

TECHNOLOGY IN MARKETING

How to Drive Traffic To a New Niche Law Blog

By Joshua Fruchter

Blogging is hot among lawyers, but for every lawyer who launches a new blog, only a small percentage ultimately develop high levels of traffic and a loyal leadership. The question thus arises: What does it take to successfully launch a new law blog?

THE 'NICHE'

In general, it is far better to blog on a "niche" topic where there is less competition (*e.g.*, international tax transfer law) than a broad subject (*e.g.*, personal injury law), where there is far more blogging activity. When it comes to blogging, the adage "there are riches in niches" holds true.

Once a lawyer selects a niche practice to be the focus of his or her blog, the next question is whether he or she wants to "own" the niche? That is, become a "guru" in that particular practice area. Or is the goal more modestly to enhance the lawyer's reputation for expertise among their peers and the media? As will be discussed, different objectives require different tactics.

BUILDING TRAFFIC

As a general rule of thumb, according to the ProBlogger (an excellent source of blogging strategies and tactics,) "[t]he best way to build traffic for a new niche blog is to have lots of content and to post it regularly." More specifically, to help generate steady traffic and attract loyal readers, a blogging law-

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yer needs to develop a publication schedule consistent with his or her blogging objective, and then stick to it.

For instance, if you want to become a "rock star" in your niche (the "go-to" resource, so to speak, in a particular "niche" practice area), then you need to aim to post new content every day (and maybe even more than once a day). The sheer amount of content that this frequency generates will eventually establish you as an authority in your niche (but see the crucial distinction between "feature" posts and "quickie" posts further below).

Less ambitiously, if you simply want to develop a reputation for expertise and thought leadership among your peers and the media, then posting two to three times a week should work.

Simply looking for a creative outlet? Then post once or twice a week.

FEATURES AND QUICKIES

Lawyer bloggers also need to understand that there are two kinds of posts: features and quickies (my term). Features are long posts that focus on a subject and develop it fully in an essay-like style. In contrast, a "quickie" is a short post, generally two-three paragraphs in length, that can be digested quickly. For example, a short post might offer a blogger's "two cents" on some new development or trend, and then link to an article on a media Web site for the full story.

The distinction between features and short posts is actually quite critical since bloggers need to understand that they are actually publishing for two different audiences.

YOUR AUDIENCE

The first audience is Google (and other search engines to a lesser extent). To develop the search engine visibility necessary to drive increasing traffic to your law blog, frequency is key. This is because Google has a bias toward fresh content. So the more frequently

you publish "niche" content to your blog, the more quickly Google will notice it, and start ranking it highly for search queries related to your niche.

But realistically, when striving for frequency, you're not going to be able to publish a new essay — *i.e.*, "feature post" — each day. In fact, attempting to do so could easily lead to burnout (and keep you from other important work — like servicing clients). Instead, for purposes of attracting Google's attention, short posts published frequently should do the trick.

But then there's the second audience: your peers and the media. In terms of developing a reputation for expertise and thought leadership, frequent short posts offering only superficial treatment of various topics won't satisfactorily demonstrate the kind of deep mastery of your niche that sophisticated readers are looking for. For those folks, you need to periodically publish an "essay" that covers a subject thoroughly and demonstrates a grasp of nuances and meaningful analysis of complexities. Those are the kinds of posts that will earn you the respect of your peers and attract the attention of journalists looking for experts.

In terms of a ratio, one or two features per week should be adequate with the balance consisting of small posts published at a frequency consistent with your blogging objective (as per above).



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