

2012

Legal Marketing
Survey Report



LEXBLOG

Greetings and welcome to the 2012 Legal Marketing Survey Report.

Avvo and LexBlog have partnered to publish their first annual review of the legal marketing industry. Drawing on survey results from more than 1,300 attorneys and legal marketers—for which we are extremely grateful—the 2012 Legal Marketing Survey Report provides an insightful look into how the legal community uses the Internet to drive business development.

Touching on topics that include social media, mobile marketing, search engine optimization and offline networking, this report is intended to provide attorneys and legal marketers with in-depth insight on how their peers in the legal community are marketing their services, what channels they value and where they still have questions. We hope it gives you ideas, sparks conversation and helps you determine what tools to use and outlets to explore in putting together your own marketing strategies.

We thank you for taking the time to read this report, we hope you find it insightful and welcome your feedback.

Mark Britton
Founder & CEO, Avvo

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Methodology

The data in the 2012 Legal Marketing Survey Report is derived from 1,325 respondents to an April 2012 online survey of lawyers and firms in the Avvo and LexBlog communities.

Survey Respondents

Here's the breakdown of the 1,325 survey respondents:

AGE

50-64	30-39	40-49	29 or younger	65+
32%	29%	27%	9%	1%

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

10-19	20-29	30+	5-9	2-4	Less than 2
26%	20%	20%	17%	12%	8%

SIZE OF FIRM

Solo Firm	2-9	100+	10-19	20-49	50-99
40%	40%	7%	6%	5%	2%

Executive Summary

Legal marketing has changed dramatically over the past five years. Today, law firms large and small are cutting back on traditional marketing tools and embracing digital activities and new technologies to market their people and services.

Networking and word-of-mouth relationships that lead to new business referrals continue to be pillars of legal marketing, but these tried and true tactics are being turbo-charged by social media activities and online marketing. Terms such as SEO, Twitter, Skype and LinkedIn now are as common in the marbled walls of a law firm as they once were in the funky workspaces of technology start-ups.

This is hardly news to any attorney or legal marketer charged with growing their business, and it's certainly not news to those of us at Avvo and LexBlog - we live in this environment daily. But in the 2012 Legal Marketing Survey Report, we wanted to dig deeper to understand what tools are being used, and how the legal industry is deploying technology to grow and prosper. To do this, Avvo and LexBlog surveyed their clients, made up of lawyers and legal marketers in April 2012. The response was excellent - more than 1,300 took the time to complete the survey. Clearly, we struck a nerve.

Some Key Findings

More time and money will be spent on marketing in 2012.

Whether it is online, offline, or both – attorneys are seeing more value in marketing initiatives. More than 60 percent of respondents plan to spend more time marketing in 2012 and 81 percent plan to spend the same or more on marketing in 2012. However, there is a large variance in how much of these budgets are spent, which will be explored further in this report.

As marketing budgets increase, so does the investment online.

With the decline in off-line and print advertising and growth in online advertising, 24 percent of respondents said they spend more than 75 percent of their marketing budgets online.

Lawyers are utilizing social media for business development.

In addition to practicing law, the majority of our respondents (77 percent) also are responsible for their own business development. 54 percent of those surveyed utilize social media tools to grow their business.

LinkedIn and Facebook are also being used to communicate with clients.

Aside from Avvo and LexBlog, LinkedIn (72 percent) and Facebook (50 percent) are the most popular social media channels for generating new business among those surveyed. Lawyers are also using these tools to communicate with existing clients, blurring the line between online and offline relationships.

Online legal marketing has breached the generational divide.

There was not a significant difference in age between those spending time and money online and participating in social media versus those who do not.

Those who don't participate in online marketing are still concerned about their online reputation.

Although 54 percent of respondents said they are utilizing social media tools, 72 percent said they are monitoring their online reputation.

Online Q&A is a key marketing channel.

