

## **ASSET #6 A PROFESSIONAL WEBSITE**

Contributed by Henry Harlow

If you're like many of our Atticus clients, you may find the Internet marketing process confusing. But it's too important to not understand at least the basic concepts. You may have resisted (or know an attorney who resisted) getting an email address when electronic mail was a radical new concept. Now, prospective clients and current clients expect you to have e-mail *and* a Website, and may perceive that you are behind the times if you don't.

According to [www.InternetWorldStats.com](http://www.InternetWorldStats.com), in 2007, 70.9% of North Americans (in the USA and Canada) were using the Internet. Additionally, according to Reuters News Services, there were more than nine million legal services searches done on the Internet in 2007.

The importance of a website as part of your marketing plan should not be underestimated. A Website that is informative, professional, and easy to navigate will serve you now and for years to come.

The elements of a professional website are fairly straightforward and shouldn't be difficult to create if you are working with an experienced team. Your visitor's first impression of you and your firm will be formed in large part by what they see on the opening screen.

It should be the first page designed for your website as all the rest of the pages will retain many of the same design elements. It will set the “look” or the design template for the pages which follow. The look of your graphics should be consistent with any pre-existing firm logos, colors, symbols or namemarks already associated with the firm. In other words, the look of your letterhead, brochure, signage – your entire graphics package should be coordinated.

If you don’t have a logo or letterhead design, you might contract with a designer who specializes in law firm graphics to create one *prior* to creating your website. It may also be possible to have the website designer create one if they are experienced in doing so. You want a first-time visitor to your site to be able to immediately grasp, or get a clear sense of your firm’s mission right away.

In addition to what you’ve written, the look, layout, and design of your graphics convey that message and will generate the “feel” of your website. To help you envision the look you want to represent you, visit the websites of other law firms and note what you like and what you don’t. Have members of your team do the same. These examples and the notes you take will be invaluable when you give direction to your website designer.

The first, and indeed, all the pages in your website, should have a balance of text and blank space. You don’t want the page to appear too

cluttered. The viewer should be able to see what they are interested in quickly – or be able to navigate the site to get where they need to go easily. Clearly displayed search functions and drop-down menus that feature different options will ease this process. The look of your site sets up the initial impression a potential client perceives – don't lose your viewer's attention by making your site difficult to navigate. It must be user friendly to encourage visitors to want to contact you.

Since contacting you is the point of a good website, be sure your address, phone number and other relevant contact information is clearly and prominently displayed instead of buried at the bottom of your front page or on another page. This is one element you don't want to hide. There are several different approaches to enabling contact. Some firms just provide their phone number. Others prompt the visitor to send an instant message to the firm (only do this if you have someone monitoring and responding to incoming messages). Other firms opt for functions that allow a visitor to send an e-mail to the firm and some sites enable visitors to fill out a questionnaire or short intake form and submit it on line. The method you chose will depend on your budget and on your client's demographics. Some types of clients are comfortable sending e-mail while others operate with a greater sense of urgency (criminal clients, divorce clients, bankruptcy clients) and will want to pick up the phone and speak to someone immediately. Keep this in mind when enabling different forms of contact on your website. The least expensive, posting your phone number, is often the best for many firms.

## **Use A Professional**

While most attorneys should not take the time to learn the technical intricacies of Web design, it pays to know the basics so you can give informed direction to your technician and understand the perimeters of what's possible.

We highly recommend that you contract with a professional to assist you in all phases of your Internet marketing -- attempting to do it yourself is akin to someone going to a stationary store and buying a generic legal form to handle an important legal issue, when what they really need is a lawyer to draft the document to fit their needs.

### **What to look for in a Web consultant/vendor:**

It can be difficult to find a consultant who will do what you want, communicate with you frequently (and in English) and who will finish your project on time and within budget. Building a website is not unlike building a house and can be equally frustrating if you deal with the wrong people. Your consultant, who will act like a sort of general contractor, will subcontract the services of a Webmaster, keyword researcher, html writer, web designer, technician, and Website copywriter.

