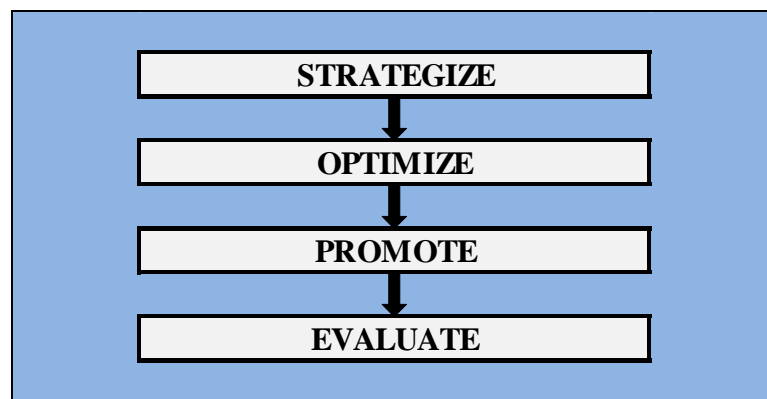


Prepared By:
Michael Carabash

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**4 Steps to Online Legal Marketing:
For Lawyers. By Lawyers.**



**Tips and Trick to
Rank Higher in Search Engine Results!!!**

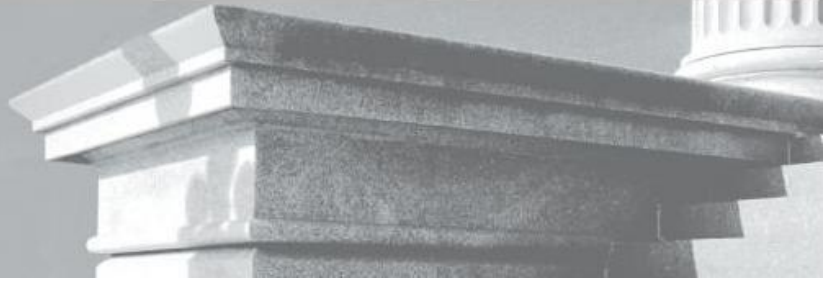


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Introduction

You have just hung out your own shingle and are looking for new clients.

You are an associate at a boutique law firm, responsible for educating existing clients about new legal developments.

You are a partner at a national law firm and need to do some damage control in light of an online smear campaign from a disgruntled former employee.

Irrespective of where you are at in your lawyering lifecycle, one thing remains clear: knowledge of ONLINE LEGAL MARKETING is vital.

By “online legal marketing”, I am talking about having a strategy which, when properly executed, will give you an online presence to help attract new clients, inform existing clients, and manage online risks.

The internet is the new playing field for professional service providers. Prospective clients – sophisticated buyers who leverage technology to find information and deals online – are shopping around for you! And if you’re still sitting on the sidelines using ads on park benches and in newspapers and magazines, then you’re wasting your time and money.

In this eBook, I will teach you everything I learned about online legal marketing – and 100% FREE. What qualifies me to provide you with such advice? Well, in a nutshell, I understand what MY GENERATION is looking for: cost-effective and convenient access to information, products, and services. I use websites like www.Wikipedia.org, www.Canoe.ca, and www.Google.ca to access information. I use www.eBay.com, www.Craigslist.com, www.Kijiji.ca and www.FreeCycle.org to find deals for both merchandise and service. And I’m connected with my friends and peers through social media websites, my blog (www.DynamicLawyers.com/DL_blog), and my microblog (www.Twitter.com – @michaelcarabash), which allow me to keep me in touch with the latest developments and share my own ideas and knowledge. I understand and appreciate what’s coming down the pipeline in terms of prospective clients.

Let me break down my epiphany for you. After getting called to the Ontario Bar last year, I developed a website www.DynamicLawyers.com to help put people in touch with local lawyers. To market that website online, I spent months researching various topics – ranging from website design, search engine optimization, social media, and paid online advertising. I have tried so many different techniques – some successful and some uneventful. And this is where you’re about to get your money’s worth: I am going to pass all of my experiences on to you for FREE. Why would I do so? Two reasons...



First, when you finally decide to build an internet presence, you won't have the time or energy to learn what I've learned or do what I've done. Indeed, you should be spending your limited time practicing law and billing clients. That is what YOU are good at and that's where I come in. Once retained, my team of professional and I will help you strategize and execute your plan. That is what the Dynamic Lawyers team is good at. You can e-mail me directly at michael@dynamiclawyers.com.

The second reason I'm giving away this information for free is because I want you to join www.DynamicLawyers.com and use it as a platform to promote yourself online to prospective clients. We are always looking for lawyers to respond to posts and get new clients. We want what lawyers have: content in the form of blogs, videos articles, etc. We have the ideal platform to promote lawyer services and we encourage you to take advantage. Finally, giving away this information makes it easier for me to educate lawyers about online legal marketing; I can just tell lawyers to download and read this eBook on their own time and at their own pace. When lawyers need me and www.DynamicLawyers.com to start planning and executing, we will be there!

