



# Legal Marketing SEO: Power Techniques to Rank Better and Faster

Mounting competition in the digital marketing space has made it increasingly harder to stand out. Compounding these difficulties are the special challenges faced by law firms. As a highly regulated industry that grapples with a complex subject matter, legal marketers must excel in concise yet persuasive communication.

Over the past few decades, search engine optimization (SEO) has emerged as a central pillar of legal marketing strategy. Legal marketing SEO acts as a potent form of organic advertising. Mastering this domain area can help land your website on the front page of Google's search engine results page (SERP).

Considering that the first result on Google's SERP captures more than a quarter of all internet searchers and that virtually no one travels beyond

the first page of Google, it's vital that you get your website as high up on Google's SERP as possible [1]. With the traditional forms of advertising fading away, such as phone books and radio ads, and the rapid adoption of smartphones and other mobile devices mastering SEO has never been more important.

Despite the obvious advantages of embracing an SEO strategy, many law firms have failed to adequately pursue any consistent marketing practices. This holds especially true for solo practitioners and smaller firms. According to the American Bar Association's 2021 Websites and Marketing report [2]:

**45%**

of law firms with  
10 to 49 lawyers  
did not have a  
marketing budget in  
2021

**65%**

of law firms with two  
to nine lawyers did not  
have a marketing budget  
in 2021

**93%**

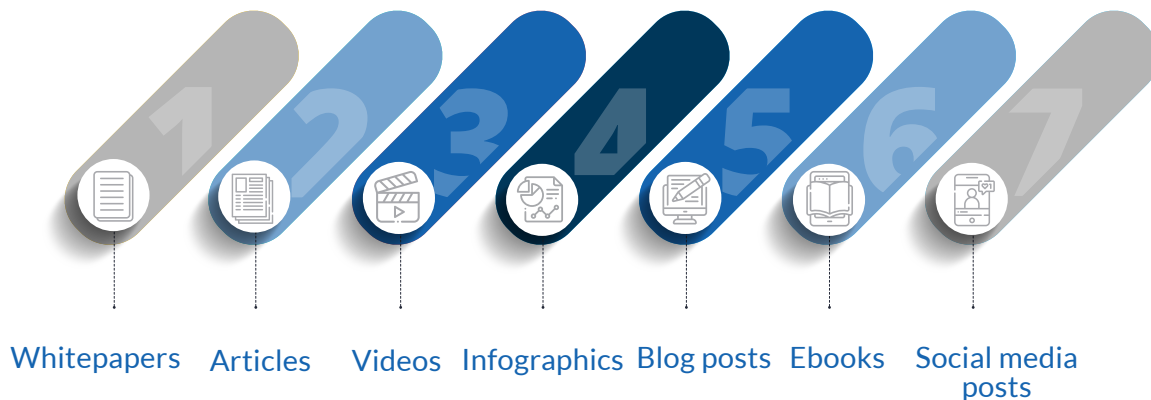
of solo practitioners did  
not have a marketing  
budget in 2021

As with so many other areas in life, failing to plan is planning to fail. All too often, small businesses look at marketing as a cost center without any immediate or obvious advantages. However, this approach fails to take a long view. A comprehensive, data-driven marketing plan is one of the most effective ways that any business can drive growth over time.



# What Is Content Marketing?

Content marketing refers to the practice of creating and disseminating informative content, such as:



With content marketing, you can build brand awareness, establish yourself as an authority in your field, and convert leads into customers. Content marketing differs from other forms of marketing in that it focuses on driving organic growth to your website. As you build up blog posts on your website, you may find yourself rising on Google's SERP.

Other forms of shareable content like whitepapers, infographics, and social media posts can drive search traffic to your website. Just remember to include a clear link back to your website.

## Organic vs. Paid Traffic

You may be familiar with pay-per-click (PPC) advertising strategies. PPC campaigns can get your website to the front page of Google in a short amount of time. However, once you stop the campaign, your visibility plummets just as swiftly. By contrast, SEO content takes a longer time frame to build up. Once you've achieved a critical mass, it requires little effort to maintain.

Over the long run, content marketing is often cheaper and more effective than PPC ads. You may still choose to use PPC ads to achieve certain goals. For example, if you want to advertise a time-sensitive matter, or if you're waiting for your website to float up the Google search rankings. Ultimately, the two are complementary tools that are used together to achieve the best results.



## It Touches on All Aspects of the Customer Journey

The customer journey is a popular marketing concept that divides the different stages a customer goes through during purchasing. While not all customers follow a linear path from awareness to retention, it remains a powerful explanatory tool for consumer behavior. The customer journey consists of the following five steps [4].



### 1.Awareness

During the awareness phase, you're exposing the customer to your brand. When it comes to legal marketing SEO, this could take the form of a blog post or an article touching on a particular pain point. For example, if you wrote an article about the top three things to do after you get a DUI, you might capture the attention of individuals in need of DUI legal representation.

### 2.Consideration

During the consideration phase, the customer is mulling over whether to make a purchase. Including a call to action (CTA) at the end of your article can help users segue into your sales pitch. Here you're free to outline the advantages offered by your law firm.


Case studies are a potent form of content marketing during the consideration phase. By highlighting your past successes, you're providing potential customers with important information regarding your prowess as a lawyer. While past results are not guarantees of future performance, establishing a strong track record is one of the best ways of making yourself stand out from the competition.