One way to locate a reputable consultant is to ask other attorneys in your community if they can recommend someone they have used locally. Once you have three candidates, get bids from each of them and be sure to compare the services each one claims they will include

in their proposal.

In advance of meeting with your candidates, ask to see other websites they have designed or implemented. If your candidate has designed websites for other attorneys or other professionals – they will have the best grasp of what you need. Also find out if their own Website has a good *Google PageRank* or an *Alexa* ranking. How highly their own pages are ranked will give you some clue as to their expertise.

As of this writing, vendors who specialize in Website design, hosting, content writing and search engine optimization specifically for attorneys are:

ConsultWebs.com Inc. [[www.consultwebs.com](http://www.consultwebs.com)]

Foster Web Marketing [[www.fosterwebmarketing.com](http://www.fosterwebmarketing.com)]

Einstein Law [[www.EinsteinLaw.com](http://www.EinsteinLaw.com)]

They typically charge from \$20,000 to \$30,000 and beyond, depending on what you build. Many of their fees are negotiable, so don't hesitate to ask for a discount.

### **Less Expensive Options**

You can build a smaller Internet marketing site with just bare bones but all the foundations [so you don't have to throw it away], for about \$9,000 or \$10,000 but it won't be as robust as the bigger sites and won't get as much traffic as the bigger option above. Later you can add pages (a must – a page per month for solo and small firms).

The under \$500 option is available via [www.guru.com](http://www.guru.com) (a virtual marketplace complete with a mediated process) where you can find cheap vendors (think India, Singapore, New Zealand, South Africa and Europeans here at \$12 to \$50 per hour) as well as value vendors (think \$50 to \$135 per hour in the USA).

The last option is to do it yourself via Site Sell at <http://service-selling.sitesell.com> for under \$300 - this is recommended only if you are in dire circumstances since your time is better spent on other referral building strategies instead of learning how to build a Website for yourself. If you can afford to spend about \$1599 plus \$49 per month, this service will build a 10-page Internet marketing site for you. This is a much better option than most vendors who will charge you that much just to build a Website with no Internet marketing abilities.

### **Upgrading An Existing Website**

If you have an existing website and want someone to come in, play the role of Webmaster, to help you improve its design or functionality, look for someone is *SBI Certified* and who will:

1. Assess your current Website in detail
2. Make a plan for how to improve your website using your current vendor
3. Manage your current vendor so they implement that plan
4. Make the recommendation, if needed, to leave your current

vendor and find you another one

Also be sure whoever is hosting your Website, has in their agreement statements regarding what they will do should the hosting equipment go down (one option is to transfer your site to another server), and what their remedies are for interruption of service for more than short periods of time (short meaning hours, at the most). If you have been with a host for some time and encounter frequent loss of service you should be able to leave that service with no penalties. Check your agreements carefully to be sure this point is included.

Whatever path you take, make certain that you own the copyright to your entire Website, including the content, code, graphics, text and photographs. Also, be sure the vendor warrants that it owns or has all permissions to use any copyrighted material that they use in building your Website.

### **Ethical Concerns**

Concerns with respect to bar rules and ethical considerations vary by state and can be confusing as websites present new challenges. Check with your bar if the advertising rules apply to Websites or blogs, and if there are any new rules for Websites or blogs. Some states may require very specific disclaimers on your site and you should be in compliance to avoid problems.

### **Funding A Website**

As of this writing, you can expect to spend from \$12,000 to \$15,000

to develop a professional Website, which should have 20 to 30 pages in total and feature “on site” SEO [search engine optimization] fully in place. The consultant’s fee should already include the services of a Webmaster, keyword researcher, html writer, web designer, technician, and Website copywriter. For a custom designed site add up to \$2,000. With video add another \$2,000 to \$5,000 [although sometimes college level students or trade school students, who are often very adept, will do this work for much less].

