Marketing for Solicitors and Law Firms: 7 Tips for Email Marketing

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When it comes to law firm marketing and growing your law firm revenue, one of the most powerful, cost-effective, and beneficial tools you can use is email marketing. What is email marketing? Simply put, it's the process of sending out relevant and interesting emails to people who have signed up to receive your law firm newsletter/email marketing, often to encourage them to take a specific action.

If you've been in the legal space for a while, you might have more experience with printed law firm newsletters that were sent out monthly, quarterly, or annually (or sometimes whenever someone could get to it!). The process of creating the law firm newsletter may have consisted of adding anything and everything that might have been relevant. The process of marketing the law firm newsletter likely consisted of leaving a printed copy in the office or at events for clients.

These days, clients and prospective clients expect something different. While the printed newsletter is still around, and can have a place in your law firm marketing activities, increasingly in an online world, email marketing for solicitors and law firms can have a much bigger (and more trackable) impact—without large costs.

If done correctly, email marketing can be a key part of your overall digital marketing strategy. It's inexpensive and can typically bring in a high return on investment.

Here are our top 7 email marketing tips for law firms looking to capitalise on this online growth channel.

1. Start with a clear goal in mind

You might be reading this because you've heard of the value of email as part of a law firm marketing plan. Perhaps you searched for a term like "marketing for solicitors," "marketing the law firm newsletter," or "email marketing for solicitors" and it brought you here. Or, you see that other law firms are doing it and you want to make sure your firm is keeping up with the competition.

This article will give you some key insights into how to do all of those things, but before commencing on any email marketing strategy, ask yourself one important question:

"What am I trying to achieve with email marketing for my law firm?"

That might sound facetious, but it is an essential consideration before you start creating email marketing content. One major mistake that a lot of law firms make is that they begin email marketing for the sake of doing it. They don't think about the "why"; instead, they just start sending out content. They throw every contact from their network into one giant email list and then sporadically send out "general updates" whenever it feels like the right time. (Not only is that likely to be ineffective, it may not be GDPR compliant since the recipients have not opted in to receive marketing communications.) Then, because they don't see any achievement or return on the effort, they abandon it.

In order to achieve the best results, you should start an email marketing campaign with a very specific goal in mind. In the legal sector, there are a number of goals that can form part of your law firm's email marketing strategy: keeping in touch with past clients; generating referrals from other lawyers or professionals; converting prospects (i.e. potential clients) into new clients. Maybe it's a mix of all of the above. Whatever it is, be clear before you write a single email what it is you want to achieve.

Then, decide also how regularly you will send out emails. Too often and people might unsubscribe; not often enough and people might forget why they subscribed to you! How often you send emails out will depend on you and the time you have, but decide this in advance. (You can always tweak your plans if the cadence ends up not working for you.) I recommend at least once a month and possibly weekly or fortnightly if you have the time. Whatever you choose, be dependable in when you send your email marketing out; your subscribers will come to expect to hear from you on a certain day and time. To maintain consistency of schedule, make two notes on your calendar: the date you will start writing the email and the date you will send the email out. (Those should typically not be the same date!)

2. Pick the right email marketing service for you

One other step to take before you dive into writing email content for your law firm marketing: You need to figure out how much you would like to spend on your email marketing and what email marketing provider gives you what you need.

The good news about cost is that it is possible to start an email marketing strategy for free or at a small cost. As you scale your activities, you might have to move to a paid subscription.

In terms of providers, your needs will vary, but look for an email marketing service provider that is both reliable and that enables you to easily create attractive emails easily. Be sure to pay attention to security settings: GDPR and data privacy are essential, so check that your email marketing service provider is robust in this regard. Additionally, you'll want to choose a provider that can manage your contact list, segment users into groups, and provide reliable analytics to track performance. (More on these things later.)

One of the most popular providers for email newsletters is Mailchimp. It's free up to 2,000 contacts and has a variety of email designs to choose right out of the box. It's one of the most popular email service providers out there and it also provides integration with Clio Grow(Clio's cloud-based client intake and legal client relationship management (CRM) software) to sync law firm contacts, track leads and monitor growth.

There are also other service providers like Constant Contact, Aweber, Autopilot which have their own features as well. Do your own research and decide which one meets your law firm's goals.

3. Keep emails concise and focused

Now that you're ready to start writing, the key rule is to keep things short and relevant. Busy people, who might often be reading your email on the go or on a phone, will usually not read long emails.