### 3. Purchase

SEO has a major role to play during the purchasing process. You should have a link in every CTA leading to your landing page. In 2023, there's no excuse not to give your prospective clients multiple ways of setting up a consultation or appointment. Only 17% of attorneys let clients sign up for consultations through their websites [2]. This represents a point of unnecessary friction.

You want to remain accessible to capture the widest possible number of clientele. Other factors to help drive leads directly toward your landing page include:

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- **Technical SEO** optimizes the technical facets of a website for Google search. Google looks at factors, such as speed, load time, architecture, internal linking structure, mobile-friendly features, cybersecurity, and more. Ensuring that your website has solid technical SEO helps get it in front of more eyes. Equally important, a webpage optimized for technical SEO has a lower bounce rate and a higher conversion rate compared to a non-optimized page ceteris paribus [5].
  - **On-page SEO** optimizes the structure and content of a website for Google search. Google ranks websites with features like title tags, meta descriptions, headers, optimized images, relevant keywords, and high-quality content. Structuring your landing page with on-page SEO factors helps you get it in front of more eyes while also increasing your conversion rate.

### 4. Retention

Generally speaking, lawyers tend to be less concerned with customer retention than other service providers. Some individuals require representation for multiple DUIs, divorces, or bankruptcies, but in practice, these cases tend to be few and far apart.

However, in certain areas of law, such as contract creation, or commercial real estate, retention carries greater importance. Providing a clean and user-friendly website interface helps you retain customers over the long haul.

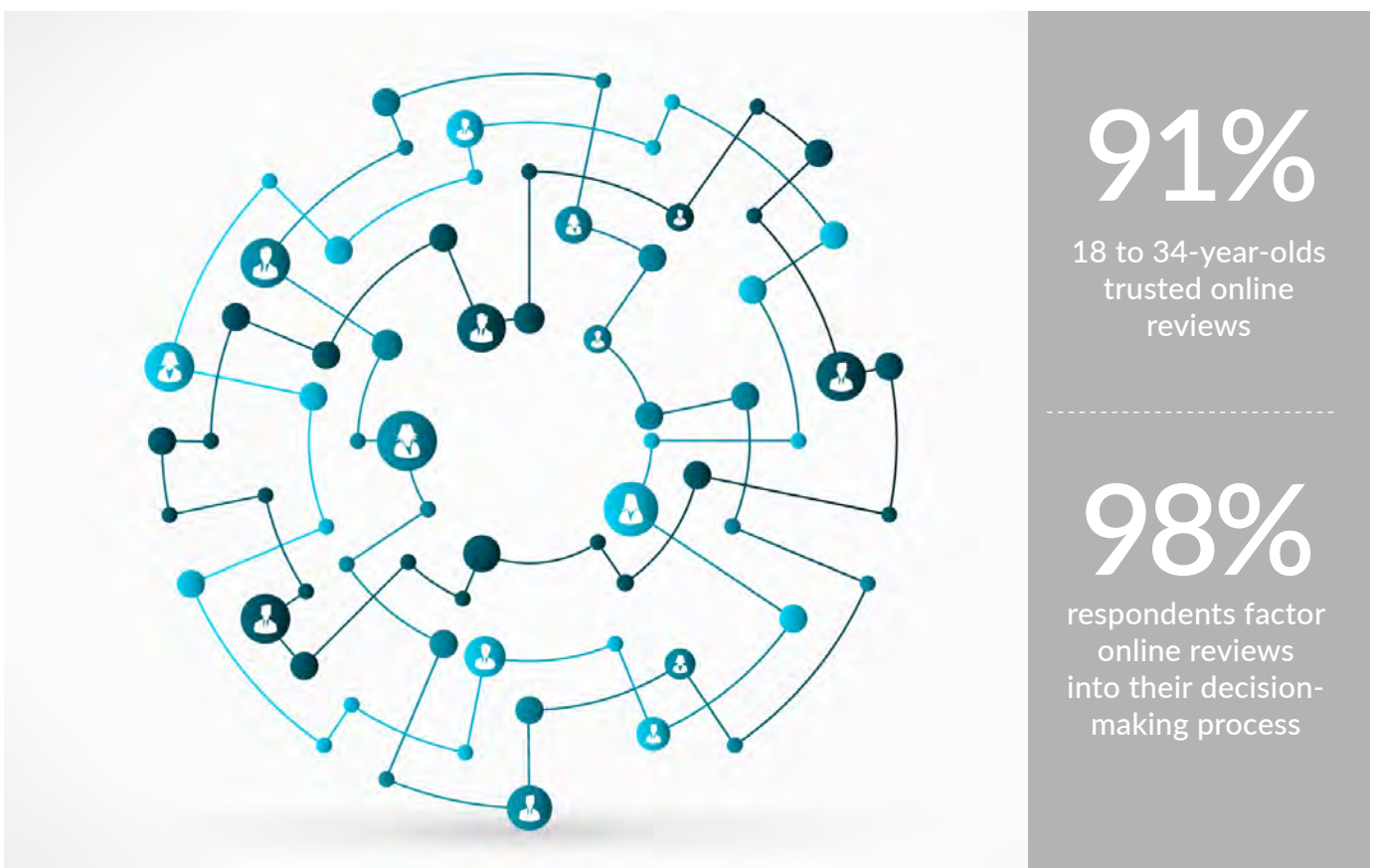
Other SEO tactics like creating and hosting a library filled with informative legal content can keep customers coming back to your website as a resource. When it comes time to hire an attorney again, you'll be at the top of their list.