For \$800 to \$1,000 you can have what is commonly known as a “name-squeeze page” or an “ASK” site. Both of these options are indeed Internet marketing strategies. Another other option is a “brochure” site (maybe even under \$500) that is NOT an Internet marketing site [and you will likely throw it away at some point].

### **Having a Website Alone is Not Internet marketing**

While a Website is essential as an electronic business card it does nothing on its own; you must be strategic in planning its usefulness as part of your overall marketing plan. A website can serve your marketing goals in many different ways: it can add to top-of-mind awareness; it can act as a brochure for your services; it can be a helpful resource for new and existing clients; it can showcase the skills of its attorneys and it can attract new clients because it paints a picture of your firm as the one to hire for the best results.

When you integrate your website into your overall marketing plan, the goals you set for yourself may look something like this:



- Establish a presence on the internet with a basic site that will serve as an electronic business card. (This is perfect for those who are just getting started, have no internet presence whatsoever and have clients who are not technologically savvy)
- Take our existing website and double the amount of content on it, from 10 pages to 20 pages, using a keyword search strategy to dictate some of the content
- Take our existing website and give it a new look so that it better represents our practice
- Contract with an SEO company to increase our rankings
- Take an existing site and add a blog to increase our rankings due to the frequent addition of new content

Accompanying any goal you set should be a *specific, measurable result* such as:

- Our firm will send out 500 announcements to clients and referral sources announcing our new website this year

- We will receive 10 new clients directly attributable to the website this year
- Our website will consistently rank within the top 5 on Google this year
- The number of hits on our website will increase from 25 a month to 50 a month by the end of the year

Your competitors on the Internet are those people who are trying to rank high with the search engines for the same keywords that you are using. You have a great opportunity to get out in front of the pack and stay there through search engine optimization (SEO) which means your website is one of the first listed when a search is conducted.

### **Keywords**

The specific words, *called keywords*, your prospective clients are using to type in to their browser to search for specific legal services. This means you must be in touch with what your targeted client is concerned about and write content that contains your top keywords to learn more in depth about keyword optimization visit [www.Wordtracker.com](http://www.Wordtracker.com) for their Keyword Research Guide.

If you don't begin with keywords in the beginning and build appropriately from that point forward you are going to have to start

the process from the beginning. Sometimes it is better to throw it all away and start over. Sometimes you can use parts of what you have and sometimes a lot of what you have in place now. Always you are going to need to run your keyword research first and then decide from there what needs to be done next.

### **Links:**

The difference that the amount of links you have on your site can make in increasing your ranking is this: the more the better. And those links should be to other high-ranking sites, if possible.

### **Search Engines:**

The entities that scan all available websites looking for the best keyword match, once a prospective client has keyed them in. When a potential client types “divorce lawyer in Seattle” or “elder law attorney in Orlando,” into their Google or MSN search function, search engines are activated, they fan out and immediately gather all the websites with these keywords. In a matter of seconds a page of results comes up on the screen containing a list of websites.

The *SEO* process, otherwise known as *search engine optimization*, results in your website being among the *first* shown on the search results page. Why is this important? People are more likely to click on those websites that appear first, or early, on the search page. We’ll go into this further, but for now, know that every law firm should be concerned about their position, otherwise known as their ranking, and try to optimize it as much as possible.

## **Secondary Search Engines**

Never hire a company or buy some software that says they will submit your site to hundreds or thousands of search engines. You may need to submit to 3 to 5 carefully selected directory search engines where a live human editor looks at your site and then lists it on the site. The reason you would list on these types of directory search engines is for the links they provide you to theirs and other sites.-Here are some of these types of directories:

[www.business.com](http://www.business.com)

[www.avivadirectory.com](http://www.avivadirectory.com)

[www.ezilon.com](http://www.ezilon.com)

<http://botw.org>

<http://dir.yahoo.com>

[www.dmoz.org](http://www.dmoz.org) (free but tough to get in often)

**Legal Directories** are places like FindLaw.com, Lawyers.com, Justia.com, and InjuryBoard.com, which are huge sites that list hundreds of legal Websites. In addition to being expensive, your listing is likely to get lost here -- your name and website comes up with all your competitors. We believe you are not likely to get a great return on your investment dollars using this strategy. It is far better to invest that money in your own Internet marketing that drives traffic to your own site where the visitor sees you and only you.

