

martindale.com Connected eBook

Copywriting for lawyers: How to write for social media

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Why this eBook was produced

Web content that works in social media circles needs to grab the reader fast, guide them ...to solve problems that matter to them, and be simple enough to digest in a single sitting at the screen.

Did you ever wonder why your law blog lacks a large and loyal following? If you do have a readership, does it sometimes feel stale?

In either case, there is a simple solution for gaining more readers while keeping the writing informative, authoritative, and exciting.

Great copywriting is not the same as great legal writing. Web content that works in social circles needs to grab the reader fast, guide them along a well-engineered journey to solve problems that matter to them, and be simple enough to digest in a single sitting at the screen.

Don't be mistaken: you are not throwing the elements of great legal writing out the window; you are simply tailoring them to work for the way readers will consume your content. It is the art of copywriting that will make your web content stand out for other law blogs and help you see returns on your investment.

In reading this eBook you will walk away with the following:

- How to write killer headlines that snag readers
- How to know what to write, who to write it for, and how to say it in a way that will captivate your readers and make them look to you as a trusted authority
- How to rank higher in Google searches by writing copy that is SEO friendly
- How to ask for what you want in your writing and get it

Learn more about social media marketing for lawyers:

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PART 1 - Headlines that should be illegal*

Why headlines should be the first thing you write

It seems that [everyone has ADHD](#) these days, especially when it comes to web browsing. The average time users spend on a webpage is 10-seconds before they click somewhere else.

10-seconds.

It's not a lot of time to capture someone's attention, get them to read, and have

The average time users spend on a webpage is 10-seconds before they click somewhere else.

them take some kind of action or make some sort of decision about you and your law firm. Without a strong headline your readers will never get past the first few lines

(if you are lucky).

That's why you should start with the headline before writing anything else.

It sounds a bit backwards, I know. How are you possibly going to come up with a good headline without knowing what your article or blog post is about?

Here's the trick: the tone of what you write and the thrust of the content is going to be dictated by your headline. Taking five or ten minutes to come up with something that's compelling, sexy, informative, and SEO optimized (yes, you can do all four at

* Adapted from original content from the authors upcoming ebook on social media techniques, "Set Yourself on Fire: Attention Getting Tactics to Ignite Your Social Media Marketing."

once) is worth the personality and attitude it can inject into your content.

Most of the time you will come to the table with a general idea of what you want to write; there is no hard or fast rule about writing headlines first. It's just a practical way of setting the tone of your piece up front.

Quick bullets to aid the headline writing process:

Use these quick bullets to get clear on a few things before crafting your brilliant headline:

- Who will benefit most from reading this (ex/ parents drafting a will, in-house counsel doing a merger, etc.)?
- What benefit can the reader take away (ex/ they will know what to do when a parent dies, they will have an exit plan if the merger falls apart, etc.)?
- What nightmare scenario are you helping them avoid or understand?

Each of these points addresses the need to write for your reader. Many law firms write copy for their websites and blogs that read like dry excerpts from case briefs, executive reports, or topical articles, using a complex weaving of legal ideas that most clients would never understand.

The headlines for such content read something like this: "Federal Rules of Civil Procedure Changes Impact Summary Judgment and Timing of Pleadings, but Not Class Actions." Wow, that's a mouthful. To avoid this kind of headline writing, it is vital to know whom you are writing for, tailor content for that audience, and write headlines that convey information while enticing readers to stay.

How to avoid 'legal-ease' in headline writing

Many law firm blogs take the easy route. They write predictable articles with bland headlines. If ordinary consumers are their clients, these law firms tend to use the following formula:

1. Write a generic headline that may or may not rank higher in search
2. Write one to three paragraphs of straight information on that headline topic
3. Plug the law firm prominently in subsequent paragraphs making it very clear that you want them to call you to handle any similar issue they are having right now

This formula works for article writing, and it worked on the old web where people were grateful to find ANY content on their issue. Today, chances are the law firm down the street has written and published something similar online. Potential clients respect personality, originality, and expertise; showing all three in what you publish online will help differentiate your firm from the competition.

