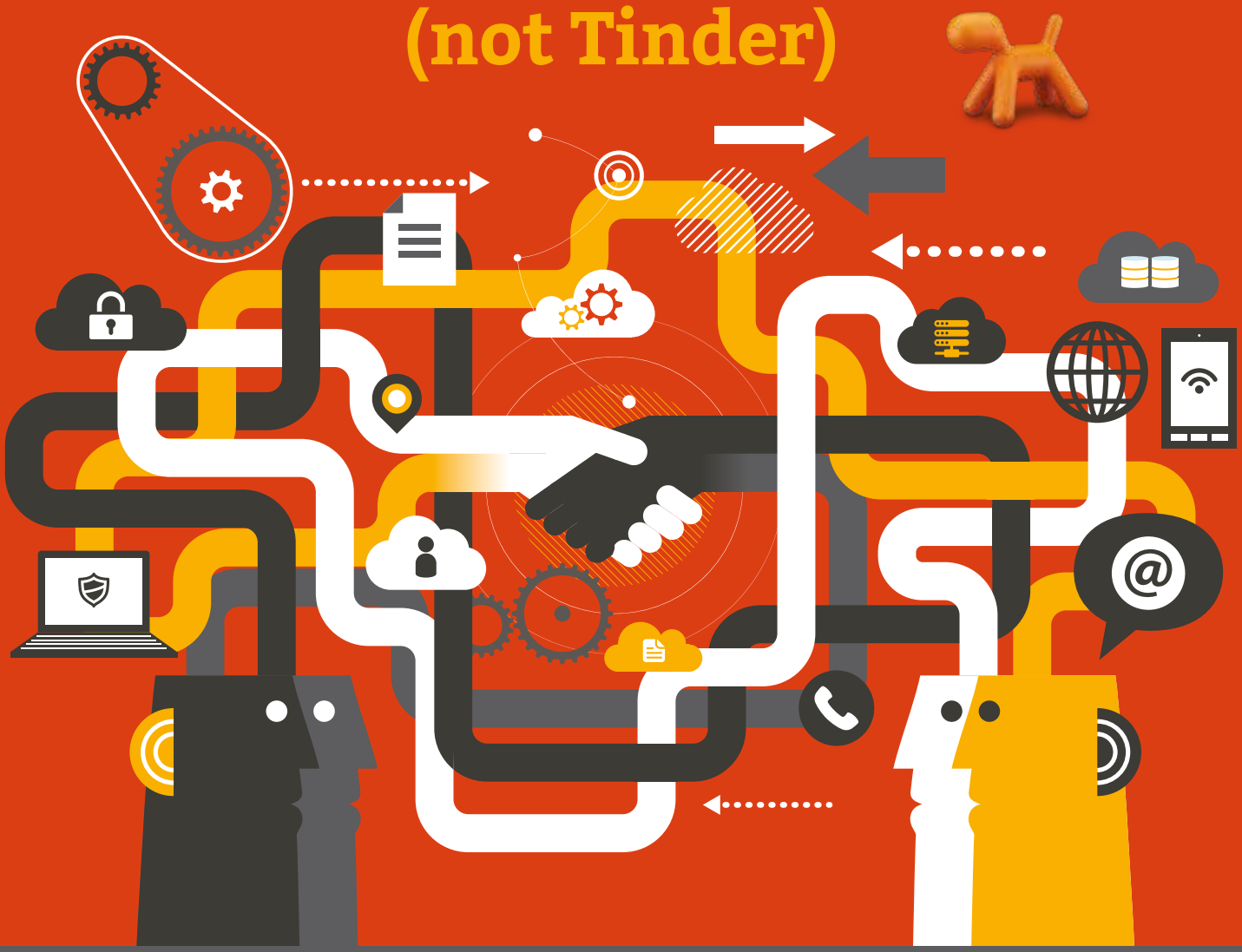
conscious

brand, design & marketing for law firms

Building relationships in a digital world

(not Tinder)



Client Interviews

Emily Raw – Jobling Gowler
Maurice Tunney – Keystone Law
Angie Gurdon – hpjv Solicitors
Lucy Harttrup – Barcan+Kirby

Conscious Top Tips

Conscious (Print) ISSN 2514-1473

Welcome to the Conscious Magazine

2019 and the 3rd issue of our Conscious Magazine. Now in our 16th year it feels a bit strange that a predominantly 'online' agency is doing print, but I keep telling people that print isn't dead! So, I didn't want you to miss out on a version of our magazine, that once again is full of great content, top tips and useful insights.

