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Attorneys Online

By Madison Lockwood

Advertising is a relatively recent development in the legal profession, and not all law firms engage in it today. Nonetheless, it is advisable for every law firm to take note of the important resource the internet has become to consumers seeking products and services. Computers are a household standard, and the internet provides information on every profession, in formats from simple 'yellow page' listings to proprietary web pages with audio and video presentations. Even among lawyers and firms that chose not to advertise, the importance of the internet as a consumer resource should not be overlooked.

There is a large assortment of online listing vehicles for attorneys. A lawyer seeking to be included in commercial online attorney listings could pay to have his or her name inserted in such sites as findlaw.com, lawinfo.com, lawyers.com, or the many 'yellow pages' services now online. There are at least four national listing services for personal injury attorneys, and others for family law, criminal law and so forth. Association membership is a vehicle for specialty listings: the Consumer Attorneys Association, the National Association of Consumer Bankruptcy Attorneys, The Council of Parent Attorneys, etc.

Then there are the localized ecommerce service listings for regions that are just as aggressive in seeking exposure on the search engines. In short, an attorney could make a significant investment in listing services alone. However, a simple listing is a hit-and-miss proposition: there is nothing in a mere listing that invites interest from the shopper. A personalized web site for an attorney or a law firm is the highest and best use of the internet.

A law firm with its own hosted website can accomplish a number of things. Most people who are conducting a random search for an attorney are probably somewhat frightened, not certain of the law regarding their problem, and concerned about cost. Moreover, there exists today a widespread skepticism about attorneys, especially among the uninitiated. A hosted website can ease some of those uncertainties, and thus invite contact from the potential client.

The website can describe the firm's areas of legal focus. It can act as an educational tool, explaining the basics of selected areas of law and suggesting some initial steps for the potential client. Eventually

the client will end up in a lawyer's office somewhere, so providing some initial online education will give the law firm a benign and positive first impression.

A hosted website can provide an email template for an initial inquiry or invite a telephone call, 'no strings attached'. The website can suggest a few online sources that provide detailed explanations of various legal specialties. Finally, the law firm's web site can address the issue of payment and explain any options that might be available in that area.

As with other forms of media, defense and personal injury attorneys are the most likely to be found using the web as an advertising service. Most law firms with other sorts of specialties that use hosted websites tend to be a little more subtle, stressing the firm's longevity or stability, its successes and perhaps providing biographies of the firm's principal members.

A hosted web site can be an effective introductory tool for an attorney or a law firm. It can provide an initial level of comfort with the firm before any personal inquiries need be made. It can establish the firm's credentials in its chosen areas of legal specialization and it can make the process of initial contact a comfortable one by explaining how and when fee structures are applied.

Connecting a potential client with a hosted web site can, in part, be a function of the site through the use of keyword optimization. But it is probably more practical to assume that the initial reference will come from some other, more common source such as a former client or the local bar association. At that point, the hosted attorney's website becomes an effective outreach tool, minimizing the intimidating effect of a simple telephone number and a downtown address.

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Career Track: Becoming A Patent Attorney

By John Daye

Choosing a career as a specialized patent attorney in the U.S. means being an attorney who has the required qualifications to represent people and corporations in obtaining patents. A patent attorney acts

in all matters and procedures relating to patent law and practice. The career title carries different credentials and positions in various countries, so check for specifics needed.

Let's take a look at a few reasons why a career as a patent attorney is so rewarding.

Employment as a Patent Attorney is Challenging and Rewarding

Patents are involved in many areas of society; they are sought out by individuals as well as corporations. Patent attorneys are the foundation for getting the patent process completed.

Patent attorneys, also known as patent lawyers, act as advisors and advocates in the process, representing their clients and supporting their efforts with documentation and legal rights, obligations and suggestions counsel. They need a strong background in engineering or science.

Patent attorneys need to be licensed in order to represent parties in court. They need to be able to prepare trial work, think under the gun, and have solid speaking skills. Other skills needed are to be able to do research, prepare documentation and courtroom presentations.

Specifics of a Patent Attorney Career

The following list includes a few specifics related to a career as a patent attorney:

- Although most work is done in an office setting, law library or courtroom, patent work is also done on job sites. Travel may be a requirement. Lawyers in private practice often work irregular hours, while those on salaries average roughly 50 hours per week plus over–time during busy periods.
- Keeping up with the news, current events, and ever–changing laws in the patent industry are three "musts."
- In 2004, there were about 735,000 attorney jobs, 3 out of 4 in private practices, with most salaried patent attorneys working in the government, corporations, or with nonprofit organizations.
- Job opportunities for attorneys are projected to grow as fast as the average rate through 2014.

Learn more and see if a career in patent law is something you'd like to pursue. Check out

<http://www.patenteducationseries.com>

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