But Online Marketing DOESN'T Work!

Some lawyers believe there are no benefits to marketing yourself online. They may say things like "that isn't how I've historically gotten clients" or "those clients are the lowest hanging fruit – looking for a deal online" or "law is a profession, not a mere business and should not be marketed as one in a tacky manner on the internet".

Admittedly, these lawyers are right (to a certain degree). It is only a relatively new phenomenon that people are getting connected – for example, through www.DynamicLawyers.com – to lawyers through the internet. And certainly, there will be a lot of desperate people with little or no money who access the internet looking for help; unfortunately, these people cannot help lawyers pay their bills (but lawyers may still take on their cases for other reasons). And finally, the simple reality is that the people with money who can afford lawyers are not necessarily from my generation (FYI: I'm 27 years old). We are pretty much the opposite: we have come out of post-secondary school with huge debts and are looking for jobs. We likely only need a lawyer to help us buy a house, fight a traffic ticket, or in those rare occasions where we get injured on the job or are unjustly terminated. What twenty-something year old can afford to pay, for example, \$338 per hour for the average solo or small firm Toronto lawyer (This was the weighted average hourly rate from a study conducted by www.DynamicLawyers.com earlier this year. That report, entitled Is Time Running Out on the Billable Hour? and which entailed interviewing 500 Toronto lawyers about their legal fees over a 3 month period, can be downloaded for FREE [here](#))?



These things being said, the key thing to keep in mind is that, one day very soon, MY GENERATION WILL BE the dominant purchasers of legal services. Some of us will become managers, directors, and officers of our present or future employers and entrusted to deal with outside counsel. Some of us will have our own businesses and we will need legal assistance everywhere we turn. We will accumulate wealth and have more disposable income. Finally, when we retire, we will need legal services to manage our wealth. The bottom line is that we will need lawyers and legal service providers to protect our rights and promote our interests. And, since we've been so used to looking online for information and services for everything else, we will naturally do so to find a lawyer or legal solution.

My generation – a tech savvy and wired generation – is comfortable with searching for deals online. We have no loyalties to established service providers when it comes to getting a deal. I, for example, take my Blackberry Bold 9000 with me to BestBuy whenever I have to buy something. While I'm waiting in line at the checkout, I shop around for deals on the Blackberry's internet browser. When I find the same product being sold cheaper at www.Staples.ca, I show the customer service representative. They match and then beat the price I show them. I save money and all it took was a few minutes while waiting in line. The bottom line is that my generation relies extensively on technology and the internet for communication, entertainment, networking, researching, and doing work. We are comfortable using e-mail, search engines (e.g. www.Google.ca, www.Yahoo.ca), instant chat interfaces (e.g. Yahoo! Messenger, MSN), personal posting and social networks (e.g. www.YouTube.com, www.FaceBook.com, www.Twitter.com), rating and feedback websites (e.g. www.eBay.ca, www.amazon.ca, www.imdb.com, www.Tripadvisor.com, www.Gigpark.com), and blogs and wikis. Whether you are prepared for us or not, we are the next generation of clients.

Why Do I need to be Online NOW?

There are four major reasons for having an online presence NOW. First, your prospective clients are conducting searches online NOW. Marketing research from April 2004 revealed that “[a]pproximately 85 percent of the Canadian Internet population conducted at least one search at the top engines each month...Canadian residents conducted approximately 575 million searches at major engines, or 40 searches per search engine user” (Comscore, [Press Release](#), May 13, 2004 “Canadians Are More Active Online Searchers Than Their U.S. Counterparts, According to comScore Networks”). These figures have no doubt increased since then. Here are some statistics related to lawyers:

- The number of searches on Google.ca in June 2009 for “Calgary lawyer”: 3,600
- The number of searches on Google.ca in June 2009 for “Canada attorney”: 8,100
- The number of searches on Google.ca in June 2009 for “Vancouver lawyer”: 12,100
- The number of searches on Google.ca in June 2009 for “Ontario lawyer”: 27,100
- The number of searches on Google.ca in June 2009 for “Toronto lawyer”: 33,100



Second, if you're not online NOW, your competitors will be. The internet is the new battleground for professional services. Third, you need a web presence NOW because search engines like Google and Yahoo favour older websites tremendously and reward them with higher rankings. They say so themselves. So if you ever want your website to be found by prospective clients using search engines, the sooner you build your web presence, the better! Fourth, having an internet presence NOW adds a measure of brand name protection: if a disgruntled individual decides to launch an online smear campaign about you or your practice (which I have personally heard stories about), you will not be able to effectively manage such adverse publicity unless your web presence is established. Don't leave yourself open for attack!

What are the Benefits of Being Online?