## **Visitors: Unique vs. Regular**

Visitors are actual users who view your web pages. Unique visitors are users who visit your website once during a defined time period – either a day, week or month. A unique visitor is counted by using cookies - information stored on a user's computer by a Web site so the individual's preferences are remembered for future requests. By contrast, regular visitors are users who visit your website more than once during a defined time period. It is valuable for attorneys to create “visitor loyalty” with regular visitors, as those who regularly view your site often mention it to friends, family and colleagues. This can easily create a “traffic virus”, which is born when people mention your website to others, who then spread the word and so on. This viral effect increases your number of visitors and thus drives more traffic to your website. It may sound strange, but word-of-mouth is the primary source of traffic for many larger sites and the reason they have become what they are today.

## **Bounce Rate**

A bounce rate is a measurement of the number of visitors that enter your site and leave - typically within the first 5 seconds - without viewing another page. Web marketers use bounce rate to measure visit quality – a high bounce rate generally indicates that site entrance pages aren't relevant to your visitors. You can reduce bounce rates by creating landing pages that are interesting to prospective visitors. The more compelling your entrance page, the more visitors are likely to stay on your site.

## **Offerings**

These are newsletters, white papers, the first few chapters of a book you are writing, a downloadable eBook, free consultations, self tests -- anything that you can offer to your site visitors that enrolls them into giving you permission to market to them via their first name and email address.

## ***Pay Per Click***

Pay per click advertising is relevant to your firm only if you are in a highly competitive practice area. Asbestos attorneys, and those firms that handle large class action suits generate such a high returns on their cases that they pay to have their site ranked above the rest on a search page. Sometimes the websites are listed separately, in a box above the rest of the listings, but they are always ranked high. If you are interested in this, and have a great deal of money to spend, look for a website consulting company who knows your market and can guide you appropriately.

## **Selecting a Domain Name**

Your domain name affects your page ranking to some extent. Ideally, the name should include one of your main keywords, or at least describe what you do. Contrary to what you may believe, using the name of your firm is not always wise as it may not fit what your prospective clients are keying in. Sometimes law firm names are not memorable and are often difficult to spell. Your keyword research can help you select a good domain name as well as a review of the names

your competitors are using which maintain a high ranking.

### **Including audio or video on your Website**

A visual or audio presentation connects with your visitor more intimately than simple text accompanied by a static picture. Adding audio and/or video to your site makes it more memorable because it requires more of the viewer's brain to process, and embeds your message deeper into their minds with a greater chance of retention in the future. If the audio is running while a visitor is scanning your site, so much the better.

By including audio or video you deliver a clear message to your visitor before they have contacted you. This aids your conversion of the client during the intake meeting because you can continue to play off of an reinforce the earlier message. Audio and video of you speaking in some capacity brings your personality forward in ways the written word cannot and gives clients a more personal sense of who you are. As an added advantage, having audio on your site differentiates it from other attorneys.

### **Internet marketing basics**

One of the most commonly accepted models of Internet marketing is CTPM, developed by Ken Evoy M.D. in 1997. This model works because it takes into consideration the habits and tendencies of those who search the internet, understands how to maximize the chances

your website will be found and recognizes what those searching want to find.