Taking the easy route is what I call, 'legal-ease' - and just like it's jargony cousin, legalese, it rarely produces the results it intends and often backfiring if abused.

Practice Tip: If you want to make headline writing somewhat easier, you can resort to templates such as the ones [here](#) on Copyblogger. Be aware, however, that just like a legal form can be a starting point for a legal document, relying on forms alone makes for substandard work.

Put some blood, sweat, and bow ties into crafting the headline that really grabs readers and says what you want it to say.

Knowing your audience, One-Sentence Persuasion, and Fascination Triggers

You've committed to leading with headlines in your copywriting process; the first step has been taken to abandoning boring writing once and for all. Now it's time to kick it up a notch. The next three techniques for great headline writing are not the typical thing a lawyer would think about when crafting a post about a DUI judgment, a new law about green building, or a controversial ruling that affects their client base, but coloring the straight, legal-ease headline with the stuff I'm about to show you is like putting an eyeball magnet on your readers' computer screen.

Know your audience

Before even writing your first headline, you must know whom you are writing for. Too often people assume that buyers or clients want to read about something without ever considering what their audience really wants or who they really are. Going through the analysis below and creating a mini-profile of your reader, will help you to better tailor your headlines and content to your target audience.

Whenever you write a headline consider the following about your reader:

- What are their fears, frustrations, and pain points?
- What are their secret hopes, dreams, and wishes?
- What or who holds the most power over them?
- What do they see as their limitations or failures?
- How do they see the world and themselves in it?

- What's the biggest threat to how they see themselves and what keeps them up at night?
- Is there a system of conventional wisdom or other prejudice leading them astray?

These questions will help you gain insights on your audience and guide you in creating content that resonates with them. The key is to take your answers to these questions and translate them into headline and copywriting guidelines.

'People will do anything for those who encourage their dreams, justify their failures, confirm their suspicions, allay their fears, and give them rocks to throw at their enemies.'

For example, if you've identified client fears, frustrations, and pain points, your headline should be something that touches upon them and suggests a solution.

So if the fear you identify is 'looking bad to their clients or partners,' then your headline should address things like 'Always be on the Ball with ____' or 'How to Impress Friends and Colleagues When ____.'

It's not so much what the headline says, as whether it gets the reader to identify with the problem and the solution you offer. You want them to say to themselves, "I've had that happen to me," or best of all "yes, this can work for me."

One-Sentence Persuasion

When it comes to writing great headlines, this one sentence (a mere 27-words) from marketer [Blair Warren](#) is a beacon of light:

"People will do anything for those who encourage their dreams, justify their failures, confirm their suspicions, allay their fears, and give

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them rocks to throw at their enemies."

Infusing your headlines with Warren's persuasion techniques will transform your writing. Let's take a look at how each of the persuasion factors can be applied to lawyer headlines.

- **Encourage their dreams** - everybody's got a dream, and with this technique you want to identify what dream you present to your clients. Is it justice, compensation, peace of mind, a new phase in life, or protection? Headlines like: '5-Easy Steps to Creating and Protecting Your Great Invention' or 'Everybody Deserves a Roof Over Their Heads: The Basics of Purchasing Your First Home,' etc. fulfill this promise.
- **Justify their failures** - it's human nature to avoid taking responsibility for something that didn't work out. Interestingly enough, marketing guru [Seth Godin says](#) it is not fear of failure that motivates people so much as it is fear of criticism. By justifying failures with your headlines, you show the audience that you understand them. Examples: 'Getting Sued: Why It's Not As Bad As You Think' or 'When Accidents Are Not Your Fault: A Guide for Defendants.'
- **Confirm their suspicions** - there is a reason shows like CSI and Law & Order draw large and loyal TV audiences. People love a mystery; just Google 'conspiracy theory' and you will find over 13-million results. If your headline can make someone in your target audience say 'I KNEW IT!' you are one step away from a loyal reader and possibly a lead. Examples: 'What the Cops Don't Want You to Know About Speed Traps' or 'Class Action Plaintiffs: The Real Truth for Corporate Attorneys.'
- **Allay their fears** - fear is one of the most powerful human emotions next to love. If your headlines can make people feel more comfortable about a worrisome situation then you are seen as a trusted advisor,