Importantly, when people are searching online for legal services, they are doing so because they are looking to PURCHASE services. They are near the final stages of becoming a client and simply need to be converted. Internet surfers are also doing research about purchasing decisions. For lawyers, this means they are looking to review your firm's online presence before retaining you for an offline transaction. Being online allows you to attract your target market in a cost-effective and convenient manner. The cost of putting up a professionally looking website with all the bells and whistles is only a few thousand dollars these days. You can even add a blog, a Facebook group, and a twitter account for next to nothing. When you go to sleep, your website doesn't. You can showcase your expertise to countless prospective clients around the world 24/7. You can build a brand (an asset which can ultimately be sold) through your web presence. You can make yourself into THE GURU on a legal topic that the media comes to for advice. You can make connections with others doing the same thing and learn how to outperform your competitors. Will it take time? Yes. A good product requires time and effort to be invested initially. But remember: garbage in equals garbage out. So if you create a high-quality and professional website, then that already speaks volumes about your value proposition to prospective clients: high quality and professional services.

But What About Traditional Marketing?

Admittedly, traditional off-line methods of marketing your law practice have their place and space in the marketing communications mix. These methods include having a solid reputation for doing good work and getting good results, publishing and mailing out newsletters and articles, paying for ads in newspapers and the Yellow Pages, giving presentations and attending networking events, and being part of various industry associations. But when it comes to distributing your message across a broad spectrum in the most cost-effective and convenient manner, there is no substitute for being online. **KEEP THIS IN MIND:** my generation DOES NOT read or attend presentations by guest lecturers (we watch online videos and listen to podcasts), DOES NOT attend networking events with our peers (we use social media websites), DOES NOT read newspapers (we read blogs and RSS feeds), and DOES NOT use the Yellow Pages (we use search engines).



What is the Reality of Online Legal Marketing?

Unfortunately, lawyers' online presence is lacking. Earlier this year, www.DynamicLawyers.com researched the web presence of 1,000 solo and small firm Toronto lawyers and found that, while 98% could be found online and 78% had websites, 48% of those websites had no substantive content in any form (e.g. articles, cases, commentary) and only 2% had blogs. So while lawyers' names and contact information are easy to find on the internet if you're looking for them, prospective clients searching for legal services will never find these lawyers because the latter offer little or no meaningful content to draw them in (which search engines use to rank pages). You can download that report for FREE [here](#).

If You Build It, Will They Come?

Just because you have a website doesn't mean anyone will visit it. In fact, I can pretty much guarantee that if you don't do the things I recommend in this eBook, **NOBODY** other than existing clients (who found you through some other non-online way) will even know you have a website! Without good quality content on your website, there will be no reason for prospective clients to visit your website in the first place. Without that content being organized and disseminated properly, search engines will not rank your website highly. Without website traffic from search engine users, you will receive little or no inquiries from prospective clients. Without inquiries...well, you get the picture.

So Let's Do It Already!

So hopefully now you're convinced of the **IMMEDIATE** need to build an effective online presence for your law practice. Now it's time to share my knowledge. I have come up with a simple 4-step approach to effectively marketing yourself online:

- (1) **Strategize**: come up with keywords that your target market will use to find you online;
- (2) **Optimize**: design your website and your content in a search-engine friendly way;
- (3) **Promote**: use link campaigns, directories, e-mail, to disseminate your content; and
- (4) **Evaluate**: analyze and improve on your strategy, optimization, and promotion.

Each of these will be examined in turn. But before we get there, I should say a few things about search engine optimization or "SEO" for short.



Search Engine Optimization

There are basically three ways in which your website can be found online. First, someone may knowingly type in your domain name (e.g. www.DynamicLawyers.com). This method of getting people on your website is impractical for so many obvious reasons. Second, someone may come to your website through a link on another website. This method makes your website dependent on the goodwill of third parties, which also has its disadvantages. Third, and most importantly, someone may find your website by using a search engine like Google or Yahoo; by far, this is the most popular and advantageous way for internet users to find your website.

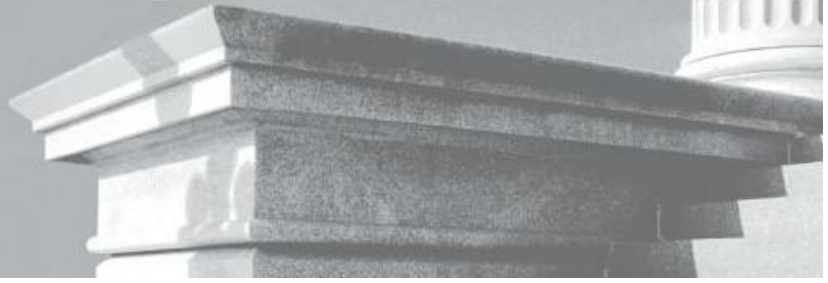
And this is where search engine optimization or SEO comes in: you need your website to rank higher than other websites for specific keywords in the search engine results. The higher your website ranks, the more likely people will be able to find you (and hence, the more likely they'll follow up with you to retain your services). Most people don't look past the first or second page of search engine results so it is imperative that you rank high. Rankings depend on many different criteria and algorithms used by search engines to determine how relevant or authoritative your website is for a given topic or set of the keywords being input. While many of these criteria are public knowledge (and which I will get into below), the algorithms used by the search engine spiders to index and rank websites are kept secret and change so often it is hard to keep up!