Inside you will gain loads of knowledge around digital marketing and how to build relationships in a digital world (no..I don't mean Tinder). Including, how to get more engagement through LinkedIn connections, how to prove your ROI (as we always know that's a tricky one), how to improve your client/agency relationship (we hope that's not a tricky one) and even more interviews from various people in law firms.

If you like what you see (or heck, if you don't) please do let the team know via Twitter **@conscioussol** or via email at **magazine@conscious.co.uk**

David Gilroy
Managing Director of Stuff & Things

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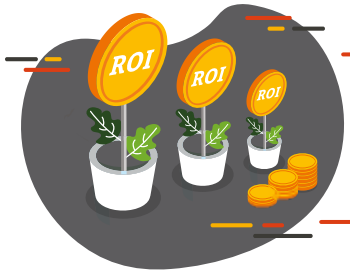

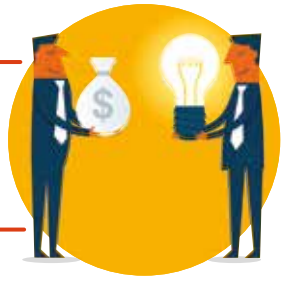

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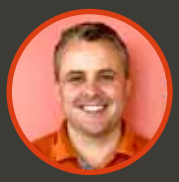
WIN A FREE SOCIAL MEDIA WORKSHOP
If you find a typo, please let us know and for the first report we get of any typo we will donate £5 to charity and put all reports into a draw for a free social media workshop!

LinkedIn

Stop being boring and start being engaging – my 5 top tips



RICH DIBBINS
Head of Sales and Digital Strategy
Conscious Solutions

If you are not on LinkedIn, what digital rock have you been hiding under?
Or maybe you tried it out and you didn't see the benefit in using it? Well, times have changed – Microsoft now owns LinkedIn and the way the LinkedIn audience interacts with content and profiles has greatly changed.

A lot of people will see some profiles bragging about their "40,000" followers or 10,000 connections. This is great when you become an influencer, but how did they get there? I can tell you how...by not being boring and by engaging with their audience. Yes, some sponsored ads may have played a role in this, but that can only get you so far.

It's actually pretty simple – put boring content out and, guess what? People won't engage with it. Put exciting and edgy content out that is going to spark a conversation, and people will start paying attention.

Unfortunately, there is no real silver bullet when it comes to creating engaging content. Everyone has a different audience, demographic and service offering. However, this also provides a great opportunity. Creating content that's carefully tailored to your audience and business can really help you stand out and cut through the noise on popular platforms like LinkedIn.

Here are my 5 simple tips to follow to help you get more engagement and hopefully begin to have more meaningful conversations with potential and existing clients.

1 Strategy

Every firm will have some form of marketing and business plan. But when it comes to social media, it often gets left to the youngest paralegal or intern to "dabble". Then they get disappointed because, surprise, it didn't work!

A strategy for social media doesn't need to be *War & Peace*. It just needs to have the right fundamentals. Ask yourself:

A – What platforms are you going to be on?
B – Who is going to be responsible for the content and report to the firm?
C – What do you want to achieve from social media?

2 Stop pushing the same old dross!

Yes, that's right, stop cluttering up my news feed with posts about divorce, conveyancing, litigation etc. etc. Yawn!

Instead, use the rule of 3 in 10. For every 10 posts you make, only 3 should be directly related to your firm e.g. services and profiles. The rest should be about related current news stories and relevant non-legal things e.g. something local to your offices, topical or involving a charity you support.

If I spoke to you about all things orange and digital day in day out, you would switch off. Human interest stories typically get some of the biggest interaction on social media, so don't miss out.

3 Video

54% of consumers want to see more video content from a brand or business they support according to research by HubSpot.

Done right, video can have a huge impact on your social media engagement levels. But it doesn't need to be all Hollywood and green screens. There are some great tools to help easily create video content. One I use is called Typito, which offers both freemium and premium version.

The best videos I have seen in the legal industry are "how to" videos such as 'how to make a will' or 'how to get divorced'. Animation is great way to get your firm to tell a story of a legal service. The story just needs to cover the problem, the solution and the satisfaction of the client.