The majority of survey respondents said that answering legal questions in online forums is an effective marketing channel. The minority who do not participate in online Q&A also tended to not use social media tools in general, citing concerns about potentially establishing an attorney/client relationship, as the reason why.

Blogs are valuable sources for professional development.

Although CLE courses and conferences are the most common methods of professional development, 56 percent said they read and follow blogs to grow their professional development.

While having an online presence is important, offline marketing is still a priority.

The key to marketing success is learning how to connect online and offline participation, and make them work together. Lawyers are still focused on offline relationships, referrals and in-person interactions. More than half of respondents speak at events and 75 percent attend conferences to network and generate new business.

Top 10 Ways Legal Marketing Has Changed in the Past Five Years

In the survey, we asked lawyers to tell us how legal marketing has changed the most in the past five years. Below are the top ten common themes in their responses:

- 1 Legal marketing has moved online. In fact most people responded with just two words: Social Media. It's very clear search engines (Google) and social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.) have dramatically changed the way lawyers market their services and the tools they use.
- 2 The widespread belief that a lawyer must have an online presence, and even more specifically, a website and a mobile presence, to be recognized among peers and clients.
- 3 Legal marketing is more competitive and aggressive, because the cost to market legal services is far less (or even free) than what it used to be when advertising was primarily offline. It has effectively leveled the playing field for all lawyers across firm size, years of experience and practice area.
- 4 The Yellow Pages are no longer relevant and print media has declined dramatically to where it no longer makes business sense for lawyers to spend money on those channels.
- 5 The adoption of new marketing channels has created chaos among bar associations who struggle with adapting new rules and regulations. This has led to confusion and uncertainty among lawyers.
- 6 Clients are smarter. People no longer rely on word of mouth – they do their own research when looking to hire an attorney, most often online, and come to appointments better educated and prepared with questions and requirements for establishing a client relationship.
- 7 Older lawyers and more traditional law firms are adapting to the online world. Where at one time digital media was dismissed or its use even banned, there's now an understanding of how important these tools are for the practice.
- 8 With so many different marketing tools, it is difficult to keep up. Lawyers feel overwhelmed.
- 9 Relationships and reputation still matter, but increasing the use of online channels to market services makes it harder to develop personal connections.
- 10 Along with the social media explosion, the rise in smart phone usage is also changing how potential clients find and contact, attorneys. Marketing plans now need to factor in mobile as a platform.

Results

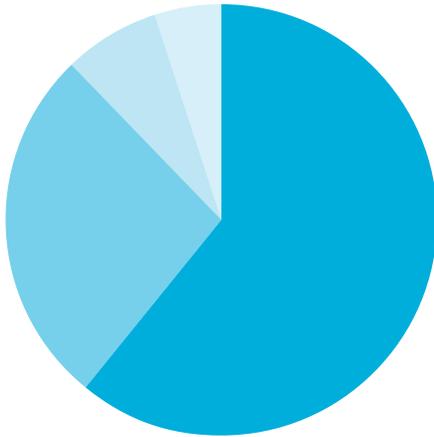
Who is Responsible for Marketing at Your Firm?

More than half (53%) responded that they handle their own marketing outreach. Of those who handle it on their own, 80% run a solo practice or are at a firm with less than 10 people. Lawyers, particularly at solo and small firms, are dedicating significant time to the business side of the practice.

For those who do not manage marketing at their firm, 24% report that it is a collaboration between marketers and attorneys. 20% of respondents use an internal marketing team or dedicated person and less than 2% use an outside marketing consultant.

***77% of lawyers are
involved with marketing
in their firm.***

Marketing Budget Trends in 2012



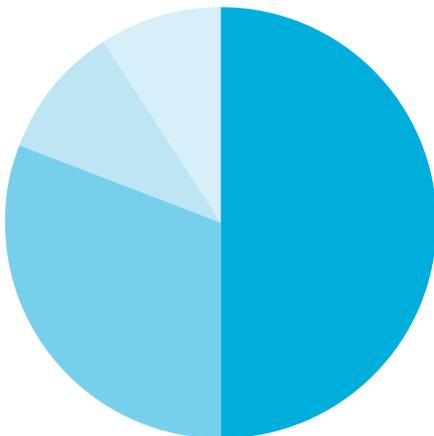
More than 60% of respondents plan to spend more time marketing in 2012.