## 5. Advocacy

Word of mouth remains a powerful way to build up a client base. This is especially true in the legal field given the high stakes involved. While word of mouth is traditionally seen as something that only happens in the physical world, consumers are increasingly turning to online reviews.

One study found that 91% of 18 to 34-year-olds trusted online reviews just as much as recommendations made by friends and family [6]. In the legal context, 98% of respondents factor online reviews into their decision-making process when shopping around for an attorney [7].

Building positive online reviews takes time and active effort. Even if you do a stellar job on a case, you shouldn't expect your client to go out and leave a review of their own volition.



You can nudge your clients in the right direction by leaving a friendly request in your parting email. Include a hyperlink to Avvo, your Google Business Page, Yelp, or another online review website. Don't get carried away. Just pick the one review platform that you feel is most instrumental to your business's success.

Although it's tempting to offer an incentive for leaving a positive review, it's best to stay away from anything that could be construed as a bribe. Offering a gift card, discount, or cash payment in exchange for an online review is ethically dubious at best, and it could lead to real-world consequences at worst. To spur client advocacy, your best tools are providing high-quality service and gentle nudges.

## It Attracts Backlinks

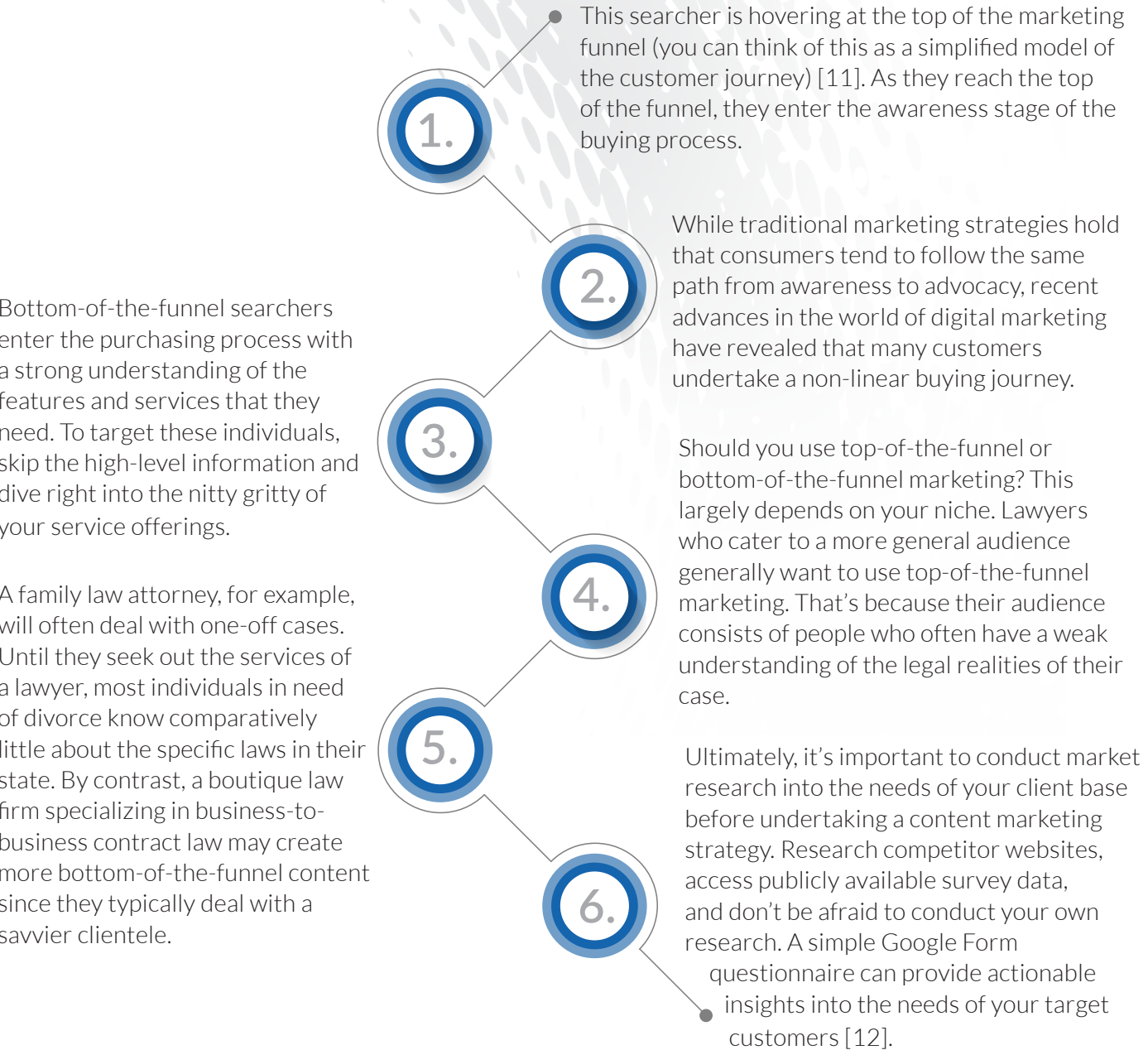
Backlinks are an important element of building off-page SEO. A backlink is simply a hyperlink to your website that’s hosted on another website. Google treats backlinks as a proxy indicator for a website’s trustworthiness and authority. You can think of backlinks like citations for an academic journal.