4 We want to have conversations

So, start tagging people in your posts. If you attend an event or conference, tag who you met. Make them feel special by giving them a shout out. When we see that little red notification with our name on it, we get that warm fuzzy feeling. Would you go to a networking event and not talk to anyone? No, of course, you wouldn't. So, get tagging.

5 Report and review

Probably the most important one. How do you know what does or doesn't work without reviewing your performance? Use tools like Hootsuite or Buffer to help measure your performance. They are free and will save you time. You can then upgrade to their paid versions if you feel the additional features offered would be helpful.

Futureproof your LinkedIn strategy

LinkedIn is going to go through many changes over the next few years. They are always tweaking and updating the way they work to find new ways to help visitors. Ignore people who say they "know how to beat the algorithm", they don't. Not even LinkedIn staff know when these types of changes are going to happen.

To make the most out of LinkedIn and see long-term success, you need to understand your audience and make small adjustments to your content, constantly reviewing what does and doesn't work. And most important of all, LinkedIn is your professional network to build credible relationships, so don't fill it with crap and be selfish. It's called 'Social Media", so be social.

A day in the life of a Social Media Manager

The good, the bad and the ugly.

I'm Laura, the Social Media Manager here at Conscious. A lot of people will probably assume that my job is a fairly easy one, and in some ways it is. There are lots of things I love about my job, but also a number of things that can be quite frustrating to deal with. So, I thought I'd give you some insight into the good, the bad and the ugly sides to being a Social Media Manager!

The GOOD

Creativity

Not everyone realises that a role in social media is actually quite a creative one. I get to draw and build on a lot of my skills in this job. For example, my job involves copywriting, image creation, video creation, data analysing, public speaking and customer service. No day is the same as the next and it keeps me on my toes. I love that, at Conscious, I'm given the flexibility to try new ideas and learn new skills.

Always learning

The world of social media is constantly changing. It takes me a good amount of time to get to grips with the latest algorithm changes, what they mean and how it affects my clients. There are also new social media platforms and apps popping up almost on a monthly basis and it is my job to find out what they are, what kind of users they are attracting and whether our clients should be using them. On top of that, I'm constantly learning new things about law as I read A LOT of content every day, in order to write legal blogs.

No, I don't just sit on Twitter all day

When people ask me what I do for a living and I tell them, I'm often met with blank expressions and then inevitably "What...so you just mess around on Twitter all day?" On the contrary, the actual scheduling of posts and being logged into the social channels probably only accounts for about 30% of my job.

The rest of my time is spent doing things like writing blogs, doing social media research, creating strategies, conducting audits, completing reports and preparing for client meetings and training days. You'd be surprised how much effort goes behind 'messing around on Twitter'.

Getting great feedback from clients

One of the best parts of my job is receiving feedback from clients who are really happy with the work I have done and the results I have produced. Let's face it, everyone loves to be told they've done a good thing, but it really helps to motivate me to carry on doing the absolute best I can in everything I do.

Fear of algorithms

The fear is real! But seriously, hardly a month goes by without Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram and others tweaking their algorithms and platforms. Sometimes these are positive changes that will give my clients' channels a helping hand. However, more often than not, these changes bring challenges that force me to adjust my strategy and find a new way to cut through the noise on social media.

One such example was when Facebook gave personal accounts priority over businesses in the news feed. Businesses panicked, assuming the worst, many saying they would leave the platform. The change forced businesses to reconsider their strategies and focus more on quality than quantity and really knowing your audience.

Social media blackouts

Similar to algorithms, but not as terrifying, is a social media blackout. Oddly enough, as I write this, Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp are all currently down on a global scale, with users not able to load photos. An occurrence which is becoming far more frequent since Mark Zuckerberg acquired Instagram and WhatsApp, adding to his ever-growing empire and shared infrastructure.

As a Social Media Manager, not being able to access social media is thoroughly annoying and frustrating, particularly as often it is not clear when these issues will be fixed. This is why I always keep a list of tasks I can perform offline, should I not be able to use social media for any reason.

Running out of ideas

There is nothing worse than running out of new and fresh content ideas when that is essentially your job in a nutshell! Surprisingly, it is a very common problem amongst social media content creators. There are times when I feel like I've tried everything within my power (and most importantly – budget!) to get results but none of it is working. In these situations, I have to take a step back and look at the wider picture to re-evaluate the client's objectives and see if we can come up with a fresh angle to take.