**C** stands for *content* – content that is current and relevant because it addresses the problems of your potential clients. How do you determine what is in demand? You figure this out from the keyword research that is done. If you are a family law attorney, for example, you might post articles you have published on topics such as, “How to Help Children Through the Divorce Process”, or “How to How To Adopt Children Using an Attorney”. You want to focus on topics your potential clients might be searching for as they surf the internet.

**T** stands for *traffic* – you attract targeted traffic from the keywords embedded in your site. This means that clients who are searching the internet for help and information will be drawn to your site because text is loaded with specific keywords they will use in their search.

**P** is for *pre-sell* – pre-sell refers to some sort of offer that the targeted traffic, your potential clients, may be interested in. Such things as newsletters, free article or information downloads, e-books, auto responders, audio, video, recordings of teleclasses – or invitations to live conference calls, etc.

**M** is *monetize* – this is where you convert the prospective clients to clients.

You or your advisor will need to write “keyword optimized” content to each of your top 20 keywords, in other words write your content in



the way that search engines want to see it so they rank you higher than your competitors. Your content should fit together in a site plan (the order your pages will appear and how they link to one another) that has an appropriate pyramid type structure. This pyramid type structure includes your home page (the peak of the pyramid) themed keyword phrase being supported by all the tier two pages (the next layer of the pyramid) and their tier three pages (usually the base of your pyramid, although you can go deeper), resulting in higher rankings for all of your pages on your site.

You don't have to do anything to get your web pages ranked; this happens when the search engines send out their "spiders," mechanisms for collecting and matching data, to read your site. Google PageRank is the standard on the Internet for success, since over 50% of the people on the Internet go to Google to do their searching. The Google PR system ranges from 0 to 10, with 10 being high and 0 being low. Approximately 98% of all internet sites are ranked 0, 1, or 2. The other major search engines (Yahoo, MSN and ASK) use similar models as Google. Consequently, if you rank high at Google you will rank high anywhere.

To check your ranking we suggest you install a 'Google Tool Bar.' This is a very useful tool that allows you to see the Google page ranking they have given you and every other Webpage you visit. It's available at: [http://toolbar.google.com/T4/index\\_pack.html](http://toolbar.google.com/T4/index_pack.html)

The Firefox web browser has a similar extension with the "Compete"

Toolbar. Compete is another great way to track a site's traffic and site history.

## **Marketing Your Website**

Once your Website is created and 'up' on the Internet, you must drive traffic to it in order for it to be viewed by prospective clients. The first method of attracting people to your site we've covered in detail already with the discussion of *search engine optimization*. But there are other methods to get people to view your site, using both traditional means and on-line opportunities. Some of the major ways to do this are listed below:

**Press Releases:** writing about a newsworthy event is covered in detail in the public relations asset, but instead of sending a press release that is basically an e-mail, there are websites that allow you to send releases which are embedded with links and upgraded with video capability. Such a service is provided by PRWeb, through their website: [www.prweb.com/sharenews.php](http://www.prweb.com/sharenews.php). This is one of the best ways to gain one way links and drive traffic to your site.

## **E-Newsletter Marketing**

Many firms recognize the importance of staying in touch with their clients during and after their matter or case is complete. A great way to do this is to create a newsletter which can be e-mailed to clients if you believe they would be receptive to receiving your news (clients of criminal attorneys or bankruptcy attorneys to name just two, are sometimes sensitive about receiving e-mails that broadcast their

association with certain law firms – especially if their only e-mail account is at their workplace). The first page of the newsletter contains the first couple of paragraphs of several articles. If one of these articles attracts the reader and they want to read further, they can click on a link that says, *Read more about this*, or something to that effect. Once the reader clicks on the link they are taken to the law firm’s website where they can complete the article and have ample opportunity to explore the website further if they wish.

Some on-line newsletter systems provide templates for use in designing these kinds of e-mails. One that provides a great deal of tracking information is called “Constant Contact”. It has been used widely by our clients and indeed many in the corporate world, preferred because it will track how many people received the newsletter, how many deliveries failed, how many people clicked on the newsletter for further information and how many people who clicked on the link then browsed through the website. All good information when you are trying to conduct an internet marketing campaign. You can’t manage what you don’t measure.