Of course, not all backlinks are made equal. Over the years, backlink stuffing has emerged as a popular black hat SEO tactic (black hat SEO refers to unethical SEO practices) [8]. This included the creation of websites for the sole purpose of hosting backlinks and other unsavory tactics. Google’s 2012 Penguin algorithm update dampened the effectiveness of these strategies [9].

While some shady operators continue to sell backlinks to spammy websites, those who engage in the practice risk getting their website penalized by Google. To avoid these penalties, it’s important to embrace white-hat SEO tactics or evidence-based strategies that refrain from ethically dubious behavior [10]. Chief among these is the creation of informative, entertaining, and shareable content.

### Informative

Establishing yourself as an authority is an excellent way to reach potential customers. To understand why informative content is so effective, it’s important to put yourself in the shoes of an average internet searcher. When someone queries “How to get a divorce?” in Google’s search engine, it’s clear where their mind is headed. However, at this point, they’re probably not ready to pull the trigger.





## It Expands Your Reach

Legal content marketing is often thought of as staid and stuffy. That's a dangerous myth, especially for attorneys who market directly to the public. The law touches on all of our lives at one point or another. There's a strong demand among society at large for accessible information regarding common legal matters.

If you can excel at digesting and synthesizing dry legal precedent into bite-sized chunks of information, you can dramatically expand your law firm's profile on social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram. Best of all, you can even reuse your existing content.

For example, if you have a popular blog post about common LLC formation myths you can

copy and paste each myth onto an eye-catching infographic. If you're not afraid of getting in front of a camera (or asking your social media intern to), you could even create a short TikTok reel.

Love it or hate it, social media has firmly entrenched itself as a critical part of the advertising landscape. In fact, it recently overtook paid searches in terms of total spending [13].

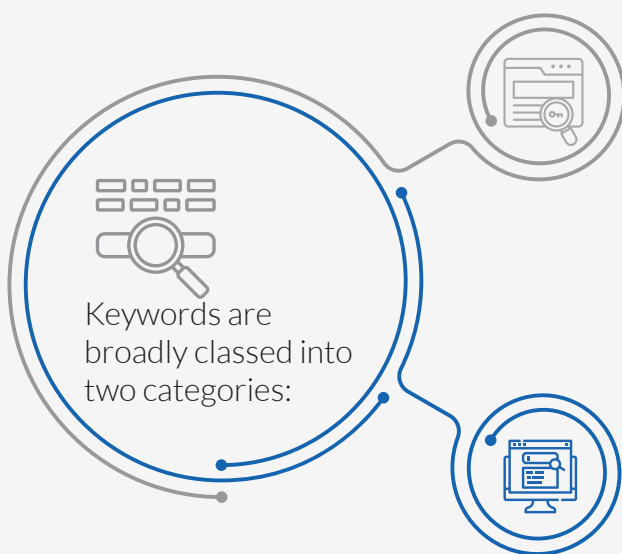
# An Overview of SEO Best Practices

SEO best practices break down broadly into on-page SEO and off-page SEO. On-page SEO encompasses everything that takes place on your website while off-page SEO deals with external factors that influence your website's ranking.

## On-Page Optimization

### Keyword Research

Although the days of keyword stuffing are long over, Google still uses relevant keywords as a top-ranking factor during its ranking process [14]. To find the right keywords take advantage of research tools like SEMrush, Ahrefs, or Moz Keyword Planner. As you gain ideas for possible blog posts and articles, you can begin to generate lists of keywords to incorporate into your writing.



Fat-head keywords are the most commonly searched-for words and phrases. This small minority makes up the bulk of search volume— terms like “DUI attorney” or “criminal law lawyer.” While these terms garner the most traffic, they’re also the most competitive. You may want to steer away from targeting too many fat-head keywords.

Long-tail keywords refer to less commonly searched terms. These keywords tend to overlap with local SEO. For example, the phrase, “best DUI attorney in Spokane WA” would qualify as a long-tail keyword. While these search terms don’t get nearly as much traffic as fat-head keywords, they’re much easier to rank for.

Aside from being easier to rank for, long-tail keywords tend to suit legal marketers better than fat-head keywords due to the inherently local nature of most law firms. If your practice is confined to a certain metropolitan or county area, you’ll want to aggressively target local SEO strategies which often make use of long-tail keywords.