The pressure to prove ROI

The notorious ROI. In the past, I have had clients who were expecting to see massive results in clicks through to their website or for hundreds of enquiries to have come through after just one month of social media activity. However, what many people fail to realise, is that social media is a slow burner.

Getting tangible results from social media takes a lot of time building up a credible and trustworthy reputation, hitting the right note with your audience and carefully planning and timing your content. The idea being that when one of your followers eventually needs your services, they'll think of you first. I understand that this is not what many clients want to hear, but unfortunately, it is the truth. As the saying goes, good things come to those who wait.

There is no handbook

Ten years ago, very few people would have been employed as a Social Media Manager. Since the explosion of social networks, most businesses have realised that they need to (sometimes begrudgingly) jump onto the social media bandwagon, so they now employ someone to deal solely with their social media channels.

The downside to this is that there aren't really any veteran social media experts and when I started working in social media, there weren't any training courses I could attend or qualifications I could gain. Due to the evolutionary nature of social media – no one can really know everything.

Luckily (and ironically) thanks to social media, there are hundreds if not thousands of networks of really great people working in the industry. These are people who I can get advice from and chat through ideas with at the touch of a button. The launch of Social Media Week in Bristol back in 2018 has also been a great boost, giving me real insights that I can apply to my role day-to-day.

I don't have all the answers

I'd say that this is a bad thing – but also a good thing. There are times when I'm asked why something didn't work or why traffic has decreased or why followers have dipped. The truth is, there are a myriad of reasons why these things have happened. In a way, this is bad because I don't have a straight answer. But looking at it another way, this is a good thing, because as I mentioned before, I'm constantly learning, and I don't like to say that I have all the answers.

Similarly, if I'm asked to predict how many followers a client is likely to have in X amount of months' time – I refuse to give an answer, because I honestly just don't know. Social media is constantly changing and something that worked 6 months ago, won't necessarily work today. The challenge is to be flexible and work with the changes, not against them.

If a phone is ringing, we will answer it

conscious

- I can't log into my website
- I can't change the text on my website
- I can't add images to my homepage


Grace


Brodie


Oscar

CALL OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE TEAM

0117 325 0210

OR EMAIL

support@conscious.co.uk

How to conquer email marketing and engage your audience by 2020

1

LOUISE PALMER
Head of Marketing
Conscious Solutions

Email marketing is still one of the most effective ways to reach, engage and build relationships with your target audience. While we often think of email as a modern technology, it actually goes back as far as 1971! Moving on nearly 50 years and there are billions of emails sent/received worldwide every day. The average office worker receives 121 emails, each day. However, most people open less than a quarter of the emails that land in their inbox, meaning the majority of emails sent never get read by their intended recipients.

So how do you grab people's attention and make sure your email is one of the ones they engage with? The secret is personalisation and targeting.

Make it valuable

Be on their side. Remind your audience they are not alone. Marketing is no longer about the product or services you offer, but about the stories you tell. Empathise with them, tell them you understand their struggles and ask how you can help. Prospects and clients don't buy a product or service because of its glitzy features. They make a purchase because it solves a problem for them. Be helpful, be generous, be friendly, be like a friend and don't just email your audience when you need something from them!

Make it relevant

According to Mailchimp, recipients are 75% more likely to click on emails from segmented campaigns than non-segmented campaigns. Therefore, it's important to divide your lists into segments that align with recipients' positions in the sales funnel. For example, a new client would receive an email telling them about your law firm and how you can help, so you can start to build a relationship, whereas you would nurture an existing client by providing them with something more specific that they will value.

Get personal

The best emails feel personal, so make sure personalisation and subject lines are key as emails can easily be drowned out in overflowing and noisy inboxes. It's important to make sure a familiar sender name resonates with the recipient and to avoid the 'no-reply' sender name at all times. So, what makes a good subject line? A subject line is the deciding factor on whether your email will be opened and whether it entices enough curiosity from the recipients who reads your emails. Mailchimp did an interesting study to find out what makes us open and what doesn't, and found that emails performed best if they:

- **Personalise:** First name and last name work best and can increase open rate by 20%
- **Create urgency:** With time-limited offers or attention-grabbing words
- **Focus on positive:** Use invitations and announcements rather than cancellations and reminders
- **Thank the recipient:** Whether it's for signing up or for their ongoing support, use the words 'thank you' in your subject lines and the open rate can increase by 62%

Get testing

Perhaps you're not sure which subject lines are more likely to get an email opened, or which colour scheme or image is more eye catching? This is where A/B testing should be used. Firstly, you decide what you want to test and the size of your sample group, then create up to three variations on each test. This could be anything from templates, sending times and different content i.e. call to action "Buy Now" vs "See Plans and Pricing" or the subject line "New Product Launch" vs "First 10 to sign up to our new product receive a discount". You can then compare the open rates and click rates and see which campaign is the most successful.