someone who can provide peace of mind and emotional stability, and they will pay attention to you. Examples: 'Worried About Bankruptcy? A New Law May Keep You From Going Under' or 'The Paper Boogeyman: Why the New Corporate Tax is Not As Scary As Your Think.'

- ***Give them rocks to throw at their enemies*** - empower someone to fight their battles and they will be loyal to you to their dying day. In headlines, think of problems your clients are having that make them feel helpless, and then show them how they can fight back. Examples: 'The Anti-Audit: How to Legally Stick it to the IRS' or 'Five Ways to Beat the Fear of Doing a Deposition.'

Fascination Triggers

Why are the Seven Deadly Sins so ... deadly? It is because despite leading most people to tragic downfalls, sins have an appeal that is often irresistible. It's as if human beings are hard wired to seek out the things that are not good for them.

Great marketers know this, and they exploit it when writing headlines.

'Fascination triggers' are the copywriter's version of the Seven Deadly Sins, which stimulates your readers' curiosity and keeps them reading your content. They were articulated in this form by [Sally Hogshead](#) in her book *Fascinate*, and taught to me on a Copyblogger webinar called Magnetic Headlines. Weave them into a headline or post and they will color the entire piece of content with an addictive allure that's sure to hit people between the eyes.

Here are the seven fascination triggers and ways to use them:

1. ***Lust*** - I know what you're thinking. 'Great. Now he wants me to weave sex into my post about tax fraud!' Yes and no. The lust trigger deals with anything that appeals to the senses. You *can* write the headline 'Why You Are Less Likely to

Cheat on Your Taxes Than Your Significant Other,' anything that uses sensory adjectives like 'delicious,' 'thunderous,' or 'stench' appeal to the trigger of lust.

2. **Vice** - here's the stuff you shouldn't talk about (especially if you're a boring old lawyer!). It's the off-limits, hush-hush topic, which you are willing to broach that no one else will. It creates controversy and stimulates argument, but it makes for great headlines. Example: 'Selling Your Soul for a Law Firm Partnership: Why Your Boss May Just Be Satan.'
3. **Alarm** - these headlines are meant to scare the s*** out of your reader. They spell trouble and you are trying to create fear in your reader. Example: 'New That Laws Will Send You to Jail.'
4. **Power** - who doesn't love to be in a position of power? This is all about control, being the one in charge, and leadership (or dictatorship). They make the reader think that by reading your content they will achieve that position of power and come out on top. Example: 'The Lawyers Guide to Winning Every Argument.'
5. **Prestige** - it's why people are obsessed with celebrities; being in the limelight, part of an exclusive club, Elite member programs, and first class. These appeal to the sense of prestige. Weave this into a headline by showing that you are about to tell your reader something only a privileged few know about.
6. **Mystique** -this is insider information, mystery, and intrigue. Any time you can raise curiosity, you create mystique. Example: "The Secret Lives of Judges (and how to get on their good side)"
7. **Trust** - any visible show of heroism, loyalty, ethics, and reliability will inspire this trigger. You want to intrigue your reader with a headline that makes them believe they can believe in you. Example: "Why I Gave Up a Six-Figure Salary to Do the Right Thing"

Again, these triggers and the other techniques listed in this post are not formulas. Nobody is asking you to pack them all in to every headline you do, but getting away from boring headline writing by coloring your words with these triggers will boost readership.

PART 2 - Knowing what to write and how to say it for social media[†]

In Part 1 you learned about knowing whom you are writing for; Part 2 provides insight on finding that great topic to write about and saying it in a way that resonates with your particular audience.