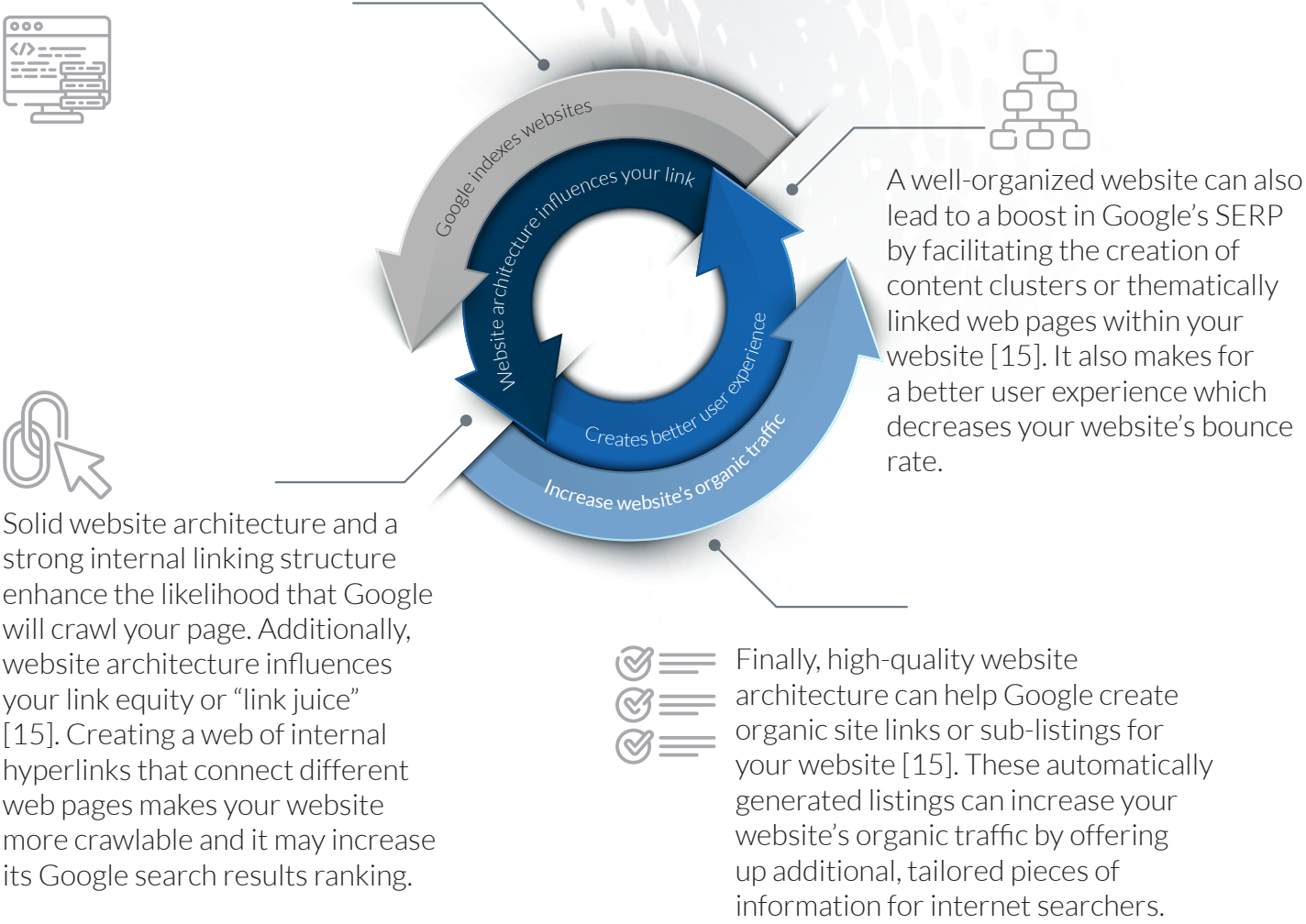
Keywords may deal with topical or evergreen content areas. It’s a good idea to produce a mixture of both. Jumping on the latest news item can help you amass a large number of shares and page views in the short term without necessarily putting in a lot of effort. However, once the story or trend fades, your returns will rapidly diminish.

Evergreen blog posts and news articles typically require more effort to stand out from the competition. That’s because they deal with topics that change little from year to year. Consequently, most evergreen topics in the legal marketing space have been written on extensively. However, if you can put out a high-quality evergreen piece, you’ll continue to see returns for years to come.



## Website Architecture and Internal Linking

Google indexes websites using automated programs called crawl bots, or spiders. Crawlbots scour the web for new websites and webpages to categorize in Google’s search results. If crawl bots are unable to access a website or webpage, it runs the risk of not getting indexed [15]. Unindexed pages will fail to show up on Google’s SERP.



## Technical SEO

Technical SEO refers to various aspects of your website design and functionality that influence its position on Google’s SERP. Google wants to present high-quality websites to its users and favors sites with fast load speeds and high overall performance [16]. It also promotes websites with solid security features.

In 2022, mobile devices accounted for almost 60% of global web traffic [17]. Google has taken note of this ongoing trend by emphasizing websites that offer a mobile-friendly experience. Optimizing your website for smartphone usage can increase your SERP ranking.



# Off-Page Optimization

Off-page optimization deals with all of the factors that influence your website's ranking that take place externally or outside of your website.

## Backlinks

Backlinks act as a vote of confidence in the legitimacy and quality of your website. Google uses the quality and quantity of a website's backlinks as one of its top three factors when calculating SERP positioning [18]. Common ways to increase the number of backlinks to your website include:

**Guest posting** refers to the practice of writing a blog post or article that's hosted on another website. Posting on a major news website like Forbes, or a popular blog within your niche can provide a solid boost to your website's ranking.

**Social media engagement** is a fantastic way for you to show off your industry expertise while connecting with the people who are most likely to care about your subject matter.

**Replicate your competitor's links** with tools like Ahrefs site explorer which let you identify your competitors' backlink profiles [19]. If you think your website would be a better match for a specific search term, you can reach out to the website administrator and ask them to swap out your competitor's backlink for yours.

**Pick a strategic topic**, typically a subject that deals with long-tail keywords.

**Linkable assets** are highly shareable pieces of content, such as infographics or original research. The key is to provide value in some form whether that be entertainment, new information, or something else.

**Promote your content** with either paid advertising, social media channels, or by reaching out to your email subscribers.