### **Name-Squeeze Pages**

This is a strategy that can be used with just a single page or as a page on your Website. The sole purpose of the page is to get the name and email address of the visitor. Sometimes the name-squeeze page is used as an entry into a Website – unless you enter your name and email, you aren’t allowed in. This strategy is typically used with very *content rich* sites, meaning that the website is authentically used as a

resource because it contains a great deal of information. Name-squeeze pages get double digit conversion rates of visitors while regular pages get about 1 or 2 percent. A well done name-squeeze page, geared to the right targets and combined with the right offer, can get more than 50% response making them very effective.

### **Social Networking Sites**

This option involves a considerable amount of time so it is not one to take on lightly. It is a bit like joining a service club. Only join if you intend to participate and have a passion for the vision of the community. You will need to spend regular time working the network on the site. Also, it depends on your practice area as to what site might be good for you. These sites usually have systems for chat, voice chat, messaging, email, posting, blogging, video, discussion groups, etc. to communicate with other members. For Business to business practice areas visit:

[www.Linkedin.com](http://www.Linkedin.com) (biggest by far)

[www.networkingforprofessionals.com](http://www.networkingforprofessionals.com)

[www.moli.com](http://www.moli.com)

[www.perfectbusiness.com](http://www.perfectbusiness.com)

For law firms who seek younger clients who are more likely to use social networking sites, look here:

[www.Facebook.com](http://www.Facebook.com)

[www.MySpace.com](http://www.MySpace.com)

[www.Twitter.com](http://www.Twitter.com)

Facebook is currently the #1 most used social networking site among worldwide active users, according to a February 2009 study by Compete.com. The site allows users join networks defined by city, workplace, school, and region to connect and interact with other people. Facebook enables you to create an individual profile which allows people to get a glimpse of who you are. To maximize the potential of Facebook, attorneys should create a profile that is both accessible and professional. The profile should include a photo of themselves, a brief summary, and a link back to their firm's website.

Next to Facebook, Twitter is one of the fastest-growing social networking sites on the Internet. Twitter is a free site that allows its users to post messages of up to 140 characters known as "tweets".

Tweets can range in both length and content, and can include such topics as:

1. Publicizing an upcoming speaking event

Ex. "Looking forward to speaking at the AR Bar Assoc Conference on 10/13."

2. Linking back to a blog post

Ex. "Check out today's commentary on recent Supreme Court decisions. <http://url.com/myblogpost>"

3. Responding to (known as “@ replying”) a follower's query

Ex. "@lawstudent2011 for more information, look at the animal legal defense fund"

4. Recommending a book or recently read article

Ex. "Great article in Houston Chronicle today! Check it out at <http://url.com>"

Twitter allows you to build a network of dedicated information providers who can offer immediate feedback to questions. By following the leaders in their fields, an attorney can track new trends in the law and participate in shaping those trends.

Twitter functions as a research tool which gives attorneys distinctive access to individuals she or he might never meet in person.

Sites such as Tweetlaw and Legalbirds make this access even easier by functioning as databases for legal professionals. These sites aggregate the most recent tweets posted by those in the legal field, and enable you to sort through these posts by category (i.e. ‘environmental law’, ‘cyber law’, ‘small law firm’). They are great resources for legal

professionals who are interested in becoming more active in social networking, and want to be part of discussions relevant to their interests or specific practice.

### **List Serves or Discussion Groups**

These are functions on various websites that allow you to join and participate in a discussion group on topics related to your practice area. Use good 'netiquette' and do not overtly recruit clients but do have a robust signature line on each of your posts that includes your Website link. For more information visit:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/>

<http://groups.google.com/grphp?hl=en&tab=wg>

### **The Power of Blogging**

The ABA reports there are 70,000 new blogs posted online each day and that about 6% of lawyers have a blog.

