

Law Firm Marketing Plan

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Executive Summary

This plan offers marketing strategies to help grow your law firm in FY23.

With the world gradually opening up after the COVID-19 pandemic, it is now time to accelerate your marketing to make FY23 bigger and better. Law firms are embracing digital transformations in the new financial year, as they adapt to constantly changing virtual and hybrid business landscapes.

When it comes to marketing for law firms, gone are the days of relying on word-of-mouth and long-lunch Fridays as the primary way to attract and impress clients. The world has changed, and so has marketing.

In the new financial year, law firms that do not 'go digital' will fall behind the curve and be out of touch with their clients. People are much more likely to trust your law firm's capacity to handle their legal needs, if your brand messaging is exposed to them more frequently through various online marketing channels.

Deciding where to invest your resources, money, and time in law firm marketing to enable you to focus on serving your clients and running your firm can be a tricky balance. The objective is to determine which strategies are most effective, depending on your marketing goals.

Knowing where to start is critical.

As with any plan, you must start with defining **SMART goals**. Once you have defined your goals, it is important to **identify your target market**. Every law firm's target market will be different, depending on the areas of law provided. Next, you need to implement effective, tailored **marketing strategies**.

Following is our roadmap to understanding how to set SMART goals and define your target market. We then take a dive into essential marketing strategies that will help grow brand awareness and generate new clients for your law firm. These strategies focus heavily on the online space given the evolving digital landscape of law firm marketing.

Setting SMART Goals

SMART goals are the starting point for every law firm marketing plan. Without goals, no campaign or strategy can effectively be measured to see if it has achieved the results you desired.

SMART marketing goals is a framework for successful goal setting. It stands for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely.

Each campaign or strategy may have one or several goals you want to achieve. Examples of a few broad marketing goals for the next financial year might include:

- Increasing brand awareness
- Growing your database
- Generating additional clients
- Increasing website traffic

To turn these into SMART goals, however, they need to be further defined by specifics and timeframes that are attainable and realistic. They also need to be measurable.

Using the first and last examples from above, we can start to make these SMART goals by drilling down a little further:

- Increasing brand awareness by 20% within the next six months. You can measure brand awareness by analysing your social media engagement and followers, Google Analytics and how your content is performing by engagement levels.
- Increasing website traffic by 25% over the next year. Again, Google Analytics, a free service from Google, collects data about your website visitors and traffic.

Once your goals are set, you need the means to achieve these goals through effective marketing strategies.

Defining Your Target Market

Defining your target audience is one of the most important parts of your plan. This will help you determine which channels and strategies to best use based on your target demographics.

Demographic details which you will need to break down include:

- Age – specify an age bracket if possible. If your core service is around wills, estate planning and business succession, then your target market will likely be the mid to older age groups that have the assets and the need to use this service. Specify an age for each of your service offerings.
- Gender – is your firm geared towards more male, female, or same sex relationships?
- Location – are you targeting local, national, or international clients?
- Profession – if your area of law includes employment law, your target audience may include business owners, CEOs, executives and directors. Define the positions (if possible) for each of your areas of law.
- Income – is your target market high income earners, or low to medium income earners? If you know an income bracket, specify this.
- Socio-economic status – this is often measured by a combination of education, income, and occupation. Identify what your target audience's socio-economic status is for your service offerings. This will significantly impact where you market yourself and how you go about it.

Marketing Strategies

Once you have set your goals and defined your target market, the next step is to use this information to determine your overall marketing strategy. Your goals and who you are targeting play a primary role in what channels you will adopt to grow your firm.

The following strategies provide a roadmap to proven and practical methods that are being used by law firms in FY23. Use this as a guide only, as all firms will need to tailor their marketing plan to meet their individual goals and target market.

Overview of marketing strategies:

1. Website
2. Guides, webinars and videos
3. Search engine optimisation
4. Google Ads
5. Newsletters & blogs

With the rapid growth in going digital post pandemic, these primary strategies can help grow your law firm no matter the size of your practice or budget in FY23.