Remember: you, the lawyer, are trying to sell yourself as the trusted authority, and in some cases, the best choice for the potential client to hire; it is a subtler sell than the infomercial, but a sale nonetheless.

Lawyer As copywriter: selling yourself subtly

It cannot be over-emphasized that as a legal professional writing in social media you must know your audience.

What you write and how you say it will be much different if you expect corporate counsel at Fortune 500 companies to read your posts or housewives contemplating divorce. Once you know who the reader is however, you are stuck with the blank screen and the real work begins.

A word about copywriting for lawyers before we continue: anyone who writes words on the web is a copywriter. Traditionally we thought of copywriters as the people behind successful ad campaigns and infomercials, and while that may be true, the proliferation of content on the web, particularly written content, as a driver of the way we inform, trust, and purchase means that knowing how to sell through your writing is of primary importance. Remember, you, the lawyer are trying to sell yourself

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as the trusted authority and in some cases the best choice for the potential client to hire; it is a subtler sell than the infomercial, but a sell nonetheless.

What should lawyers write about: Feeding the muse

There is a little book by author and screenwriter Stephen Pressfield, which is one of my personal favourites called, [*The War of Art*](#).

Pressfield holds creation of anything, whether words on the page, multi-million dollar deals, or Friday night dinner, as a sacred expression of a persons' inner brilliance inspired by a muse they cannot resist. Creation at its highest and purest level, says Pressfield, happens because the creator has no other choice but to bring the creation into existence.

So your blog post on new tax laws or changes to the damages thresholds for auto accidents may not seem like a creation on par with Pressfield's muse, but it is. You are creating and that takes inspiration, courage, and dedication.

Here's my proof: how many times have you sat down to write something only to find you lacked the energy, focus, time, (insert excuse here) etc. to bring it into being?

This phenomenon that everyone experiences is what Pressfield calls "The Resistance." It's a soul sucking, cunning, baffling, and powerful enemy that wants nothing more than to see you suffer and die. And it's keeping you from blogging about the law.

Confronting resistance to legal copywriting

We are on the verge of discovering where great ideas come from, but before we get there, you need to be clear on why so many great ideas never happen.

When I was still in law school, I learned a very powerful lesson at the boutique entertainment law firm I interned at.

My mentor, a veteran of 30-years in the industry loved to tell this story: a client walks

Ideas are a dime a dozen. The Resistance knows this and that's why it lets you have them. The real challenge is in turning those ideas into something you can share with the world on a consistent basis.

hurriedly into the office with sweat beading down their forehead. They look a mixture of fear, anxiety, and sheer excitement, peering over their shoulder like a member of the witness protection program. The client pulls down the shades, turns the lights low, and makes

sure the office door is closed before leaning in close and whispering, "I've got a great idea for a screenplay." My mentor would stop them right there, open the blinds and turn on the lights, go to the door and call in three other associates, and then with an audience, ask the client what the great idea was.

Ideas are a dime a dozen. The Resistance knows this and that's why it allows you to have so many great ideas. The real challenge is turning those ideas into something you can share with the world on a consistent basis.

That's where a few techniques come into play.

Technique #1: Brain Dumping, Mind Mapping, and Getting Busy

You already know who your audience is. You should have an idea of what you want them to do with the information that you want to create. Now it's time to get really clear on what you will create.

Brain Dump. The first part of any creative endeavour is to get it all

out. This can be done with pen and paper, Word, crayons on a cereal box, take your pick. Write down all the terms relevant to what you will write about. Don't censor. Just write.

At the end of the dump you should have a jumble of words and phrases. These are the topics you can talk about on your blog, group, or whatever other social media asset you will be using.

Mind Map. The next part of bringing your creation into existence is organizing your thoughts. My single favourite tool for organizing thoughts is the mind map. [Click here](#) for an in depth post I wrote about mind maps.