Now back to the 4-step approach I mentioned earlier...

Step 1: Strategize [Find the Right Keywords!]

The goal is simple: rank high on search engine results for specific keywords. To get there, you need a strategy. The strategy should end up telling you what are the best keyword(s) for your website to focus on. It's a waste of time to optimize your website for keywords that are not being searched for. So here are 5 techniques I use to help me figure out what people will be entering into search engines with respect to my particular product or service:

1. **Know your products/services:** You should be able to describe your idea, the benefits to your target market(s) (i.e. your clients and customers), how you differentiate yourself from competitors (i.e. what's your sustainable competitive advantage), the history or story behind the idea (this is always a great selling feature), the progress you've made, and your future plans.
2. **Know your industry:** You should look around for competitors and figure out what services they offer and how they try to distinguish themselves from others. You should also know where the industry has been (e.g. new, old, dominated by a few players or fragmented along various lines) and what trends are coming down the pipeline.



3. **Know your customers:** You should not only be able to describe your ideal customer as much as humanly possible (with respect to the WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY, and HOW), but you should map out the different avenues they would take to find your product or service – both offline and online. I use SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS to do this. Ask yourself: who is my ideal client or customer? Create a whole bunch of situations in which someone or something would need to use your product, service, or idea. When you've done enough of these situations, you'll start to see overlap. In fact, you can even group a whole bunch of the situations together. At this point, you will likely have identified your primary and perhaps even secondary target market. You should be able to say something like: "my primary target market is boys between the ages of 15 and 20 who live in Toronto and who play online video games after school". Finally, you should realize that your customers are entering one of three types of keywords: (1) keywords for browsing, (2) keywords for comparing or reviewing, and (3) keywords for buying. Keep these things in mind!
4. **Use Software:** You can use software like Google AdWords Keyword Tool (FREE), WordTracker (PAID), or Micro Niche Finder (PAID) to help you find the right keywords. These applications will tell you the volume of selected keywords being searched for on a monthly basis (for example, on www.Google.ca) and the fierceness of competitor websites with respect to those keywords. It is always best to find a high volume, low competition keyword or set of keywords to focus on.
5. **Evaluate Your Competitors.** You can find the right keywords by looking at your competitors and seeing which keywords they are targeting. This is fairly easy to do. Simply visit a competitor website and look at the top of the page or the Title. For example, the Title of <http://www.romanolawfirm.ca> is "Toronto Personal Injury Lawyer – Injury Lawyers". This means that this particular page is targeting these keywords. Another simple way to find competitor keywords – assuming you're using Firefox – is to select "View" from the main menu, and then "Page Source". This shows you the code that was used to build the webpage. Often times, you will see keywords in a META Tag (i.e. a non-visible background element that describes the page). Just look for something that looks like `<meta name="Description" content=["actual keywords followed by a statement about your product, services, and/or organization"]/>` and `<meta name=["keywords"]>` or `<meta name="Keywords" content=["actual keywords"]/>` near the top of the Page Source. A final way to find out what keywords competitors are using is to purchase software like Internet Business Promoter or SEO Elite, which examine competitors based on many different variables – including ALT Attributes, META Tags, Headers, inbound links, etc.

By using these techniques, you should have come up with an idea of some keywords to focus on. Also keep in mind that nothing stays the same over time. In fact, that's the only thing that does stay the same. So you should repeat steps 1 through 5 every so often to make sure you are ahead of the game.



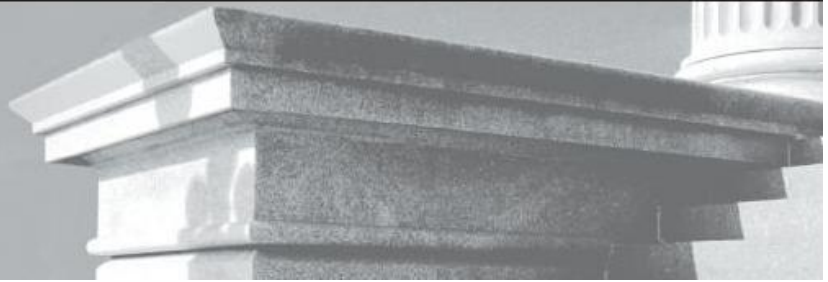
Step 2: Optimize [Make Your Content Search-Engine Friendly!]

