

# Spotlight Branding

## THE SOLO ATTORNEY'S BACK-TO-BUSINESS PLAN



When you first opened up your law firm, you likely put together a business plan that outlined how your firm would succeed. You likely never envisioned having to shut the doors for a couple of months due to a worldwide pandemic, yet here we are.

As the country reopens and we all get ready to return to normal business operations, you might want to take a hard look at how you operate your firm moving forward. In this special report, we'll give you some insight for marketing your firm in this new post-pandemic world, as well some tips that we've learned as a small business that will help prepare us for another potential wave of the virus.

## How Will Marketing Your Firm Change?

The fundamentals of marketing your law firm aren't going to change, but you're going to want to use the tools in a different way. For example, you'll likely be very timid when it comes to spending big bucks on lead generation, especially if you haven't seen consistent results.

As a marketing company, we're obviously not going to tell you to slash your marketing budget. However, marketing tactics like SEO are very hit-or-miss, and those who typically have the best results using SEO spend thousands of dollars every month - and that's money you likely don't want to spend right now. Instead, it may be time to reallocate your marketing budget to a different strategy.

The good news is that there are several ways you can continue to market your practice, and they're not only more cost-effective, but they've been proven to consistently bring in high-quality clients. Here are a few ways you can do that.

### 1. Seek Out Speaking Opportunities

Over the next few months, you likely won't get many invites to in-person seminars. However, everyone has gotten a crash course in online meetings this year and many people are holding webinars and other online events. Podcasts have also exploded during this time, and you can gain a ton of exposure as a guest on various podcasts that are relevant to your practice area.

The benefit here is that you have a platform to demonstrate your expertise. People want to work with the expert, and there's no better way to show off your knowledge than in front of a live (or virtual) captive audience.

*Pro-tip:* If you get a guest spot on a webinar or some other type of online meeting, make sure you get a list of the registrants. That will come in handy for our next point.

## 2. Get More Active on Email

If you aren't sending out consistent emails to your list, you're going to be forgotten. People won't remember who you are or what you do, and they'll go to another attorney instead (or tell someone in need about a different attorney who stays more top-of-mind). If you're getting more active on the speaking circuit, you can consistently grow your email list and gain more exposure for your firm. That leads us to our next point...

## 3. Produce Valuable Content

We're living in a content-rich environment right now. People are spending more time online and they're taking in more content than ever -- whether that's through text, video, or audio. You should be putting out content on at least two of those three mediums on a regular basis. And while that seems daunting at first, you can quite easily take one piece of content and multiply it into several pieces, which in turn greatly expands your exposure.

Don't believe us? Here's how simple it is:

**Step 1** : Start with a video. It can be a short, 60-second video, or even a 2-3 minute commentary on a legal issue.

**Step 2** : Transcribe that video to text (there are a lot of free apps that do it), and now you have a blog.

**Step 3** : Rip the audio from that video, and now you have a podcast episode.

**Step 4** : Promote all three mediums on your Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn profiles, and you now have a dozen pieces of content all from one original video.

The benefits of producing content echoes back to our first point - it demonstrates your expertise. Not only that, but becoming a consistent source of valuable content creates multiple touchpoints with your audience, keeping you top-of-mind, and greatly increasing your chances of being the first person someone thinks of when they need legal help.

The only downside to producing so much content is that it has the potential to take you away from the other responsibilities that come with running your law firm and being an attorney. If you have an in-house marketing person, this is what they need to focus on. If you don't have the budget to hire a full-time employee, we strongly recommend hiring a vendor to produce the content for you (perhaps it's us at Spotlight Branding, or maybe it's someone else; regardless, you NEED to be doing this).

## 4. Build a Consistent Social Media Presence

If you're going to produce content, it needs a place to go. After all, what good is multiplying your content if you have no other home for it than your website? You should be posting to your Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn (both personal and company) accounts often, and the content you post should be valuable.

*Pro-tip:* Be a source of education and information for your audience. As you know, there's a lot of misinformation on social media, so positioning yourself as a source of accurate, practical, and helpful information can do wonders for your credibility. Post your blogs, videos, and other third-party articles that are relevant to your practice area. Make sure your audience is prepared for a potential second wave of a virus, or make sure they're equipped with a solid understanding of their legal rights during a pandemic and in life in general as we all move forward.

## How Will Running Your Firm Change?

We're marketers, but we're also a small business just like you. And like many small businesses in 2020, we were thrown right into the deep end to figure out how to keep our doors open while sustaining as little loss and disruption as possible. Luckily, our business has come out of the pandemic in great shape and, if you're reading this, we hope you have too. Below are a few things we learned along the way and hope that law firms consider moving forward.

### 1. Develop Remote Working Procedures

You likely have a policies and procedures manual of some sort for your staff that dictates expectations for in-office work. With many people being forced to suddenly work from home, the lines in that P&P manual can get blurry, especially when there's no one around to make sure your employees are actually working at home. Now is a great time to review your P&P manual and make sure stipulations for remote or at-home work are clearly outlined.

Aside from technological considerations, which we'll discuss next, we modified our internal policy on communication to emphasize "overcommunication." When you're primarily communicating via email or chat, you open yourself up to a lot of potential for misinterpretation. You lose tone, facial cues, and more, which makes communication more difficult. We asked our team to err on the side of caution and overcommunicate with each other to make sure we were all on the same page. You can even go a step further and require everyone to have extended conversations over phone or video.

Other considerations could include whether or not your in-office dress code is still in effect. What about sick leave and paid time off? You may also want to think about how you can best help employees who are not as productive when working from home and how to manage mental health issues that may not be as obvious as if you were seeing them every day in the office.

## 2. Invest in Tech That Helps You Work from Home

It's quite possible that you've become a Zoom or Skype expert this year. But beyond just having a way to conduct team meetings or legal consultations, you want to make sure your other office technology works both at the office and at home. To the greatest extent possible, you want to be sure that your employees can pick up at home where they left off at the office as easily as possible.

Outside of video conferencing software like Zoom, Google Hangouts, or Skype, here are some other apps you should consider:

- A team messaging app like Slack, Zoho Cliq, or Quip so everyone can chat and collaborate with each other.
- Cloud-based word processing and spreadsheets like Google Docs and Google Sheets that allow users to collaborate and make changes to the same document in real time.
- If you have hourly employees, there are several apps that allow employees to clock in and clock out while they work from home.
- A screen capturing/recording app like CloudApp or ScreenMailer that allows users to provide visuals to an explanation that may be difficult to communicate remotely.

## 3. Build Up Your Business Savings

Remember how Suze Orman told us that every individual should have six months of savings in their bank account? The same should be said for your business (otherwise known as “runway” or “burn rate”). Be smart about your firm's spending over the next few months, and even look for creative ways to cut some unnecessary expenses. Make sure you have enough savings built up in case the economy shuts down again and you suffer another loss of income.

Here are a few ways you can extend your runway:

- Apply for a line of credit.
- Launch a new, secondary service like a legal audit or some sort of small-scale legal package to generate some one-time cash flow.
- Conduct an expense audit and cut recurring expenses that you don't need.
- Renegotiate other recurring expenses with other vendors, such as your phone or internet provider.
- Look into the Profit First model for managing your company's finances.



## Need Some Help?

Getting back into the office can be stressful, and you'll likely feel the need to go into overdrive to make up for lost revenue. We can help take the marketing duties off of your plate so you can focus on running your business and being an attorney.

We hope you found this resource valuable. If you have any questions about marketing your firm moving forward, we are experts in content creation for law firms, and we can help! Contact us today to see what we can do for you.



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