For those of you unfamiliar with mind mapping, it's a visual way of organizing information into branching structures that show the relationships between them

[Mind Node](#) for Mac OS X is my tool of choice because of its affordability (\$20) and ease-of-use. You can use anything to organize your thoughts (Word, Excel, etc.), but you might want to check out one of the mind mapping programs listed on this post above.

In creating the mind map think from big to small, general to specific, and make logical connections between branches.

At its core mind mapping or organizing your thoughts is simple: think outlines during law school or case strategy in practice. Similar to the logic you would use in organizing that information, do the same for the topics you want to write about.

Getting Busy. There is no substitute for writing. Write no matter what. This is where 99% of the losses to Resistance happen; we overthink the writing, especially in the legal world.

Notice that I am not saying, "publish." There is a big difference

between writing and publishing. When you are encountering Resistance to creating content the answer is to just write (Resistance to publishing is a whole different game). At this point you just want to get stuff on the page (you can always edit later).

Create a bunch of post drafts based on what you've done in your mind map. Think of clever headlines, like we showed you in the first instalment of this series, and start getting some information down in the body of the post, even if it's just an outline.

As you start to see drafts pile up, new things will happen: the structure of your blog becomes clear, your posts take on a new direction, and you realize the next thing you need is a plan.

Technique #2: Planning and creating a posting routine for legal blogging

Let's start simple.

You've got to find some time to blog. Time is not an easy thing for lawyers, especially when you need to spend most of it doing billable work for clients, getting new clients, and the good housekeeping stuff like CLE, pro bono work, email (lots of email), etc., regardless, you've got to do it.

Here are a few practical steps to take back control of your time.

Step 1: Kill your time suckers. We've all got these (even hotshot, uber-busy lawyers). You may be addicted to your iPhone/Pad, Android, or Blackberry. Perhaps you are anal about email to a fault or spend hours browsing the web while calling it "research"? Wherever you find yourself doing things in your workday that could be eliminated get Terminator on them.

Step 2: Stomp out distractions. Do you have audio notifications that pop up for Outlook, Tweetdeck, IM, and other applications? These are meant to derail you. Turn the sound off for the half hour that you've committed to blogging.

Tell the secretary to hold your calls. Even turn off the cell phone, if you dare. The key is to create a distraction free environment for at least 33-minutes (read this [inspiring post](#) to find out why 33-minutes can change your writing).

Step 3: Make nice with your calendar. Based on the brain dump and mind map you created above, start creating lists of potential posts and then schedule them in your calendar. Realistically, you should be able to crank out decent posts in anywhere from 45-minutes to an hour and a half (add time for longer, more in depth posts). Start out slow with the scheduling, maybe 1-post per week, and as you build up momentum in the blog and in how fast you write, schedule them more closely together. Within a few months you should have no lack of editorial content to write about.

Technique #3: Find your Voice, Style & Rhythm; then get writing

The big difference between legal writing and social media copywriting is personality.

Your blogs, tweets, posts, and other content should show your unique perspective and personality. There are plenty of lawyers out there doing this right.

My friend Ron Coleman of the [Likelihood of Confusion blog](#) is one. Carolyn Elefant at [MyShingle.com](#) is another. Both of these lawyers have found their voice and they make it work.

How did they do it?

Write like you speak; then edit. A lot of great writing gets clobbered before it ever hits the page. Your internal censor tells you, “don’t put that on the page!”

This is the Resistance you met above.

Try this instead: take a serious and dry topic like Chinese Drywall (are we done talking about this yet?) or Dodd Frank, and then talk about it on the page

like you would explain it at a barbeque to friend over beers and sodas, only make the

Use headings to categorize your content and create a flow of information that is easy for your reader to follow and digest. That's what a great lawyer does anyway: takes complex information and presents it in a way that is persuasive, understandable and engaging.

way you talk about it sound juicier and spicier than Uncle Sheldon's baby back ribs.