This can be a hard adjustment for lawyers and legal professionals: You can be used to delivering deep into a topic and approaching it from many angles. That's what makes you good at the law, after all! In law firm email marketing, however, you need to resist the urge to write long. According to data from Constant Contact, an email marketing software company, emails with 20 lines of text have the highest click-through rates (i.e. readers clicking a link you have included in your email).

When someone opens up your email and sees that it's eight paragraphs long without any images or other content, they won't be very likely to read it. Keep your emails concise and focused, and try to include other media assets like photos or videos whenever possible to make the content more interesting.

If you have a lot to say, try linking your email to a full article or post on your blog, and just include a snippet of the text in the actual body of the email. This is an excellent way of keeping emails short, and it also helps drive traffic to your website.

4. Focus on providing value

With so many emails hitting everyone's inbox on a daily basis, it's easy for messages to be overlooked. Your goal with any email marketing strategy should always be to create content that people actually *want* to read.

Sounds simple enough, but this is usually the hardest part. In fact, the average email open rate for the legal industry is estimated to be only 22.49%.

So how can you maximise the number of people who actually read your content, enjoy it, and look forward to receiving it in their inbox?

The best approach is to focus on providing as much value to your email recipients as possible. There are a few ways to do this:

Share your perspective on relevant current events

Providing legal analysis on current events is a great way to demonstrate your knowledge and position yourself at the forefront of your industry.

For example, for probate law firms, share your thoughts about how changes happening to tax policies could affect your clients' probate plans. If you're a commercial law firm, outline how new legislation might affect firms in your target market. If you're in immigration law, perhaps there are conversations happening about visas and asylum matters that your prospective clients might be concerned about. Sharing your insights can help to build confidence in your expertise.

Note: If your firm practises a number of areas of law, segmenting your subscribers so that they're seeing only the most relevant emails can be a good idea. Find more information on that in Step 5.

Break down complex concepts and present them in a simple way

The law is complicated and it can be intimidating to navigate for those without a legal education. By presenting complex legal concepts in a simplified manner, you can help clients understand the problems they may be facing and establish credibility for yourself in the process.

For example, if you are a personal injury lawyer, perhaps you could create a simple infographic that explains the process of filing and pursuing a claim from start to finish. Or, if you practise family law, outline the typical process that happens in a divorce or custody case. A reader may not act on this information immediately, but when they need your services (or want to recommend you to someone else), this kind of email can be valuable.

Repurpose popular posts on your website

You don't always have to generate a fresh piece of content for different channels, including your email list. You can repurpose old blog posts in different forms through an infographic, video, or a podcast as part of email campaigns. In fact, this is not only something you can do but something you *should* do. Driving more traffic (visitors) to your website or other content helps with SEO and the chances of others reading content that is relevant to them.

5. Optimise emails for recipients

The trick to keeping email subscribers reading is to make the experience as relevant and enjoyable as possible. Here are a few ways to do that:

Segment your email lists

If you specialise in one particular area of law, you may be happy to talk to all email subscribers at once. As you grow your subscriber list, however, you might decide that you want to send different material to different types of readers, e.g. current clients, past clients, potential clients, professional contacts etc. Or, your firm might practise law across a spectrum of legal areas. In either case, it can be helpful to segment your email list. That involves a bit of work upfront and means you need to bucket subscribers into different email lists. (Most email marketing services are capable of doing this.)

One easy way to segment is to ask those subscribing to your email marketing to choose what topics/practice areas they are interested in hearing more about. Then, when it comes time to send an email, you should send it only to those who have indicated they are interested in that topic.

Though there is work in this, it typically keeps subscribers more engaged and therefore happy to receive your emails.

Call to action

With every email you're sending out, you need to know what your "call to action" will be. "Call to action" is a marketing term for prompting the recipient to take an action. Do you want them to contact you? Put a link at the bottom of your email that makes it easy to do so. Do you want to inform them? Link additional resources they might find useful. Do you want them to visit your website? Add links to informative blog posts or to your areas of practice.

Test your emails

Before you send out an email, make sure to send a test email and view it on as many device types and email servicer providers as you can. You want to ensure that your email looks just as professional on a mobile phone as it does on a desktop computer and as good on Gmail or Hotmail, for example, as on Outlook.