# Local SEO

Businesses that operate in a confined geographic location often turn to local SEO tactics to drive relevant search traffic to their website. For example, rather than targeting the phrase “best criminal law attorney” you might go after “best criminal law attorney in Cincinnati.”

While local SEO has a lot of overlap with long-tail keywords, the two are not synonymous. Some local SEO terms receive high amounts of search volume traffic. If your law firm is located in a major market like New York City or Los Angeles and you don’t operate in a niche area, you may have a harder time standing out from the competition compared to a smaller city or a more rural area.

## Stand Out by Identifying Content Gaps



## Google Local Pack

Google local pack presents three local businesses in response to a search query. If someone were to search for the phrase “best real-estate attorney near me” then Google selects the top three real-estate attorneys in the searcher’s proximity and lists them in a prominent position at the top of its SERP alongside an embed of Google maps showing the location of each business.

To land on this coveted real estate, you should optimize your Google Business Profile. Ensure that your contact information and relevant details are up to date. You should also engage with reviewers, both positive and negative, and add up-to-date photos of your law offices.



## Manage Customer Reviews

Potential customers aren’t just looking at your company website. Although online reputation management (ORM) isn’t quite the same thing as SEO, the two share many commonalities. Both seek to enhance your online profile and convert new customers. Taking a few simple steps like claiming your Avvo page and seeking endorsements from fellow attorneys helps bolster your online reputation.

You certainly don’t want to pick fights with negative online reviews. But, you can use websites like your Google Business Profile to present your side of the story if a disgruntled former client chooses to leave a less-than-stellar comment. Engaging with positive reviews also helps to strengthen your online image.





# Strategies for Effective Legal Marketing SEO

Now that you have a solid footing in legal marketing SEO, you can bring it all together with these nine steps.

## Identify Your Audience

You need to identify the specific pain points and expectations of your clientele to build a better understanding of your high-level marketing strategy. Collect information from your existing clients through a simple online survey form.

Ask them about their specific legal needs and how they've gone about satisfying those. Find out about the major obstacles they've encountered, what they're looking for in a lawyer, and what resources they've used to search for an attorney thus far. You can use this information to inform the issues you address in your content marketing strategy.

## Use Your Research to Identify Relevant Keywords

Finding the right keywords to reach your target audience is as much an art as it is a science. As you pore over the survey data that you collected in step one, clear trends should begin to emerge. Compile a list of potential topic areas, and then run a content gap analysis. Discard any saturated topic areas and focus your energy on the keywords that are most likely to provide a positive return on your efforts.



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## Study Your Competitors

You don't want to turn your website into a mirror image of your top competitors, but you can use their websites to glean helpful ideas and strategies. Peruse the blog sections of other attorneys in your practice area to see if you can spot a topic that you can play off. You should also pay attention to how their websites are organized, and what sort of landing pages they have.

You can draw inspiration from their layout, and you might even find something that your website is missing. SEO tools like Ahrefs and SEMrush can identify what keywords your competitors are ranking for. Incorporating these keywords into your website helps you compete more effectively.

## Ensure Brand Consistency

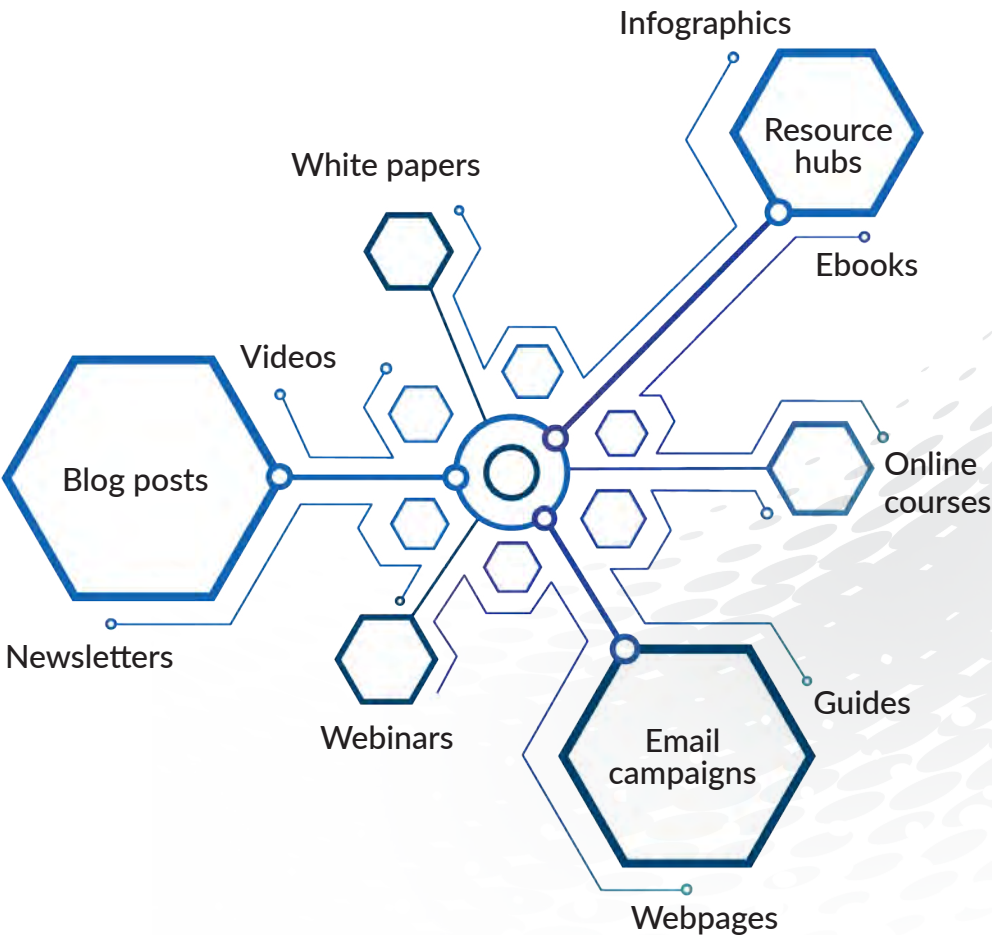
Brand consistency has a big impact on the way customers perceive your business. This encompasses everything from using the same logos, colors, and designs across your website and social media profiles to maintaining a uniform tone in the way that you interact with your customers and the public more broadly.