Choose the right tools

There are a lot of email marketing tools you can use, with our preferred choice being Mailchimp. Mainly used for email campaigns and newsletters, it allows you to focus on audiences and ensure the right message is reaching your desired target market. It also allows you to check how well your campaign is doing through the reports tool. We also recommend adding a tracking tool to your emails. CANDDi is a website tracking tool which allows you to see where your audience are going on your website. By adding this tracking to your emails, you can see who visited your website and gauge what they are interested in, allowing you to further tailor communications with them at a later stage.

Make it part of your bigger marketing campaigns

There are lots of things you need to consider when developing your email marketing strategy, including how you will grow your email list, what types of content you will offer your clients and how you are going to influence more conversions over time. But if you want to conquer email marketing and engage your target audience into 2020, you'll need to make it part of your overall digital marketing strategy and develop a comprehensive marketing plan to strive to gain the highest ROI possible with your allotted budget. Are you looking to double the size of your business, increase it slightly or just protect your current levels of fee income? Either way, taking a strategic approach to marketing your firm is crucial to the outcome.

The Interview

Emily Raw

Managing Partner, Jobling Gowler

I have found it invaluable to diarise one hour a week to read and reflect broadly on issues facing the profession and the wider business community.

Q Having worked in the legal sector for nearly 10 years you must have come across a variety of challenges; how do you approach these?

The legal sector is facing a variety of challenges, some of which are unique to law firms, but many are shared across the knowledge professions. There is a breadth of experience in the commercial world for us to draw from and we can learn together how best to respond.

As a professional manager, my job is to look beyond the walls of our business and reflect on how the firm can continue to thrive effectively in today's environment. I have found it invaluable to diarise one hour a week to read and reflect broadly on issues facing the profession and the wider business community.

Jobling Gowler has been very forward thinking in employing a professional manager to the board. Our lawyers can concentrate on what they do best – helping our clients. It's about working to everyone's strengths.

Q You have been a Managing Partner since 2017, what's your management style and how has this impacted the firm?

I've always been quite driven, setting high expectations for myself which I extend to the whole firm. My challenge is to ensure that we balance pursuing excellence with maintaining the caring values of the firm.

I am happy when our clients are happy, the team are proud of the service they've provided and when we've made a positive difference to our community. I'm proud that I am not alone in prioritising client-centred values at Jobling Gowler. It's this integrity that attracted me to working at the firm and why I'm still here!

The fundraising initiatives for local charities and the free public information workshops that we run, are not bolt on CSR projects, but are hallmarks of what we are about.

Q Do you get the opportunity to meet up with people in similar roles to you and does this help with progression of the firm?

As a non-lawyer manager, I have ended up at fairly dry compliance training events, which don't engender an environment for positive conversation and networking! However, for the last few years I have attended the annual Symphony Legal Conference which has been positive for the firm and for me personally. The conferences provide a valuable opportunity to learn from others about how they are responding to key challenges, but also to inspire and motivate us in moving forward.

In 2014, I vividly remember Shaun Jardine from Brethertons speaking (dressed as a penguin!) about the value of non-lawyer managers and how his appointment of non-lawyers to the board had made a big difference to his firm. This was pivotal for me in believing that I could and should pursue more and that I have value to the legal sector. Legal management is always changing and throwing new challenges, so I find it invaluable to get the opportunity to learn from others who are mastering it!

Q We notice you take part in lots of fundraising activities for charity; how important is this to the firm?

In a society where lawyers don't have the greatest reputation, our key fundamental differentiator has to be how we 'relate' and how we 'care'. As a growing business (particularly a law firm), our public conduct shapes our reputation and demonstrates the integral nature and values of our firm.

For us then, the art exhibitions that we host throughout the year provide a valuable way to fundraise for local charities, support local artists and to provide a welcoming environment for clients and members of the public. The fundraising initiatives for local charities and the free public information workshops that we run, are not bolt on CSR projects, but are hallmarks of what we are about.

Thank you, Emily, for speaking to us!

