

CUTTING EDGE WEBSITE RENOVATION



by Eleanor Southers

Your website is your best brochure and your blog is your most effective device to keep in contact with your clients and colleagues.

Now that we have millions of websites to evaluate we have learned a few basic rules that are replacing the sort of random marketing that websites have produced. Among those are that it needs to be EXTREMELY USER FRIENDLY, have great EYE CANDY and allow the viewer to have a PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.

1. DETERMINE YOUR TARGET MARKET:

What group of people do you want to reach? Where do they live? What is their wealth status? Is there anything unusual about them?

Define your target market as narrowly as possible. Get it down to the ideal client that you would like to see walk in the door. See the difference between “has a family law problem” and “has a family law problem and is financially able to retain an attorney”. One target market is very different from the other. One narrows and one widens. Exactly who you want to call you and take your precious time needs to be carefully thought out.

2. DETERMINE THEIR “WEED”:

After you have determined your target market, you need to find your target Market’s weed. What would be the most troubling thing to them? What is the “weed” in their garden that you can get rid of. We have recently found out that lay client’s look for their “weed” in your home page. If they can relate to what you are saying you can help them with, they will be much more inclined to hire you than if you lay out in detail your credentials, etc. They assume since you are a lawyer, that you will know what to do.

So find out what troubles your clients. Ask old ones or pretend you are a client. What would you want to see on an attorney’s Home Page that would tell you he or she recognizes your exact problem.

You might also want to explore the circumstances that have brought on their need. In family law, it may be an unhappy or scary scene. In probate law, the actual need is a little different because the need is for the future. Being aware of these problems will help you to focus on what exactly is important to your future clients and create an up to date website.

3. WEBSITE HOME PAGE:

Simply and clearly restate your target market's "WEED". Use the magic words that will hit the search engines.

4. PROFILE PAGE:

First of all, this is where your picture goes. What kind of a picture should you have? The usual rule is that you dress like your client would expect a lawyer to dress if he or she were to appear in court. This does not mean that you flash the Rolex watch or other expensive jewelry. And for heaven sake, smile. Warm, friendly is what you are going for. Then, the most important part of this page is to tell your story here. Why did you become a lawyer? What type of cases have you handled? What has brought you joy as an attorney. This is not a time to spill your guts but to be sincere and forthright about why you are doing what you are doing. Don't brag. At the very end you can give a brief overview of your education and experience. Also do a link to a more extensive resume.

5. TESTIMONIALS:

Get people to write comments about their experience with you. Be sure to get their OK to use their full names. No one believes testimonials that are from Jane D.

6. PRACTICE AREA PAGES:

Simple, Simple, Simple. Again go back to the "Weed" and identify and then address the client's need in each area.

7. LINKS:

Make sure these are helpful and not just fill-ins.

Add in anything which will make the site more useful and allow for more in depth viewing if the reader wants it. This could be publications you have written. Helpful tips about your area of the law or your blog.

8. EYE CANDY

Your entire site has to be attractive and something that an audience wants to look at for more than 20 seconds. Choose your colors carefully. If you are a Probate Attorney you don't want a predominately black website.

Remember that most of your audience is visually oriented. A few are auditorally oriented and even less are tactilely oriented. So, if you have no sense of color or are unsure, get some help. But do this with guidance from you. What "feeling" do you want your viewers to bring away from your site. Is it calming? Is it aggressive? Is it exciting? It is very important that any designer or webmaster understand that you are at the helm and determining what is best for you.

9. THE FUTURE:

We are going to see a lot more video in websites. These will be either a quick introduction on the Home Page with the attorney addressing the audience or links to videos in different areas.

If you want to venture into this area, make sure that you get professional help if you need it. Make sure that you have the right light and camera equipment to do good production. Remember you are competing with 12 year olds that can whip out a professional looking *You Tube* rendition which will make them millions.

10. HINTS

If you want to create your own website try: www.redrockdomains.com AND go to "build a website"

In helping clients cope with the new technology I have found that David Scott's book, *NEW RULES OF MARKETING AND PR* to be very informative.

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