Although brand image differs from law firm to law firm, lawyers generally want to strike a balance between being authoritative and approachable. Clients are entrusting large sums of money, and their futures in your hands. Consequently, projecting an aura of competency, professionalism, and trustworthiness are all major selling factors for most attorneys.

## Try Out Different Content Forms

Don't be afraid to experiment. It's not uncommon for one content form to flop while another blows away the competition. The popularity of different content forms shifts with time. It may also vary by practice area and geographic location. Equally important is the person behind the content. If you're a talented writer, but camera shy, you may find more success with blogging.

The following list is not exhaustive. However, it does contain many of the most popular content forms currently in use.







Be Consistent



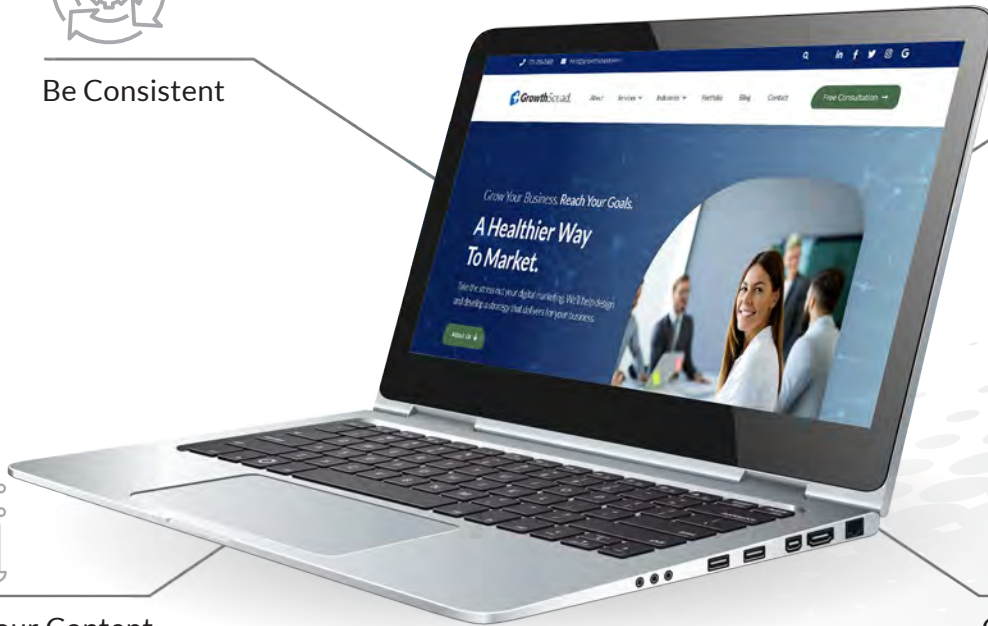
Fine Tune Your  
On-Page SEO for  
Landing Pages



Share Your Content



Gain Backlinks



## Be Consistent

A one-off blog post has little impact on your Google SERP ranking. Posting erratically is better, but not by much. To reap the full benefit of content marketing, it's important to commit to a regular schedule. The more frequently you post the better. However, if you're strapped for time, posting a new blog just once a month can get you started on the right path.

Take an afternoon and create a content schedule. Then input the various topics you'd like to hit into your calendar. You should ask your secretary or paralegal to block off the necessary time in your calendar that you'll need to plan and write each post. Alternatively, you can outsource your legal marketing work to an employee or a content marketing firm.

## Gain Backlinks

Reach out to popular blogs and online magazines within your practice area with a guest post pitch. Many blogs and publications are happy to host your guest post for free. Others may charge a nominal fee. Before you commit to a guest post, double-check that the website you're pitching to allows backlinks. Most will, but you never know.

Networking at professional associations can help you land interviews on industry-related podcasts, webinars, and other online video sources. This is a great way to raise awareness, establish authority within your practice area, and gain new backlinks.

