for them, run the text through a Flesch readability score tool, such as the ones [here](#). Based on the score, make adjustments until you receive a score that is right for your audience.



TRACKING AND TWEAKING COPY

Once your website copy is live, it may be tempting to think that your work is done. But a content writer's work is never done. You need to constantly reevaluate and rewrite website copy on a performance basis. Continuously tweaking copy can be a difference-maker in terms of effectively conveying your message to the public.

If you recently posted your content, have a little patience. It can take Google up to one month to “crawl” and “index” your pages. After that, if you are not getting as many leads as desired, consider updating your copy. In addition, any leads you did get can provide valuable information. For example, recently-retained clients can confirm the factors that led them to choose you. They might even offer a testimonial to improve your firm's trustworthiness.

Aside from adding client-specific feedback, try tweaking certain aspects of the copy. Adjust paragraph lengths, break up information with bulleted lists, and translate legalese into more reader-friendly language. However, don't change too much at once. Make one or two changes and then republish the page. Following a month or so waiting period, see if your changes led to more leads. On the other hand, if leads continue to drop, undo the most recent change and make a different adjustment.

Repeat the process until you start to make sense of what is and isn't working. This is a simplified version of what marketers call “A/B testing.” By tweaking your copy, you can attract more clients without having to drastically increase marketing spend.

A good analytics tool is also invaluable. Analytics allows you to see how users are engaging with your content. Tools such as [Google Analytics](#) use machine learning to provide valuable insights. These insights inform the actions you take to improve the user experience. With analytics, you are not guessing what will improve your conversion rate. You're making informed decisions that are much more likely to produce the desired result.



COMPLEMENT YOUR COPY

A key website metric is the conversion rate of traffic to leads. The conversion rate measures the number of new users who visit the site and take some type of action once there. The action could be requesting a consultation, signing up for a newsletter, or downloading a free ebook. Users don't always become leads right away. Often, you need to lead them along the so-called "marketing funnel" from broad actions to a specific action.

You should continually be asking what can be done to make more people interested in taking the next step. In addition to website copy, there are a number of visual elements that can improve the user experience and increase the conversion rate. On a good website, copy and visual page elements should work together. Great writing may not be enough to offset a page that is poorly designed, or missing visually engaging features. Try adding the following to improve the overall user experience.

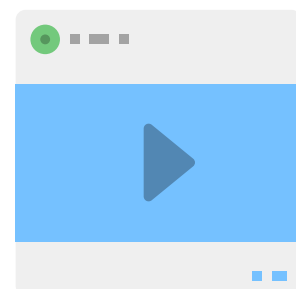
Photos

Photos of attorneys and other staff members give legal websites a more personal touch. This is particularly important for nationwide law firms that may never get to meet the person they are representing face-to-face. But even if you deal directly with local clients, you need to set people at ease and increase their comfort level. Put a picture of your attorneys in different locations, such as the Home, About Us, and Practice Area pages. The photos don't have to be large, but they should be professional.



Videos

We live in a digital age in which video is increasingly important to online marketing. According to a recent [study](#), the time spent watching online video is expected to grow more than 20% over the next two years to an average of 100 minutes per day. Especially for younger people, video is the preferred means of consuming information. But for people of all ages, video makes your website content more accessible. You want videos to follow the same guidelines as your writing. Keep them concise and to the point, and call attention to features of your service that will be of the most interest to prospective clients.