So now that you've selected some keywords to focus on, you'll need to ensure that your website is designed to be search-engine friendly when the spiders (i.e. the applications used by search engines to index your website) come around. Here are **20 FREE TIPS** you should know that will help you improve your organic search engine rankings for your particular keywords. By organic, I am referring to the search results that occur after paid Google ads are displayed. The paid Google ads will be displayed along the top and right hand side of the search results. Now if this stuff starts to get too technical, no worries: as a lawyer, you're unlikely going to be delving into the coding yourself. That being said, you should, at a basic level, understand and appreciate what your web developer or search engine marketer is going to be doing for you:

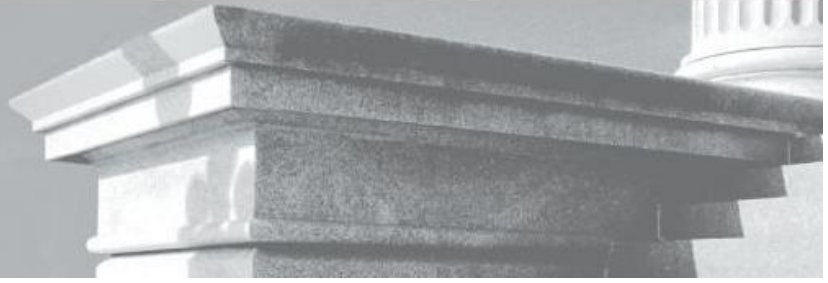
1. **Content is King:** Use the keywords you uncovered to create high quality content. Without content, the search engines won't find your website and other websites will have no reason to link to you. In fact, you will never be found unless you end up paying for Google Adwords. The bottom line is that you need to have high quality and regularly updated content on your website for the rest of the world wide web to trust and reward you with higher rankings. As a general rule, try to have at least 500 words of content per webpage. There are some websites – like www.needanarticle.com – that will actually write your content for you (e.g. \$5 for 500 words); my experience has been that the quality of their work is about grade 12 and it doesn't work for lawyer websites because those services providers cannot write about complicated legal topics.
2. **Domain Name:** Have your keywords in your URL / domain name if possible. Lawyers don't seem to get this point. Prospective clients are not putting lawyers' names in search engines. They are using terms to describe what they are looking for, such as "Toronto personal injury lawyer". If you can avoid it, don't use your name or your law firm's name as the URL / domain name.
3. **Website Title:** Make sure that your website title includes your keywords. For example, the Title of www.ezinearticles.com is "EzineArticles Submission - Submit Your Best Quality Original Articles For Massive Exposure, Ezine Publishers Get 25 Free Article Reprints". Try keeping your title less than 60 characters and put your keywords upfront. Do not repeat your keywords in the title as search engines may interpret this as spam (and punish your website accordingly).



4. **META Tags:** Have your keywords in your META Tags. Meta tags are non-visible background elements contained in a webpage to help describe what the webpage is all about. Search engine spiders look at the META Tags to index the page. There are two types of META Tags which you should be familiar with: description and keywords. As I previously discussed, META Tags for competitors can be viewed – if you’re browsing their webpage using Firefox – by selecting “View” from the main menu, and then “Page Source”. Just look for something that looks like <meta name="Description" content=["actual keywords followed by a statement about your product, services, and/or organization"]/>” and “<meta name=["keywords"]> or <meta name="Keywords" content=["actual keywords"]/>”. As a general rule, it is best to have your description META tag less than 150 characters and repeat your keywords up to 3 times – otherwise search engines begin to think you are trying to spam their search results. Furthermore, you can have up to 800 characters in the keywords META tag but only include your keyword once – again, because search engines may punish you for trying to spam their search results. Finally, make sure that you include your keywords in both your META tags and the actual content of your webpage – otherwise search engines will consider your webpage to be spam.
5. **Keyword Density:** Keyword density is the number of times your particular keyword appears in content as a percentage of the content overall. Your goal is to have a low keyword density. As a general rule, your keywords should appear anywhere from 5-7% of your overall text. Also: try to have your keywords appear at the top of your page where possible.
6. **Use Headers:** Put the keywords in your headers. Headers are a class of text (e.g. bold, underlined, large font) that characterizes words in one area (e.g. a title) from words in another (e.g. a paragraph).
7. **Inbound Links:** Have links that come from another website, article, or blog to your website. Try to have your keywords in the actual link text.
8. **Blog:** Blogs – or weblogs – allow for periodic entries to be displayed in a search-engine friendly manner through the use of widgets or applications that employ various SEO techniques (discussed in these 20 FREE TIPS).
9. **Blog Tags:** These are keywords and terms that will help describe your page or blog for search engine spiders to find. Make sure to fill your website and blog with relevant and popular tags.
10. **Have a Sitemap:** A Sitemap is a page that displays every page on your website according to their depth and links. It allows users and search engine spiders to quickly and easily find your content. So be sure to have a Sitemap file to help search engines index your website. Also worth having is a sitemap.xml file (which you can create for free using Google Sitemaps) which helps ensure that your webpage get picked up by search engine spiders as quickly as possible.