Blogs are relatively easy and inexpensive to build and few technical skills are needed by those doing the writing. For those of you not familiar with the term, a "blogger" has a special site on the Internet – most professionals make them a part of their Website -- where they post comments, opinions and ideas.

Some of this commentary is lengthy, formally organized and written

much like article in a newspaper or magazine – in fact, often journalists who work for large publications maintain blogs so their readers can read more in-depth commentary when they expand on a topic. Much of the writing at this level complies with the normal rules of grammar and punctuation. Others write commentary that is looser and more like a like a personal e-mail producing text that reads like a quick recording of their thoughts, ideas or opinions. Others approach their blogs like they would a diary, chronicling their daily experiences.

Despite its informal approach and relatively new form of public media, many bloggers boast huge followings and their ability to influence public opinion should not be underestimated. The audiences of some bloggers eclipse those of traditional media, and easily outstrip the readership of many newspapers.

How can a law firm use a blog to their advantage? According to Nora Bergman, Atticus coach and former director of the St. Petersburg Bar Association, by using it as a tool to advocate for their clients, attorneys can demonstrate their expertise and encourage dialogue. “It’s not appropriate for all firms to use blogging as a strategy to attract clients, but for some it is another means of adding to their internet marketing plan,” says Bergman. As a public relations tool, “it must be appropriate for the type of clients the law firm wants to attract. Those who practice in the areas of intellectual property, patents, trademark and entertainment law, to name just a few, have early-adopting, technically sophisticated clients who are more likely to use the internet to search for legal services.”



Attorneys who seek a forum for expressing their opinions and expertise can also use blogs to cultivate other attorneys; again, this is practice-area dependent.

There are some blogging programs that are set up to allow the reader to post feedback on the article, opinion or views posted. If you are considering starting a blog, it's important to think carefully about allowing this function. If a blog's intended use is to cultivate an exchange of views and the feedback is monitored and responded to frequently – it's a good idea to employ the feedback function. If feedback isn't welcome or won't be monitored enough, don't allow readers to post comments. Negative, insulting or misleading comments may sometimes be written and should not be left there, unmonitored, for any visitor to read.

One advantage of blogging is that the fresh content posted on a blog that is part of a law firm Website will often boost the Website's ranking. While search engine optimization has many components one thing that's easy to understand about them is this: search engines scan for new material and any Website that has recently been updated with new content is automatically ranked higher than those that haven't. This means when a potential client searches for a practice like yours, your Website shows up closer to the top of the search results page.

Blogging also incorporates the use of "tags". In blogging, a "tag" is a

keyword or term assigned to an entry that helps categorize it and allows it to be found again by browsing or searching. A blog may have a sidebar listing all the tags in use on that blog, with each tag leading to an index page. By looking through the index of tags, the average user can instantly find what she or he is looking for in an entry, rather than searching through the user's history to find what it is that s/he wants.

Another advantage of blogging is synchronicity. One example of this is linking to your Twitter account. By linking to Twitter, you are able to amplify your blog's presence on the web. Visitors to your blog will be able to connect, or "follow" you on Twitter, thereby driving your blog traffic and page views.

Many blogging sites are easy to use. They allow the user to customize and personalize a certain design, moderate comments, and upload and store multimedia.

The following sites offer such services, and are completely free, mainstream and popular:

WordPress ([www.wordpress.org](http://www.wordpress.org))

BlogSpot ([www.blogspot.com](http://www.blogspot.com))

All together, having a well-designed website, whether or not it includes a blog, is how you acquire this asset. It must broadcast your firm's brand and educate potential clients about who you are, who you

serve, and the problems you solve. It should attract clients and inform referral sources. For many of you it is a very important marketing tool and should be considered by every firm, no matter how small.

In the next section, we address the many ways you can use Public Relations to help you attract clients, polish your firm's reputation and raise your profile in the community.