Website

Your website must be the pinnacle of all your marketing, and it should not just be a pretty face. Your firm's website must perform as a lead generator, a brand ambassador, a client resource, and your number one marketing asset.

If your website is not doing at least one or more of these tasks, then it's time for a new site.

Below is a short summary of what makes a good law firm website:

- Client-friendly – easy to read and find information.
- SEO optimised with keywords.
- Consistent branding and strong graphics.
- Performance enhanced user experience.
- An informative About Us page with staff images.
- Up-to-date contact information, always.
- Fresh new content that is valuable and produced regularly.
- Professional imagery, avoiding cliché photos such as the scales of justice or a gavel.
- Secure website hosting that is professionally managed and maintained regularly.

Your marketing activities should be crafted in a way that drive visitors to your law firm website. Once there, with the right website, you have an opportunity to gather an attentive audience, answer their questions, and generate leads that turn into clients.

All high performing law firm websites must provide tools and resources to drive a cold lead to a hot lead (client picking up the phone and booking an appointment).

These tools can include digital assets and videos to capture client details and help you establish a point of contact moving forward.

Guides, Webinars & Videos

Driving traffic to your website is essential, however once clients have landed on your site, you need the right tools to generate leads.

This is where digital assets such as eBooks and guides, as well as webinars and short video tutorials, can become an income producing strategy for your firm.

These online marketing tools are added to your website to provide clients with “free” information that gives them enough detail, but not too much, to encourage them to pick up the phone or submit an online enquiry.

eBooks & guides

eBooks and guides offer clients information and education. The aim isn't to sell in these ebooks - the focus should be on how you can provide website visitors content that is of value. Various topics can be created that can focus on your areas of law, for example, Wills & Estate planning or Separation & Divorce.

In exchange for these free resources, you can ask for their details upfront which allows you to grow your database and contact them after they have downloaded the asset.

Video tutorials & webinars

Webinars and short videos can be recorded and housed on your website for clients to learn more about the topic of interest, and ultimately establish you as a subject matter expert.

Video tutorials and webinars give you the opportunity to teach your clients and help them understand why you should be the point of contact for their legal needs.

These tools will allow your audience to place a brand name with a face. It improves your brand personality and increases your chances of converting cold leads to clients.

Search Engine Optimisation

To be truly effective, a website first needs to be easy for your potential clients to find. It needs to appear towards the top of the results for common searches on sites like Google and Bing. This is where most clients start looking for a lawyer, so ranking highly here can really boost your firm's profile.

96% of people seeking legal advice use a search engine. Running an active SEO program is crucial to your online marketing, helping your law firm to be easily found ahead of your competitors.



The steps to implement a successful SEO program are:

1. Conduct an initial SEO keyword audit. This will present how well your website currently ranks and the volume of traffic each keyword is generating. This audit also acts as a benchmark for progress reports that should be given to you each month.
2. Engage with an SEO expert that understands the legal industry to help you formulate an action plan.
3. Conduct on-site optimisations with the help of the SEO expert targeting keywords focused on your areas of law and geography.
4. Add fresh new content via blogs to further assist SEO.
5. Continually monitor the performance of your SEO program to measure its success.

SEO is only effective when you have a website that meets industry standards and includes digital assets such as eBooks, guides, and video tutorials to help convert all the traffic coming to your website.

Google Ads

Google Ads is a paid advertising platform that falls under a marketing channel known as pay-per-click (PPC) where you (the advertiser) pays per click or per impression (CPM) on an ad.

If you have a special campaign or have recently launched your firm, Google Ads can give you instant ranking on highly targeted keywords at a cost.

While it can be very competitive for your targeted keywords, using a Google Ads specialist can help save time and money for your law firm. A specialist will be able to modify your campaign so it is geo-specific, remove any broad keywords, and use best practices to improve your quality score.

Landing page

Your efforts don't stop with your ad – the user experience after click is equally as important.

For every Google Ads campaign you should have a landing page designed for traffic generated through the campaign to land on. A landing page is a single website page with a specific purpose — the objective of a landing page is to convert visitors into leads.

Ensure your landing page is using best practices to help increase conversions.

