

How Lawyers Can Use Social Media To Control Your Online Presence



Cathy Mellett is a director of online marketing company Net Branding, which specialises in digital marketing strategies for companies, including law firms. LawFuel spoke with her about the social media landscape and how it is changing and how law firms can better use social media tools to acquire new clients and build their law firms.

[Cathy Mellett](#)* As Director of online marketing company Net Branding, I'm still constantly amazed when I think that, only a decade ago, social media was little more than a budding trend.

Back then, Facebook was still in its early stages of spreading around the world. Twitter had appeared, but many saw it merely as a rather pointless noise-maker. LinkedIn was essentially a digital resume or virtual Rolodex.

Back then we also didn't need to worry too much about customers sharing a negative experience. Sure, they might tell the standard dozen or so people with whom individuals tend to share such things, but that number was manageable.

Fast forward to the present, and now we simply login to our platform of choice, put our thoughts into words and soon they're growing legs of their own across the social sphere. Now, more than at any other time in human history, it's easy to reach people right across the planet.

We now have global voices. Unbelievable!

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These days, social media has not only become an integral part of our modern lifestyle, but it's an increasingly valuable business tool. And just think how much reach customers have today.

Now companies have an invested interest in the customer experience. Some with a hope of mitigating poor experiences and bad word-of-mouth. Others hope to encourage customers to share their positive experiences and become advocates.

Twitter is switching. It is moving from the “Social Networking” to the “News” channel in Apple’s iTunes App Store, becoming the top-ranked app in its category. Who’d have thought!

Live Video Streaming

Then there’s live video streaming. It’s not a new concept of course, but what is new is how accessible it has become, turning it into a key marketing and communication tool.

Live streaming is all about connecting and interacting with your audience in real time. It breaks down barriers and creates a connection that transcends traditional marketing limitations.

Just think, what would you remember more? Reading an interesting article or watching a video that lets you become part of the conversation? Well, it’s no surprise that video wins every time.

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And this is not just any video – there’s nothing more authentic and genuine as live video. And that’s exactly what audiences want – authenticity!

Live video streaming is now also quick to produce. For example, how long would it take you to shoot a video tip or answer a question? Two/three minutes?

That’s a lot less time than it takes to write a blog post. In today’s world of ever-shrinking attention spans, live video gives your audience a way to interact without them having to exert much energy or invest a lot of time.

Let’s recap why Facebook Live is a must in any business

- It provides your audience with a ‘window’ into your business. For example, use it to show your customers a behind-the-scenes look at how you create a product; or host interviews – interview your company’s employees, clients or important people in your niche. People love to see anything that’s usually off limits.
- It increases the level of ‘trust’ among your audience – as we said, there’s nothing more authentic than live video (as opposed to planned, pre-recorded and edited).
- Facebook Live is ‘livestream’ which means that people can engage with you in real-time. As the video is shooting, you see how many people are watching the video, as well as their names and comments.
- Your Facebook followers (and their friends) are more likely to see Facebook Live because Facebook is giving priority to Facebook Live in the newsfeed, so it’s showing it to more people than it would a regular photo or text-based post.
- As soon as it’s over, the video is automatically saved to your timeline.
- From there you can share it, tweet it, embed it in blog posts, or delete it.
- Facebook retains the video in the newsfeed (this is why it’s better than Periscope, where it disappears after 24 hours).

- *Use it to broadcast live events.* If you're at a conference or some other place others would love to be, simply share it live! And engage with the audience while you're filming. Walk and talk them through it, and answer questions they send in.
- Why do lawyers need to be 'on it' when it comes to social media?
- Social media has changed the way we communicate and connect on a personal level. And it's now increasingly relevant in communications between lawyers, their clients, and the courts.

Take Control of Your Online Presence

I cannot overstate the importance of taking control of your online presence. There are few better ways of doing so than with social media. Used carefully, social media can give your firm a voice, amplify your professional reputation, and help drive new business.

While many lawyers have yet to adopt a social media strategy, it's clear that it's becoming more popular with law firms and solo attorneys.

Most law firms have a LinkedIn presence. However, more than half have yet to set up a Facebook page, while few are on Twitter.

According to recent data, 95% of Millennials expect brands to have a Facebook presence. Even 87% of Gen X and 70% of people aged 45 to 60 agree that businesses should at least have a Facebook page. In general, people expect brands to be present on a social network. Lawyers are no exception to this expectation.

By engaging with people on social media, you can attract new clients all while keeping past clients interested in your services, should they require them again in the future.

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While relatively few law firms maintain a blog, many of those who do have said they've acquired new clients from blogging. And a fair percentage of firms say they've obtained new clients from social media.

Part of the reason for this could be due to the fact that more people are relying on social media to make purchasing decisions – and although lawyers aren't selling an online product, it's reasonable to assume many of these same people will look over a service provider's social media accounts before deciding who to work with.

Why Wait?

So what's holding you back? Why not simply start by filling out an online profile that makes it easy for people to get information about your business, including any contact information.

However, don't simply limit your online presence to social media. Before you rush headlong into social media, ask an online marketing company like Net Branding to help you assess your online brand – they'll take a pragmatic look at the whole spectrum of what's doable, then recommend what's practical for adding value in the case of your specific firm.

The important point to remember in all decisions about having an online presence is that you select the platform that you're comfortable with and that you have the budget and resources to keep it up to date.

Coming Soon – Cathy Mellett Talks About what Social Media Platforms to Choose