11. **Have a Robots.txt file:** A Robots.txt file is an exclusion file contained within webpages that provides instructions for search engine spiders to either index or not index the particular page. If the Robots.txt file is set to 'no-follow', then the page will not be indexed by the search engine.
12. **Directory Submission:** You can submit your website (sometimes you have to pay) to search engines, special interests websites and internet directories. A listing that is relevant to your business and your country can bring you significant targeted website traffic. Beware of resubmitting too often, as search engines and directories may characterize this as spam and punish your website accordingly. Submission can be done manually by visiting each website; I prefer purchasing software (like Internet Business Promoter) which allows you to do this automatically or semi-automatically for hundreds and thousands of these directories.
13. **Permalinks:** These are permanent links or URLs which point to a specific blog or forum entry after it has passed from the front page to the archives. You should make sure that you change default links to your specific blog or forum (which may simply contain alpha numeric characters) to permalinks that incorporate your title.
14. **Related Links:** Put up links adjacent to your content to encourage users to visit other pages, blogs, etc. This is great for SEO because search engines love lots of deep linking within websites.
15. **Links to Other Websites:** Linking to good quality websites will not only make your website a 'go to' portal on a particular topic, but it will also create trust among industry players and search engines. Note: I will discuss linkation, linkation, linkation in "Step 3: Promote".
16. **No Broken Links:** Search engines hate broken pages / URLs and will punish your website if there are page errors or broken links, etc.
17. **Share Backlinks:** Allow other websites to link to your page by filling out a form. When they do so, you will be automatically notified and then you can do the same. Backlinks are the relationships that search engines use to determine if your website is a good one. The more good quality backlinks you have, the better.
18. **Use ALT attributes:** Although search engines cannot see or index the images or words that appear in images, if you describe your images using an ALT attributes (which sometimes displays when you hover your mouse over an image), then search engines can read those images. Also, be sure not to use too much FLASH or other multimedia as search engines cannot see or index these elements.
19. **Nomenclatures:** You should be saving your files using keywords that describe them. This way, when someone clicks on a picture file, the filename will include your keywords.



20. Use Videos: Because of their popularity, search engines are ranking videos higher than normal text for relevancy and authority on certain topics and keywords. With a simple camera, you can now record, edit, and upload your video to the internet (e.g. www.YouTube.com), describe them using your targeted keywords, and then embed the videos into your website or blog.

So there you have it: 20 FREE TIPS on how to search engine optimize your content. Just remember: there's always some new way to improve your Google rankings and you should never stop learning about them to take advantage (and leave your competitors wondering how you got on p. 1 of Google for your specific keywords).

Step 3: Promote [Linkation, Linkation, Linkation!]

Promotion is all about getting your content "out there". How do you do it? Obviously, you could send out e-mail blasts notifying everyone that you have some great content on your website (and include a link to your content). But if you don't have a master list of your prospective clients, then your alternative to disseminating your content is through a LINK CAMPAIGN.

SEO is as much about the number and quality of links coming into your website as it is about how your website content has been search engine optimized. Here are a few things to keep in mind about inbound links.

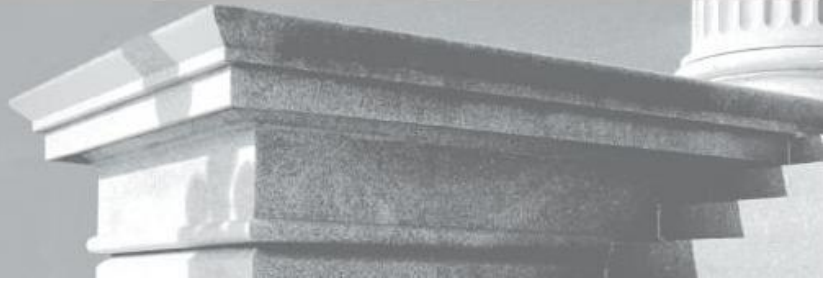
Why are links so important?

In the world wide web, links are the relationships or building blocks upon which search engines (e.g. Google and Yahoo) determine the popularity of your website. Search engines look at the web pages that are linking to your site to determine their relevancy and authority for a given topic or set of keywords (by examining things like link text, title of the web page, tags, and the URL). Interestingly enough, you want to make sure that inbound links and websites from which they are coming have the keywords that your are optimizing your website for. So if you want to target "Toronto auto dealership" (exactly in that order), then you want your inbound links to be written – preferably in bold and in large font – using those words in that order.

You will also want to try to ensure that the inbound link to your website which appears on other websites is not buried deep inside those websites; the more difficult it is to find; the easier the link is to find, the better!

So how do you increase the number of good quality inbound links to your website?