Some best practices include:

1. Crafting a solution-focused headline.
2. Choosing an image that illustrates the call to action.
3. Writing compelling copy.
4. Including the lead form above the fold.
5. Adding a clear and standout call-to-action. A single call to action is required, not multiple.
6. Only asking for what you need on the form.
7. Removing all navigation.
8. Making your page responsive.
9. Optimising for search.

A good landing page paired with a robust Google Ads campaign will generate leads for your law firm.

Newsletter & Blogs

Repeat business, new business and referral business are typically the result of trust, which is what e-newsletters are all about. It's not about immediate conversions, but ongoing brand awareness that puts you top of mind when the client needs you (or refers to you).

Statistics show that clients place a higher value on information that is sent from their lawyer, than other newsletters that they may be subscribed to. In addition, the “shelf-life” of a high-value e-newsletter goes way beyond a few days after being delivered to its intended audience.

The following elements are critical to a successful e-newsletter program:

- Contact List Management (your audience)
- Choosing a specialised email service provider
- Creating a newsletter template
- Design & layout
- Ensuring your newsletter designs are mobile friendly
- Using images
- Subscribing & unsubscribing
- Creating and managing fresh, valuable content
- Managing publication schedules
- News & alerts, including special announcements (new laws, etc.)
- Measuring performance

The key to newsletters and blogs is consistency. If you intend on writing an article and distributing it or simply creating a blog, ensure it is done regularly. This could be monthly, bi-monthly or quarterly. Whatever schedule you choose, ensure it is consistent.

Budget

Once you have developed your marketing plan, the final step is to develop a marketing budget and activity plan that schedules when you plan to execute your campaigns. A marketing budget documents how much your law firm plans to spend on marketing over a specific period, such as a year, quarter, or month.

Why do you need a marketing budget?

Having a budget enables you to keep on track financially. When you create a marketing budget, you'll be able to keep track of how much you spend on each strategy, flag any overspending, and identify if and when you can spend more.

In addition, having a set budget allows you to track your ROI for any lead generation campaigns. Once you have invested in a campaign or strategy, you want to measure what the returns are if the goal is lead generation. Not all campaigns, however, will be focused on lead generation, some may be purely brand awareness. Regardless of the goal, it is important to set a budget and have realistic expectations of the returns.

Budget template

You may choose to use our marketing budget template, or you can create one of your own.

SAMPLE LAW FIRM MARKETING BUDGET

	JAN-YY		FEB-YY		MAR-YY		Q1		AMOUNT LEFT
	BUDGET	ACTUAL	BUDGET	ACTUAL	BUDGET	ACTUAL	BUDGET	ACTUAL	
Product Marketing	100.00	150.00	100.00	150.00	100.00	150.00	300.00	450.00	-150.00
Content	100.00	150.00	100.00	150.00	100.00	150.00	300.00	450.00	-150.00
Paid Advertising	100.00	150.00	100.00	150.00	100.00	150.00	300.00	450.00	-150.00
Public Relations	100.00	150.00	100.00	150.00	100.00	150.00	300.00	450.00	-150.00
Branding & Creative	100.00	150.00	100.00	150.00	100.00	150.00	300.00	450.00	-150.00
Events	100.00	150.00	100.00	150.00	100.00	150.00	300.00	450.00	-150.00
Other	100.00	150.00	100.00	150.00	100.00	150.00	300.00	450.00	-150.00
TOTAL	\$700.00	\$1,050.00	\$700.00	\$1,050.00	\$700.00	\$1,050.00	\$2,100.00	\$3,150.00	\$ (1,050.00)

As you build a budget, there are a few items you will want to keep in mind when planning your marketing budget allocation:

1. Identify all your marketing strategies and channels.
2. For each month, insert your projected expenses (how much you're allowing to spend on the strategy) and what your actual costs are.
3. Track it quarterly if necessary to ensure you are not over or under spending.

Where to Next?

Follow the steps in this plan to develop and create a tailored marketing plan for your own firm.

If you need assistance with all or some of the elements of your law firm marketing plan, please contact us.