UX Your Client Personas

TRACEY STOCK
Design Director
Conscious Solutions

It's a familiar term in any web related conversation nowadays. But what does it mean exactly?

User experience or 'UX' is all about knowing your audience and understanding what it is like from their perspective to interact with your service or product. It is practiced regularly by UX designers but also product managers, product designers, entrepreneurs, start-ups and forward-thinking organisations. It's why Google is quick and easy to use and why Apple is supported by such a loyal client base. It's intuitive. You can find what you're looking for and feel a connection - a satisfaction that your problem has been answered. More and more well-designed websites will have gone through a 'user journey' process and will be more successful for it.

But before you can think about designing a website you need to understand what type of user will visit your site. Get into their mindset. Personas are fictional characters that represent different user types that might use your service. On a project, you might create any number of personas to be representative of a range of users. They help define what different user types might be looking for, their needs, experiences, behaviours and goals. Within the legal sector, for example, a corporate client will have a very different need and expectation to a client who has been involved in a life-changing injury. Their different requirements and expectations can all be mapped out to give both users an efficient, informative, empathetic and effective journey.

We've all visited websites that take too long to load, or the navigation is so complex you have no idea how to even find the telephone number. This creates a bad user experience and, unless you have the patience of a saint, you'll give up and move on within a minute of trying.

Good UX aims to provide a positive experience that keeps users coming back for more. It can help keep them loyal and promotes a trust that you are a credible business with accurate and informative content. It allows you to define customer journeys on your website which in turn are more conducive to the success of your business. This attention to usability is the main distinction between how successful a beautiful looking site is and how effective a website that has good UX is. Beautiful design can be aesthetically pleasing, good design must have good functionality.

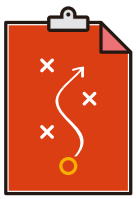
What is the UX process?

A UX DESIGN PROCESS IS SIMILAR TO A DESIGN BRIEFING APPROACH, AND CONSISTS OF FOUR BASIC STAGES:

1. User behaviour

It's important to understand how different users think and what they do to solve existing problems. Identify their needs and constraints and find solutions that are easy to use and solve real issues. Create personas to represent different target audience types so that specific areas can focus on a particular client's needs.

2. Strategy



Understand your business and customer goals and plan a design solution that aligns both. Define the problem by observing and asking questions - this is a great way to reveal frustrations and identify key areas within the business that need addressing.

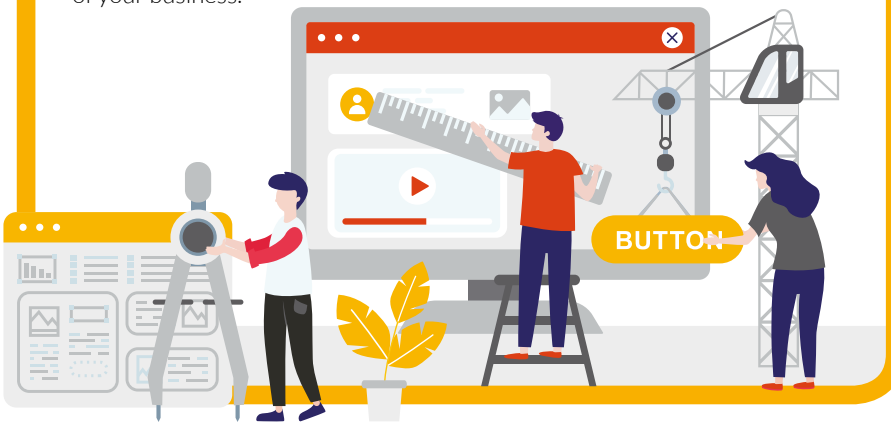
3. Layout

An initial layout that defines the hierarchy of the website. It looks at the user journey - how a user moves through a design to achieve a goal. A sitemap provides the structure for the navigation that should work exactly as your users expect. The interactions are intuitive and so well designed that users don't have to think. They just touch, read, scroll and interact until they reach their goal.

4. Usability

It's easy to think that because a site looks beautiful, stylish, edgy or cool, it's a good design. If a design does not help the user solve a problem, or confuses them, or makes solving a problem extremely challenging, then it's not a good design. Usability is all about making it easy for everyone to use - regardless of disabilities or constraints.

So, invest the time in UX design. Make it easy for your users to find what they are looking for. Give them a positive experience and you'll have them coming back for more and that can only be good for the long term success of your business.