61%
Spending
More Time

27%
Spending
Same
Amount of
Time

7%
Don't Know

5%
Spending
Less Time



50% of respondents plan to spend more money on marketing in 2012.

50%
Spending
More Money

31%
Spending
Same
Amount of
Money

10%
Don't Know

9%
Spending
Less Money

Who is making the most changes in time and money spent on marketing in 2012 vs. 2011?**44% ARE SPENDING MORE TIME AND MORE MONEY**

- 42% Running a solo firm
- 33% 30-39 years old
- 16% Business attorneys
- 24% Practicing 10-19 years

**23% ARE SPENDING MORE TIME AND LESS MONEY**

- 47% In a firm with 2-9 lawyers
- 35% 50-64 years old
- 26% Practicing 10-19 years
- 22% Bankruptcy/debt attorneys

Less than 1% are spending less time and more money and 3% are spending less time and less money.

Online marketing levels the playing field – free tools enable lawyers without much marketing budget to engage while the less expensive tools allow those who may not have big marketing budgets to do the same.

Despite the overall shift to online marketing channels, a quarter of all respondents still plan to spend less than 25% of their marketing budgets online.

- 25% spend less than 25% of marketing budget online
- 24% spend 75% or more of marketing budget online
- 17% spend between 50% and 74%
- 14% don't have a marketing budget
- 11% spend between 49% and 25%
- 9% don't know

Despite the increase in online marketing best practices across all industries, nearly a quarter of all respondents are spending very little money online. While this could be due to the use of free tools instead of paid online advertising platforms, it may also represent a lack of adoption among some lawyers.

On the opposite end, of those who spend 75% or more of their marketing budget online, 56% are solo attorneys. Only 2% are from firms with 20 or more lawyers.

25% of lawyers are still spending more than three quarters of their marketing budget online.

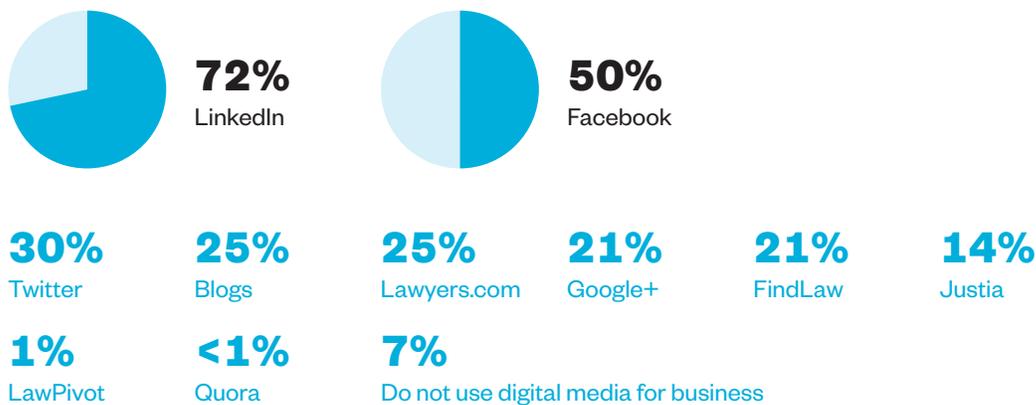
Business Development and Online Marketing Trends

Respondents were asked to select any number of applicable channels that drive new business, aside from referrals. The results showed that most new business is coming from a variety online sources such as lawyer directories, rating and review sites (56%), other free sources on the Internet (55%) and other social media sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube (21%). Many lawyers also attribute new business to their website and blogs .