## Fine Tune Your On-Page SEO for Landing Pages

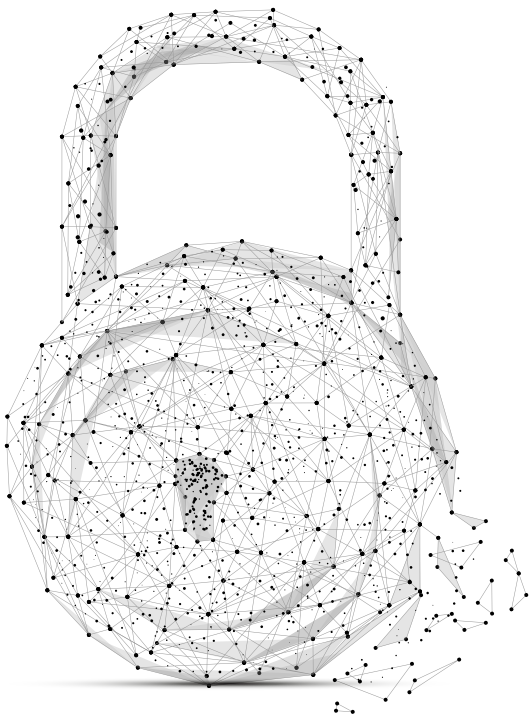
Creating a fine-tuned landing page is the ultimate step in converting online searchers to paying customers. Ask your marketing department to conduct a technical SEO audit. You want the landing page to load quickly and without any complications. Ensure that your content is structured according to SEO best practices, and using relevant keywords.

You may want to hire an outside copywriter to maximize your conversion rate. Writing your landing page copy in-house may save you some money in the short term, but if it costs you even a few customers over the long run you'd be better off going with a professional.

## Share Your Content

Decide on a distribution channel or series of distribution channels to get your information out there. Once you've determined which platforms you want to use, set up a promotional schedule to outline which days and times you're going to promote your content. For example, you could commit to making a Facebook post every Wednesday and Friday, or to send out an email to your subscribers every Thursday morning.

Don't be afraid to pursue multiple promotional strategies. You can mix and match platforms and promotional strategies to maximize your exposure.

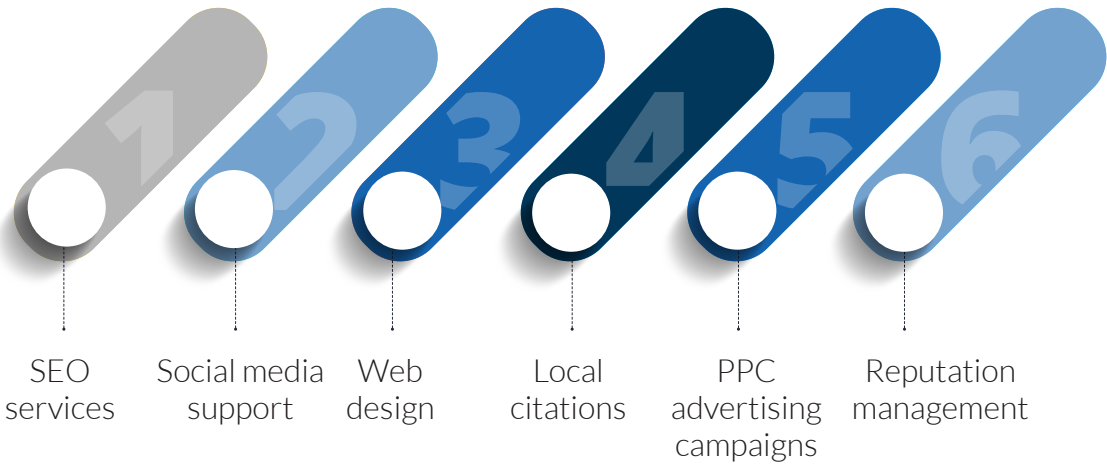


# Key Takeaways

Law firms face unique pressures when it comes to the digital marketplace. You can stand out from the competition by optimizing your on-page and off-page SEO. Create a solid marketing plan that exploits content gaps and takes full advantage of local SEO best practices. You can build a solid backlink profile by creating shareable content, guest posting, and interviewing for podcasts and webinars.

Touch on all aspects of the customer journey, and create content that targets top-of-funnel and bottom-of-funnel needs. You can increase your website traffic by optimizing for internal linking and website architecture. Don't feel hemmed in by a single content form. Experiment to find what works best for you. However, once you've settled on a strategy, it's best to post consistently and follow a set distribution plan.

Growth Squad offers comprehensive marketing services to law firms of all sizes and practice areas. We'll help you develop a holistic digital marketing strategy that accounts for the unique needs of your business. Our education first emphasis means that you'll stay in the loop from beginning to end. This spirit of collaboration enables us to meet each of our client's individual needs. With Growth Squad, you'll gain access to:



Learn more about how Growth Squad can transform your law firm's digital image. Schedule a free consultation today [21]!

1. <https://backlinko.com/google-ctr-stats>
2. [https://www.americanbar.org/groups/law\\_practice/publications/techreport/2021/webmarketing/](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/law_practice/publications/techreport/2021/webmarketing/)
3. <https://searchengineland.com/google-ymyl-eat-seo-380569>
4. <https://www.cim.co.uk/content-hub/blog/five-stages-of-your-customers-buying-journey/>
5. <https://support.google.com/analytics/answer/1009409?hl=en>
6. <https://www.searchenginejournal.com/online-review-statistics/329701/>
7. <https://www.ilawyermarketing.com/new-study-how-consumers-choose-lawyers-online-in-2020/>
8. <https://www.semrush.com/blog/black-hat-seo/>
9. <https://www.searchenginejournal.com/google-algorithm-history/penguin-update/>
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12. <https://www.google.com/forms/about/>
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15. <https://www.searchenginejournal.com/how-to-optimize-website-architecture-for-seo/477179/>
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19. <https://ahrefs.com/site-explorer>
20. <https://ahrefs.com/content-gap>
21. <https://growthsquad.com/contact/>