Return on Investment
(ROI) Tracking for Law Firms

I was with a client recently and the topic of conversation turned to how they can track the effectiveness of some SEO and PPC that they were considering. The firm has a turnover of c. £12m with a marketing budget of 2.4% of turnover i.e. c. £290,000. Not too shabby (they could spend more of course). Marketing theory says to grow turnover by double digits every year you should spend between 5-8% of turnover.

DAVID GILROY
Managing Director of Stuff and Things
Conscious Solutions

Interestingly, I pulled their accounts and in FY2014 their turnover was £11.6m rising to £12.1m in FY2017. Definitely NOT double-digit growth, not even cumulatively over the four years and definitely not year-on-year.

I call a marketing budget of 2.4% a 'standing still' marketing budget.

Now, we're not a law firm, but for reference, in those same four financial years, we increased our revenue by 49.6% in total, with an average compound growth rate of 14.4% per year. Our marketing spend for those four year? An average of 4.4% of turnover each year.

So, I wonder what my client might have achieved in terms of growth had they spent the extra 2% i.e. another £240,000 on top of what they did spend?

Anyway, I digress. The conversation went something like this*.

Me: How much does it cost you to acquire a new client?

Client: Sorry, I don't understand the question.

Me: You spend money on marketing, right?

Client: Yes.

Me: And you take on new clients?

Client: Yes.

Me: So how much does it cost you to acquire a new client?

Client: No idea.

Me: OK, let's go back to the beginning. I know your enquiry handling is not centralised is it?

Client: No.

Me: So, who handles all the inbound enquiry form emails from the website?

Client: The central marketing team farm them out to the different legal teams.

Me: Great. And how do you track what they have done with them?

Client: Hmm, I'm not sure (looks at colleague who shakes their head). I'll have to get back to you on that.

Me: OK, sounds like it's not really being tracked at all.

(Client looks sheepish)

Me: Another question. How complete/accurate is your 'source code' tracking of new enquiries?

Client: Good enough.

Me: Do you run reports to check what volume of each of the source codes are being used?

(Client shakes their head)

A fundamental piece of marketing is to know what it costs to acquire a new customer/client. Without this piece of information, how can you plan how much you need to spend on marketing in order you meet your business growth targets?

You do have business growth targets, don't you? Businesses cannot just stand still nowadays, you need to have an active growth plan, otherwise someone else is going to grow past you e.g. like Airbnb have done with hotels, or Uber with taxi companies.

Simple ROI Calculation

This is the simplest model I can think of. Assume 50% of your marketing budget goes to acquiring new clients and 50% to bringing in new work from existing clients. You can then use the following calculations to give you an idea of your marketing ROI:

Cost Per New Client

=

50% of your marketing budget

÷

No. of New Clients Taken On

Cost Per Matter From Existing Client

=

50% of your marketing budget

÷

No. of New Matter Open

Even if you do nothing more complicated than this, it will give you a benchmark against which you can at least evaluate new marketing opportunities and track the change over time of how much it costs to acquire new work from existing clients.

Having at least some kind of number for the cost of a new client means that you can plan your growth. For the next section I am going to make sound 'round number' assumptions for ease of writing this article. Yours will be **a)** more complicated and **b)** more accurate, but the principles will be the same.

Complex ROI Calculation

We have done a couple of pieces of work with clients to calculate their acquisition cost and have released the Excel model we used to do it, along with instructions on how to use it.

The model can be used to mash up case/revenue data with your marketing budget to calculate a 'cost per matter' from existing clients and for a new client.

This more complex model will allow you to calculate not just a cost per new client and a cost per matter from existing client, but break that data down by 'marketing channel' e.g. website, referral, advertising etc.

Both documents needed can be downloaded from
https://www.conscious.co.uk/roi-calculator

Forecasting Your Growth Using ROI Number

Let's say your firm has a turnover of £5m and you want to increase that by 10% year on year for three years. So, by the end of year three your turnover will be £6.65m a compound increase of 33% (not 30% in case you were thinking that!).

In year one, you need to add £500,000 of revenue. The following is a theoretical calculation about the additional marketing budget required for that level of additional turnover.