Offline and paid online channels are not driving as much new business for lawyers. 17% is a result of print advertisements, and another 17% is from paid online advertisements, including search marketing, and 3% from TV advertisements.

LinkedIn and Facebook are the most popular social media channels.

In addition to Avvo and LexBlog, 72% cite LinkedIn is a primary social media channel they use..



Traffic to websites, social media and referrals are increasingly important metrics for measuring the success of marketing activities.

72%	referrals from previous clients
57%	traffic to website
57%	client retention
23%	traffic from online media sites & amount of social media engagement
15%	traffic to blog
13%	press coverage
12%	do not measure marketing success

In writing this survey question, we assumed the amount of new business coming through the door was an obvious metric to monitor with regard to marketing efforts. Taking it a step further, we wanted to know what else lawyers thinking about when trying to measure success? While there is a range of elements that lawyers find most important, it's interesting to note the high percentage of people focused on referrals from previous clients and client retention. Several people also responded through the write-in option with 'referrals from other attorneys'.

Regardless of all the new online tools and platforms, as a service-based business, referrals and maintaining relationships with the client base are top priorities when it comes to measuring marketing success. However, many of the online marketing channels can be utilized to achieve just that if implemented and executed appropriately.

It's important for lawyers to understand that online relationships can lead to offline, in-person relationships.

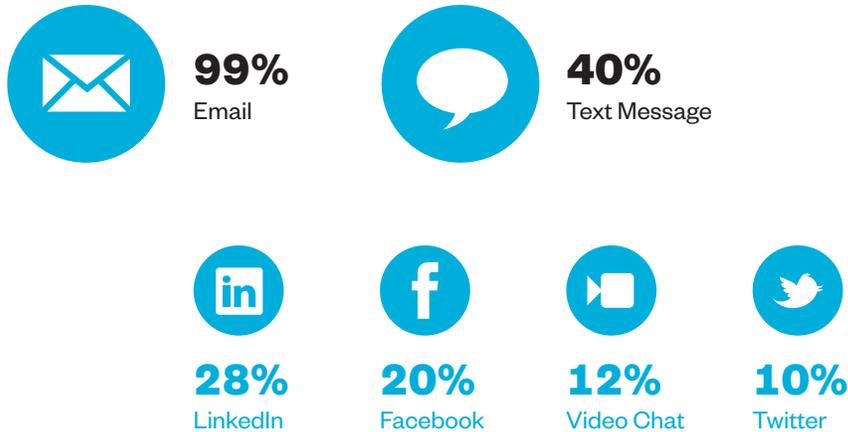
While conferences and other events top the list of methods for generating new business, more than half use social media.

75%	attend conferences
57%	speak at events
54%	participate in social media
26%	sponsor events
40%	write articles for journals and other publications
4%	not concerned with business development
4%	my business is big enough

Other responses added by individual lawyers include: interacting directly with attorneys in person, holding membership and leadership positions, being part of a philanthropic effort, attending bar association networking events, and volunteering within the community.

The common thread here is that despite the shift to marketing legal services across the Internet, most attorneys still understand the significance of meeting and interacting with people in person. Digital media channels cannot replace face-to-face encounters when it comes to business development activities.

While email still dominates as the digital media tool of choice for communicating with clients, use of text messaging and social media is significant.



We assumed that most attorneys still use the phone and meet with clients in person. This question was meant to uncover the other technology lawyers are using to conduct business. While email communication is not new, the higher percentage of lawyers using nontraditional methods of communication exemplifies the legal industry moving forward. Lawyers are more open to trying new things, and much of the change is being driven by the clients. Other reasons include efficiency, reassurance of security, and cost-savings. It's also an indication that lawyers may be getting more comfortable managing social media privacy settings.

Online reputation management is a top concern among lawyers who are using the Internet to market their services and expand their referral network.