Here are the various FREE ways you can do it:

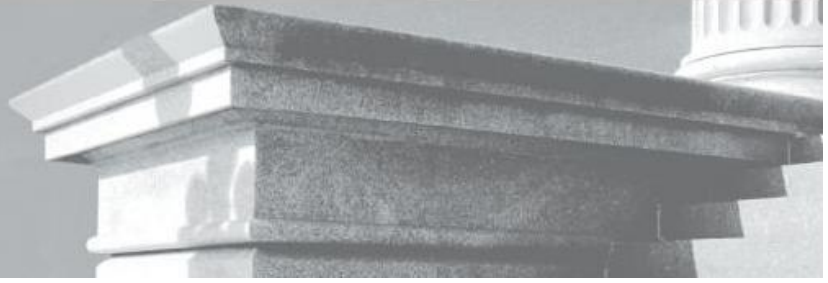


1. **Reciprocal linking:** The best way is the most natural. If your website has good quality and regularly updated content that targets your keywords, other websites will naturally link to it. You can also set up a link-exchange program or form on your website, where you agree to share links with other relevant websites. Look at competitor websites or websites that are popular for particular keywords and ask them if they'd be willing to link to your website.
2. **Directory Submission:** I have already written about this above.
3. **Article Submissions:** Article databases like www.ezinearticles.com allow you to freely submit your articles. The great thing about these database websites is that they rank highly on search engines because they are older, have lots of content and are search engine optimized. So all you need to do is contribute content and have a link from your article back to your website!
4. **Press Releases:** You can submit online press releases for mass dissemination (sometimes you have to pay) with links back to your website. Remember: if someone syndicates content from a website that contains your press release, that syndicated website is making your content (including links) viewable to their entire audience.
5. **Blogs:** Blogs allow for easy linking (e.g. through comments and trackbacks). A trackback is an automatic system that notifies Blog Owner A that Blog Owner B has referenced one of Blog Owner A's blog post. The end result is that a link will be created in Blog Owner A's blog to Blog Owner B's blog.
6. **Social Media:** Much like article submissions, you can submit content to social media websites like www.FaceBook.com, www.Twitter.com, www.Digg.com, etc. with links back to your website.

Admittedly, these techniques take a lot of time and effort. The key is to create good quality content that has something relevant to offer when people are searching for your keywords. Patience and a good strategy are vital. Continuing to tweak your website with high hopes that it will be thrust on p. 1 of Google in no time is not the reality; you need to accept the fact that if you have a new website, it will take a while before it ranks well in Google.

Don't try fooling the search engines

Now, in the underground world of SEO, there are automated programs that build up links as quickly as possible. These programs work, for example, to build links on unsophisticated blogs where owners are not checking 'cloaked' trackbacks (discussed above) that are essentially spam. Doing so – particularly if you have a new domain name – could lead to search engines punishing you. There may or may not be something called GOOGLE SANDBOX (no one is really sure), which allegedly punishes your website for many months if you build up too many links too quickly in an unnatural manner. It could also piss off a whole bunch of people if you are spamming their blogs with your trackbacks.



Techniques for linking

Search engines look at the Page Rank of the website from which your inbound link is coming from. The higher the Page Rank the better. Page Rank is a tool used by Google to rank your page. Just go to http://www.prchecker.info/check_page_rank.php and type in any url (e.g. www.canada.com). Within a matter of seconds, Google Page Rank will return a number out of 10 that gives you insight into how well ranked your website is on Google. Most websites are ranked 0,1, or 2. You should keep coming back to this tool to see if your law firm search engine optimization techniques, strategies, and perhaps vendors are improving your search engine results. The bottom line is that, the higher the PageRank (or “PR”) from the website linking to your website, the better.

You will also want to keep in mind that being linked from the homepage of a website with a high PR is much better than being linked from an internal page on that website with a lower PR. Make sure to check whether the page that is linking to your website has a Robots.txt file (as previously discussed) associated with it that allows the page to get indexed by search engines like Google. A Robots.txt file is simply an exclusion file that contains instructions for search engine spiders to either index or not index the particular page. If the Robots.txt file is set to ‘no-follow’, then the page will not be indexed.

You’ll also want to keep in mind that the value of the inbound link from the website by looking at the total number of links on that page (the more, the worse off you’ll be because the page rank will be divided by the number of links).

With respect to the specific text of the link on third party relevant websites, try to change it up (e.g. if you want to target the keywords “good Toronto lawyers”, then try to get keywords like “great Toronto attorneys” or “super lawyers in Toronto” in the actual link text that links back to your website), get it written in bold and underlined and in a header text, and put it close up to the top of the page. These things should all help building your link popularity.

What about buying links?

The idea of buying links goes as follows: what some people – and particularly SEO companies – offer and do is a service whereby they build dummy website that link to your site. In effect, they are trying to trick the search engines to ranking a particular website higher because it has links. By relying on these kinds of links, websites are disregarding the quality of the links, the sources, and the long-term impact it will have on their websites.