For example, you can do a post about why Chinese Drywall should not make the list of best poisons to have in your home. While adding colourful commentary about the other household killers that are much more effective, you can discuss

the law and ramifications around the whole Chinese Drywall issue. This kind of post would intrigue users, because it appeals to their fascination trigger of Alarm that you learned about above.

After you've added the special sauce, i.e. your own special twist on the content, your job is to strip out the overly stuffy formality in your writing. Lawyers are experts when it comes to making things sound official, so when it comes to your social media copywriting, lighten up! Here's your chance to show off your brilliance in a laid back way.

Pretty cool.

Style & Rhythm. This refers to the way you format and construct your sentences.

Yes, it matters.

See what I did there, and have done throughout this eBook? I have used short sentences, broken up long paragraphs with carriage returns, and

created a sense of readability with lots of headings.

It works.

Break up long analysis with plenty of headings. Use the headings to categorize your content and create a flow of information that is easy for your reader to follow and digest. That's what a great lawyer does anyway: takes complex information and presents it in a way that is persuasive, understandable, and engaging.

Get writing. This is the most important point of all.

Regardless of anything else said on these pages, just writing is the most important part to developing the copywriting skills we have been discussing.

So what are you waiting for?

Write.

PART 3 - Searchability (SEO) & Calls to Action[‡]

The first part of this eBook touched on the idea of knowing whom you are writing for; the second part talked about turning your great ideas into content that speaks to your target audience; this third part is all about getting your content seen and getting people to do something as a result.

Searchability: SEO so simple, even a lawyer CAN do It

With the advent of Web 2.0 in the early 21st Century we also saw the rise of the SEO

There is no magic technique that will beat Google's search algorithm ... You can, however, better your chances of being seen online by doing a few simple things every time you post in social media.

professional. They called themselves any combination of names from “search guru” to “SEO ninja,” but semantics aside, the SEO Specialist claimed to have a “secret sauce” that would readily propel your obscure website to Page 1 of Google fame.

Sadly, the rumours of such a rise are greatly exaggerated.

There is no magic technique that will beat Google's search algorithm and place you at the top of millions of similarly situated sites, many of whom have produced valuable content on the web for years.

You can, however, better your chances of being seen by doing a few simple things every time you post in social media.

Understanding Page Rank: Drinking the “Google Juice”

[‡] Adapted from original content from the authors upcoming ebook on social media techniques, "Set Yourself on Fire: Attention Getting Tactics to Ignite Your Social Media Marketing."

Google is the biggest search engine in the world. As the web becomes semantic and social in its move to Web 3.0, Google will continue to be a main driver behind information categorization and search.

Social Media Tangent: Just look at the Google+ project; not only has Google emerged with a viable social network (unlike their previous attempts Orkut and Wave), they have integrated the +1 button (Google's version of Facebook's Like Button) into EVERY search result. This means that Google is not only indexing what you search for, but it is also indexing what you like in the results.

Google determines who gets the top spot in results by an algorithm called "PageRank." Named after Google co-founder Larry Page, this program works like a huge online voting system with other websites being the voters. They cast their ballots by linking to your site. The more links to your site, the more votes you get, the higher your PageRank climbs, and your site shows up higher in search results.

Not all links are created equal.

The key is to get links from websites with high page rankings. Ranked from 0 to 10 (with 10 being the best) getting a link from a site with a high page ranking is essential for your posts to show up higher in search results.

Links in action: as we said before, "not all links are created equal." For example, a link to your law blog from the Martindale Blog, which has a respectable PageRank of 6 would not weigh as heavily in your search favor as a link from Martindale.com, which has a PageRank of 7; a link from LexisNexis.com, which has a PageRank of 8 would trump both of these (think of it like PageRank Poker).

The bottom line is that PageRank is important. You want to know what yours is, and more importantly, how to improve upon it. Getting links to your site

is what you call “off page SEO,” and it’s one of the more powerful tactics.

Off page SEO tactic: guest blogging

One surefire way to get links to your blog is to write guest blog posts for a site with higher PageRank than yours. The steps that follow will help get you started the right way in the guest blogging game.