72% of respondents reported they do monitor their online reputations, where 23% said they do not. (5% were not sure.) Of those who do keep track of what's being said about them on the Internet, 86% said they manage the process by frequently searching for their name online. 23% said they use online tools to monitor their online reputations and 12% reported they have someone else manage it for them. About one-fifth of the respondents said they take a proactive approach and create content to ensure positive and accurate information shows up in search results.

72% of respondents monitor their online reputations on a regular basis.

While many respondents have reported using different digital media tools, the website is the most important component of a lawyers' overall marketing mix.

When asked if they are happy with their website, 63% responded yes.

Of the 26% who were not satisfied with their website, 72% said they are not happy with design, 51% said they are not happy with usability and 61% are not happy with the site's SEO. Many others also added that they are not happy with their website because it does not attract traffic or drive business.

10% of respondents said they did not have a website at all, and the reasons provided were mostly because they do not have time to create or manage it (65%), do not want to spend money on it (38%) or do not believe they need a website to attract and retain business (26%).

Q&A has increasingly become a key marketing tool for attorneys.

It's not a surprise that of those who said yes, most answer questions on Avvo, because many respondents are from the Avvo community. Other websites that lawyers answer questions on include LinkedIn (26%), Lawyers.com (7%) and a few mentioned others including FindLaw (5%), Yahoo! (3%), LawPivot (2%), JustAnswers (2%) and Quora (1%).

Of those who do not answer legal questions online, the primary reason is a perceived risk associated with client/lawyer confidentiality (68%). 41% said they do not have the time.

As more lawyers take on marketing themselves, there's an appetite to learn more about online marketing, particularly search engine optimization (SEO) and how to effectively manage an online reputation.

What area of marketing would you like to learn more about?

44%	SEO
41%	online reputation management
32%	business development strategies
31%	social media
28%	blogging
28%	website analytics
27%	mobile optimization
26%	website design
24%	marketing and advertising ethics

Only a small number of respondents (4%) showed no interest in learning more about marketing and another 11% said they rely on others to know the most about marketing.

CLE courses and conferences still dominate as sources for professional development, but more than 50% read blogs.

91%	attend CLEs
74%	attend conferences
72%	read journals
56%	read and follow blogs
12%	follow influencers on Twitter
3%	use Flipboard/Zite

These responses show significant interest in learning from others online, but again, the value of attending in person events and conferences remains strong when it comes to professional development.

About Avvo

Avvo is the web's largest expert-only legal and health Q&A forum and professional directory, providing trusted answers to consumer health and legal questions every 9.7 seconds. In Avvo's free Q&A forum consumers can get free legal advice or free medical advice from more than 125,000 participating lawyers, doctors and dentists. Avvo's professional directory provides comprehensive profiles, patient and client reviews, peer endorsements and the unbiased, industry-recognized Avvo Rating for more than 90% of doctors, dentists and lawyers in the U.S. Launched in 2007, Avvo is privately held, with funding from Benchmark Capital, Ignition Partners and DAG Ventures. For more information, visit www.avvo.com.

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About LexBlog

As we enter our 8th year, LexBlog is working with over 7,000 lawyer-authors to build powerful Internet identities via blogs and other custom social media solutions to accelerate relationships and word-of-mouth that drive business development. The LexBlog network publishes and curates in ways that create incremental and multiple points of exposure for our client content. See: <http://lxbn.lexblog.com/>.

Our technology, methodology and industry relationships are all about building reputations, growing relational networks and positioning our clients as subject matter experts among the right amplifiers, influencers and thought leaders. This starts with content that engages. End result? High quality clients for lawyers.

From an operational standpoint, we simplify things for lawyers--LexBlog provides a turnkey solution that walks the lawyer through strategy, project management, design, development, ongoing training and support (including hosting and backup). After the blog or custom solution launches, we continue to support and train the lawyer to reach higher levels of engagement.

Connecting with LexBlog

To learn more about LexBlog visit www.lexblog.com or call Jenna Tomko, Client Development Coordinator, at (206) 973-5290

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