I liked Robert Guest's [Dallas Criminal Defense Lawyer Blog](#), wherein he talked about his experience with phony links and SEO companies. In one particular example, he discussed a spam comment that had been made under one of his blog entries. It turned out to be his own writing and it actually linked back to a prominent DWI law firm's web site! What had happened was that a spam comment bot just copied and pasted his own materials in the comments, but then linked back to the law firm. All of this was done to trick Google to rank the page higher.

Another example I came across was even more eye-opening. A blog in [Lead-Gen SEO](#) described how, in the summer of 2008, popular lawyer referral service FindLaw had been caught selling links to its clients in a bid to increase their search engine rankings. An e-mail had been sent out – likely without being cleared by FindLaw's inhouse counsel – that gave a message to the tune of “buy super-link-juice-passing text links from Findlaw and get top rankings in Google”. The big problem with FindLaw's actions was that it was also selling web development services; hence, its clients may not have realized the risk they ran (i.e. in case Google decided to punish them) by engaging in FindLaw's services.

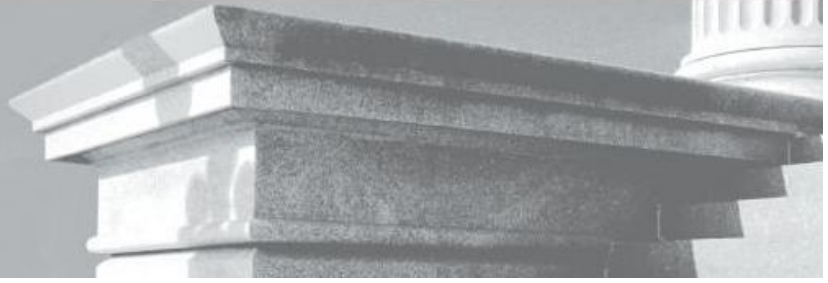
Overall, buying paid links on dummy websites as a form to cheat the system is against [Google's Webmaster Guidelines](#). Google can (and probably should) be punishing those websites that engage in such conduct and put warnings up not to deal with certain SEO companies who engage in these deceptive practices.

Step 4: Evaluate [Web Analytics]

Nothing stays the same and you will need to constantly monitor your performance and make adjustments. This is the final step and I'll be discussing some tips and tricks you can use to evaluate your website's performance.

You've heard it before, but it's worth repeating: content is king. So the first step is to find out how much of your content has been indexed by search engines. This is easy. Just go to www.Google.ca or www.Yahoo.ca and type in the following: site: [URL]. So, if your website was www.canada.com, then you would type in: site:www.canada.com. The search engines will display all of the pages they've indexed from your site.

Another tool you can use to determine how Google (and likely other search engines) ranks your page is to visit Google Page Rank. I've previously talked about Page Rank. Just go to the website and type in your URL (e.g. www.canada.com). Within a matter of seconds, Google Page Rank will return a number out of 10 that gives you insight into how well ranked your website is on Google. Most websites are ranked 0,1, or 2. You should keep coming back to this tool to see if your law firm search engine optimization techniques, strategies, and perhaps vendors are improving your search engine results.



Finally, it is definitely worthwhile to invest in website analytics (like Google analytics, Awstats and Webalizer) to help you track each visit and action on your website. Website analytics tells you everything you wanted to know about how website visitors found you and how they interact and navigate through your website. Good web analytics software which will tell you things like:

- How strong is visitor loyalty with respect to recency, length of visit, and depth of visit?
- What are your website's top landing pages and exit pages?
- What are the direct and indirect sources of your website's traffic (e.g. direct traffic, referring website, search engines, etc.)?
- When are most people visiting your website?
- Where are your visitors geographically located?
- Which keywords and search phrases are visitors using to find your website?
- Which browsers are visitors using to find your website?

Importantly, you should definitely be using sophisticated analytics software to manage your e-mail lead campaigns and pay per click advertising campaigns to see what's working and what isn't.

Conclusion

You need to be online NOW to market your legal services to prospective clients, educate existing clients on new legal developments, and manage online risks. For better or worse, MY generation is going to be the next set of clients paying your bills. If you can't appreciate the fact that WE use technology and the internet to buy goods and services, then you will be left in the dust. In this eBook, I have given you countless tips and tricks based on my knowledge and experiences to successfully engage in online legal marketing. My four step approach – (1) **Strategize** [find the right keywords], (2) **Optimize** [Make your content search engine friendly], (3) **Promote** [linkation, linkation, linkation], and (4) **Evaluate** [Web Analytics] – will help you get higher search engine rankings. BUT don't waste your own time and energy trying to do everything yourself. When you're ready, you should contact me to help you strategize and execute your online marketing needs. You can e-mail me directly at michael@dynamiclawyers.com.



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