PageRank thermometer

Download a Chrome or Firefox extension that tells you the PageRank of the site you are browsing (if you are not using one of these two browsers ... ask yourself why). I use the Chrome Extension called “PageRank” because it’s lightweight, free, and awesome. [Click here](#) to visit the install page.

Know thy PageRank and go forth

First go to your own blog with your brand spanking new extension, and make a note of what your own PageRank is. Then find out the players in your practice area by doing a Google search using key words from your practice and filter the results by “blogs” (you can choose this on the left hand navigation of the Google search results page).

Visit the first few pages of results and note what their PageRank is. In many cases top results have higher PageRank (duh), but this isn’t always the case. Depending on how simple or complex your search was, even sites with lower overall PageRank may place high in search; this isn’t magic; they just used good on page SEO and got links to that post. These are not the droids you’re looking for. You want sites with high-ranking front pages and post pages.

Ask to guest blog

But first, get to know the blogger. Asking to guest blog out of the box₂₅



is like walking up to a stranger and asking them to dinner (okay, maybe it works sometimes, but not the greatest of tactics). Get to know the bloggers work and become a familiar face on their blog. After you've read a bunch of their posts, start leaving comments on their latest installments. The comments should be insightful, add to the conversation, and invite a response from other readers as well as the blogger. Then about 1 to 2 months after this, make a pitch to the blogger. See if there is an interesting angle you can offer to write about on a common subject, or even better, find an obscure subject to write about. Worst case scenario they say no; otherwise, you get yourself an opportunity to get exposure on a well read blog while adding valuable content to it.

Bring your A-game

The guest blog pieces you submit should be your best stuff. Link back to old posts on the guest blog itself rather than your own blog: peppering a guest post with links to your stuff can come off as selfish even though most people accept that guest bloggers are only doing the guest post to boost their own profile. Think of the 80/20 principle: if you have relevant posts of your own that add to the guest piece, then those links should only account for 20% of the links on the page. Don't forget, you will get to link back to your own site in the About the Author description which 99.9% of the sites you guest post for should have.

Now you will learn about "on page SEO" tactics, which is more in your domain of control (it's all comes from copywriting).

On page SEO: Know your keywords and phrases

By this point you no doubt have an idea of what you want to write in your web copy and whom you are writing for. Given that information it should be no difficult step to consider keywords that your should use within the copy itself to make it more searchable.

Try to think like your readers and potential clients: given the specific issues they tend to have, what terms and phrases are they likely to enter into Google when looking for an answer to their specific problem?

The following steps will show you how to start building upon your customer intelligence to generate key words that work.

Know your audience (even more)

You already read about this in Section 1, but it deserves emphasis here because deeply understanding your audience and potential buyers separates strategic marketing from shotgun marketing.

Shotgun shells are plastic casings filled with little pellets. When you fire a shell the pellets spread out in front of you in a spray of metal hitting everything within the reach of it's trajectory without prejudice. A regular bullet, however, hits the target in a precise spot.

When discussing copywriting and social media marketing techniques, you want to target rather than spray when crafting your message and copy. Shotgun techniques may be preferable in the buzz phase of your efforts, but when using keywords and writing copy you should look for precision.

Refer to the questions in Section 1 and ask these as well:

1. What kinds of questions do they post on discussion forums, either on consumer websites or sites like Lawyers.com?
2. What kinds of things do they say in their emails to you and how do they describe their problems?

These questions will help you to deepen your knowledge of your customers, and give you an idea of the kinds of terms they would use in searching Google.

Know your competition

There is no shortage of lawyers out there, likely doing very similar work to you. The following questions are aimed at seeing where your competition is focusing their keyword efforts:

1. How does your competition describe their solution for customers? What terms or phrases do they use? Can you differentiate and still capture the same market?
2. Does your competition have a blog? If so, what are some of the terms and phrases you see repeated in prominent spots on their site (besides the law firm name – why are law firms so enamoured with writing it everywhere?). What kinds of tags do they use in posts?