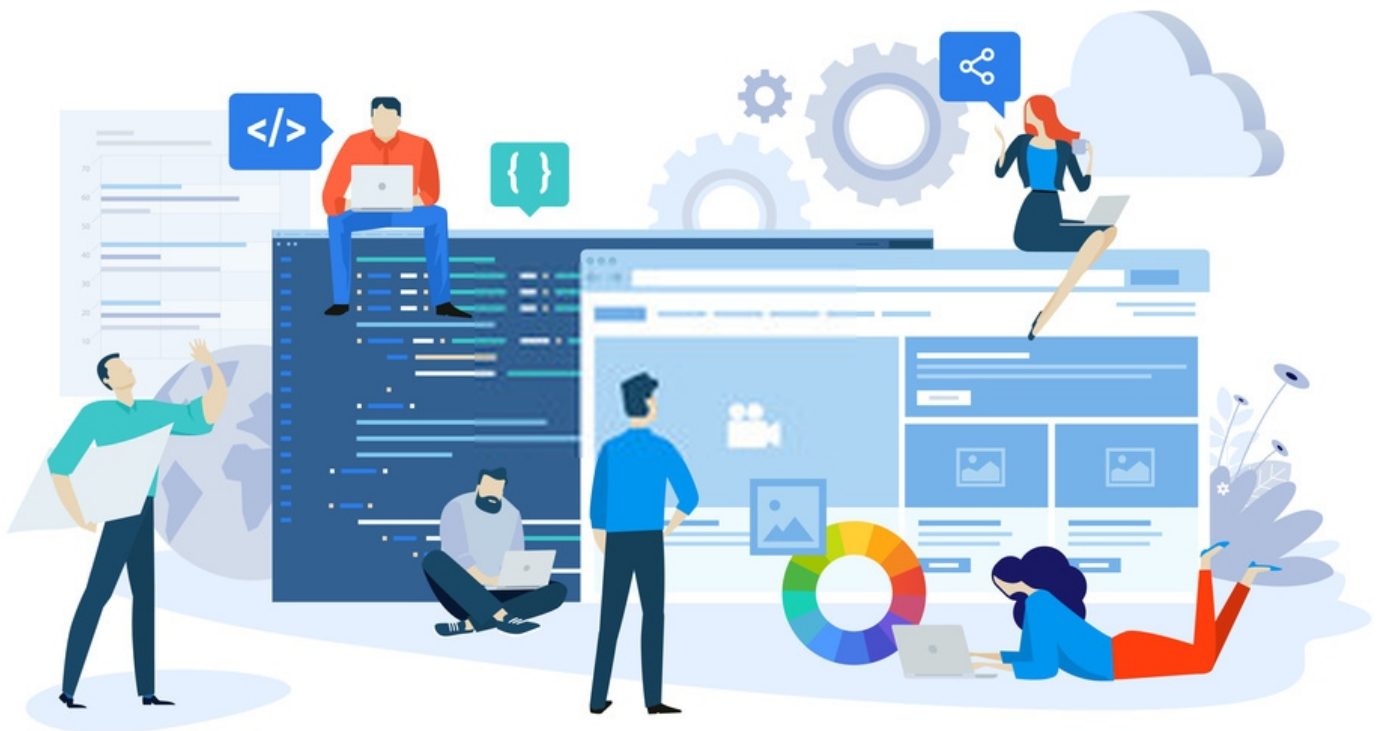


Before recording video, prepare a script and do a few practice takes. Also take care to choose a location that has good lighting. As with photography, you might want to consider hiring a professional. If you go this route, be prepared to shoot multiple videos during the same session. Over time, build up your video library to address frequently asked client questions. Or, film specific videos to accompany landing pages. Some attorneys have a visual designer create an animated video, and then provide voice-over. The possibilities of video are endless.

Web Design

Even the best copy may not be enough to overcome a poorly designed or outdated website. People do judge books by their covers. An unattractive site signals unprofessionalism. Prospects may never get as far as reading website copy if they are scared away by a bad design.

Good web design is about more than color schemes and templates. The best designers know how to build a page that attracts and retains more customers. The benefits of a well-designed site include better speed, a more seamless customer experience, intuitive navigation, and easy social sharing. Web design can also enhance the effectiveness of your copy by using different-colored headers, varying font sizes, and other visual cues that allow prospects to quickly locate the information they're looking for.



LEGAL ACTION MEDIA CAN HELP

The team at **Legal Action Media** wrote this guide because we want to give your law firm the tools to succeed. But we know that many lawyers do not have the time to both run their practice and perform their own marketing.

That's where we come in. As a full-service legal marketing agency, we handle everything from web design and content writing to social media and reputation management. Whether you're a national practice with hundreds of attorneys or a boutique firm with a local focus, Legal Action Media makes it easy to get more qualified leads.

**Ready to attract and retain more clients?
Start the conversation by scheduling a**

Free Consultation