Additionally, be sure to consider the technical limitations of some email service providers. For instance, in Gmail attachments cannot exceed 25MB. Also, it's recommended to have a maximum of 100KB in HTML size to have easy deliverability and no display issues.

Also, keep in mind that mobile data is dependent on network coverage and may be slow in certain areas. Consequently, having large email sizes may end up ruining the experience of mobile users when the email doesn't show up properly.

6. Measure your results and iterate

You've created an email marketing strategy for your law firm, you have a clear goal in mind, and you've sent out interesting and engaging content. Now what? Measure your results. If necessary, adjust your strategy if what you're doing isn't achieving the goals you set out. Most email marketing software, such as MailChimp or Constant Contact, will give you some decent analytics right out of the box. You should be analysing two important metrics for all your campaigns:

- **Open rate**: The percentage of recipients who actually opened the email
- **Click through rate**: The percentage of those people who opened the email that also clicked a link inside

Why do these numbers matter? Because they help you measure whether or not you are achieving your goals.

Open rate

You don't necessarily have to do an in-depth analysis, but just pay attention to your numbers. The open rate is a good indicator of how compelling your subject lines and email topics are.

A good rule of thumb on email subject lines to be snappy, relevant, and simple to understand. For example, if you are writing to non-legal experts, the subject line "How New Trading Rules Will Affect SMEs" is far more interesting than "[Name of Act] (Amendment) 2022: A Legal Analysis." The opposite might be true when writing to those in the legal field. Posing questions or creating intrigue can also increase open rates, but be careful not to be misleading or "clickbaity".

Also, understanding where the email ends up will help to increase the discoverability of your emails. For instance in Gmail, the probability of someone opening your email is higher when it's delivered straight to the email recipient's Inbox as opposed to the Updates or Promotions tab. So, then the question is, how would you make sure the emails are delivered straight to the inbox? Some factors to consider would be things like spam complaints, volume of emails, email content, and so on. Find the full list here.

Click-through rate

The click-through rate is a measure of how engaging your emails are. Some people may just open the email and not read it or just skim it. But if they click on any of the links you've included in the email, they are definitely interested in what you are writing about.

Use these metrics to find out what kinds of content your audiences like to consume. The more of this data you analyse, the better you get to know your audience's tastes and can deliver content that will resonate.

7. Building a subscriber list

We've talked about meaningfully engaging with end users and nurturing prospects into future clients. But all of that would be irrelevant if you don't have a high-quality email list to begin with.

Before we get into how to build an email list, a note: When you create an email marketing list, you need to be mindful of GDPR rules and regulations. You don't want to create great content and a big subscriber list only to discover you've fallen foul of data protection regulations and guidelines. Before you start collecting subscriber information, check with your local law society or regulatory authority to make sure you're compliant with GDPR and other data security rules and best practice guidelines.

How do you go about attracting subscribers? All of the below are a good starting point:

- Add a subscription box prominently on your website
- Add a link to sign up on your social media channels
- Add a subscription link in your email signature

Make sure you make the link as prominent as possible in all places. It shouldn't fade into the background.

Outside of that, giving something away for free can be a fantastic way to build your subscriber list. The best way to do that is to provide a free asset that would help solve a problem for your users. This will also help to build authority and trust. The free content could be a PDF, a video series, or a webinar in the area that you specialise in.

Suppose you specialise in the area of employment law. Your free asset could be on the topic of "things to consider when hiring part-time employees" or "the essential differences between contractors and employees."

You don't need to stop at one free asset either; the more you offer, the more chances you have of building that all-important list.

Summary

Email marketing is one of the best ways to market to people who are already in your network and keep them up to date with the latest events happening at law firms. It can help you maintain strong relationships, drive repeat business from existing clients, generate more referrals, and attract potential clients.

It doesn't matter what your firm type, size, or practice area is: email marketing is something you should give serious consideration to you as part of your overall law firm marketing strategy.

Just be sure to keep these seven email marketing tips for lawyers in mind before you start.

About Clio

Clio is the global leader in legal AI, powering legal work across the profession, from law firms of every size to corporate legal teams, government agencies, and courts. Its Intelligent Legal Work Platform unites the business and practice of law, connecting the people, information, and processes behind legal work. Clio's AI brings the context together with legal sources drawn from Clio Library, a growing collection of more than one billion legal documents. Over 400,000 legal professionals in more than 130 countries rely on Clio to run their legal world. Learn more at www.clio.com.