By looking at the competition's use of keywords and phrases you can be sure not to miss any terms and find ways to tweak terms somewhat to stay competitive without losing ground with customers.

Hone your keyword list

Based on your research above, you should already have started a list of keywords and phrases that can be used in SEO. Now it's time to really see how those keywords and phrases measure up.

Google keyword tool

The Google Keyword Tool is still one of the best free tools out there. It allows you to enter either a keyword and phrase to get started or a website. The results will show you how many Global and Local Monthly Searches are done using those keywords, and what the competition is like if you want to bid on the keywords in Google Ads.

Practice Tips: SEOBook is another great site for SEO information with lots of free tools. Where many people might already have a Google account that works with Google's tools, you will need to sign up for an SEOBook account to access their tools. There is also a Premium upgrade option.

[Click here](#) to access SEOBook.

The list provided can give you a good sense of (a) the volume of searches around your keywords and phrases and (b) the likelihood of your page showing up high in search results. If there is a high volume of search with a low threshold of competition then you've found a winner.

[Click here](#) to access the Google Key Word Tool.

Add your keywords to your copy

You may have come across a keyword spam site in your Google search results at some point on the web. These are sites that have superficial content packed with keywords just to draw traffic, most likely for advertising dollars.

Don't be that guy.

Just because you've gotten a good sense of keywords now doesn't mean you want to go over to the dark side and start doing spam search pages. The point is to be cognizant of keywords, especially in the editing phase of your copy, to see where you can naturally include them.

Some best practices include:

1. Including at least 1-keyword or phrase in your headline or title
2. Finding places for keywords or phrases in your headers (H1 and H2), particularly if you can ask a question, such as "When Is It Time to Call a Bankruptcy Lawyer?" or "What Should I Bring to My Deposition?"
3. Using keywords in the body copy while paying attention to *keyword density*.

Keyword density refers to the number of times a keyword or phrase appears on a page in relation to other words. Generally a 1% to 3% keyword density is acceptable to search engines before they start to get suspicious that you are spamming keywords.

How to write a Call to Action

This is a line in your ad (or blog post, article, etc.) that asks the reader to do something. The power of calls to action cannot be overlooked because often they are the whole point of the copy you have created. Regardless, many copywriters, especially lawyers, never really pose the question that is the whole point of what they've written.

For example, you can write an in depth analysis on Securities Law and then add a line at the end saying: "Submit your questions about this new SEC ruling in the comments below, and I'll be happy to answer it." Most blogs require the entry of a valid email address to comment, so your call to action just picked you up a potential lead.

A variation on the above example, and one that may work better among clients who do not want to start commenting on their specific issues publicly can be a simple link to an email form where they can ask a question privately or call you for more information. Your call to action can be tweaked then to say, "The new SEC regulations are confusing: [click here] [link to contact page] for an email form where you can ask me anything about them privately; I'll be happy to answer as best I can."

Three-steps to writing great Calls to Action

Feeling better about calls to action already? Good. Follow these three steps to go from good to great calls to action:

1. **Be clear, Be Specific** - don't dance around the issue. If you want them to watch a video say, "watch this video." If you want them to click to get 20% off their next purchase or book a seat at a seminar then say so. People will appreciate the honesty and frankly they don't have the attention span to figure out what you want them to do.
2. **Excite the user** – clarity doesn't require boredom. You can precede a link with

something to the effect of: “Crush Them in Court: Download Our Free Litigation for Clients Kit Today” or “Traffic Tickets Stink: Click Here to Learn How to Get Out of Them.” Add a little drama and get people to act.

3. **Start with key phrases** – while the first two tips are definitely important, don’t feel you need reinvent the wheel every time. There are key phrases that resonate with your buyer, a lingo that speaks to them. Start with that, spice it up, and then simplify. Refer to your keyword list.

Calls to action are simple: just ask your readers to do something.