Total Revenue Needed	£500,000
Average Revenue/Matter	£2,000
No. New Matters Needed	250
% New Matters – New Client	20%
% New Matters – Existing Client	80%
Cost/New Matter – New Client	£250
Cost/New Matter – Existing Client	£40
Marketing Budget – New Clients	£12,500
Marketing Budget – Existing Clients	£8,000
Total Extra Marketing Budget	**£20,500**

We run a 'marketing budget benchmark' which shows us that the average marketing budget as a percentage of turnover for a range of law firms between £1m and £20m turnover is 2.1% of turnover (excluding salaries and external agency fees).

So, for your £5m turnover firm, if you are spending that amount, your current marketing budget is £105,000. To achieve that 10% year-on-year growth target, you will therefore need to find an additional 20% on top of your existing marketing spend.

Conclusion

For me, a law firm owner cannot possibly forecast the growth in their business with having an accurate 'acquisition cost' for new clients and new matters. This number should be the key driver when forecasting the growth you want in your business.

And, if anyone is reading this and thinking "I don't want to grow, I am happy with my business the way it is!" then I would really encourage you to challenge that thinking lest other firms 'grow past you' and leave you in their wake.

***Confession.** I have taken a bit of artistic license with the conversation to make my point.*

The sales process for solicitors is fraught with complexities. You've spent significant budget on a variety of offline and online marketing tactics, including high cost per click keywords, with the goal of converting a lead as prospects interact with you.

Whilst most businesses track form submissions, other leads can also come through channels such as phone calls and live chat which go unattributed.

Classing interaction as a conversion is only half the battle, the reality is it may take months, or even years for you to see a return on investment due to lengthy cases or strung out processes.

You are spending a significant amount of time and money driving leads to your website - knowing what really drives the revenue in your case management system is the difference between winning and losing.

As experts within the call tracking and multi-touch attribution fields, Ruler Analytics help solve this challenge every day. The legal sector stands out in terms of how much firms benefit from call tracking analytics to close the loop between revenue and marketing campaigns.

Later this year, Ruler Analytics will be sharing their 2019 industry benchmark report, which allows businesses to compare lead generation success and conversion rates against the industry standard. The report highlights opportunities where organisations could refocus their efforts by seeing how industry peers are performing.

As a sneak peek, Ruler has given Conscious a taste of the latest benchmark report for the Legal industry, with some interesting takeaways for solicitors to consider as the digital marketing landscape continues to evolve.

TOP 5 TAKEAWAYS

from the Ruler Analytics benchmark report 2019

ONE

It's good to talk

While consumers utilise online methods for research and discovery, when it comes to signing on the line, a clear majority still prefer to discuss the finer points over the phone, with calls evidencing a far higher conversion rate when compared to a cursory form submission. This behaviour points to the benefits call tracking can have on marketing analytics, call handling training and best practice.

TWO

Cover all bases

No huge surprise here, but a successful marketing strategy must cover all channels to maximise leads generated. With no one activity source standing out for conversion, it's clear that marketers have their work cut out in ensuring the entire marketing mix is brought into play. Multi-touch attribution provides the data to hold each channel to account, pointing out where potential opportunities exist and where your expenditure could be working harder for you.

THREE

Form tracking isn't enough

As with campaigns, the report shows people interact with brands in different ways, so it's vital to give people opportunity to get in touch via their preferred medium. Relying on form tracking isn't enough to get a true picture of your customer's journey; an effective view comes from tracking all sources of conversation. It will be interesting to monitor how this behaviour shifts over time as technology evolves and live chat, chatbots and AI become more prevalent.

FOUR

It's not all about the destination, the journey counts too

When digging a little deeper into the statistics, we find that customers will interact with a brand a number of times before making a decision. A paid ad could bring the initial lead, however, as the client whittles down their options then subsequent sessions can be driven by organic search, social clicks or direct. Traditional analytics tools would each try to claim the lead as their conversion, while true multi-touch attribution would allow you to attribute the revenue from your case management system as you see fit.

FIVE

All about the optics

When Ruler previously ran the benchmark report 2017, social media was barely hitting the radar when it came to linking up activity to sales conversions. Step forward two years and the legal industry has clearly become sharper in creating engaging content and discussions on social platforms. Legal firms are increasing their awareness and landing deals directly via social media, showing it's not just a playground for reality TV influencers and the B2C crowd.

RULER

ABOUT RULER ANALYTICS

Ruler Analytics call tracking and multi-touch marketing attribution technology enables organisations within the legal industry to attribute revenue to their marketing activity. By closing the loop between sales revenue and marketing activity, Ruler's platform provides a single point of truth to identify which campaigns are driving revenue, allowing organisations to make meaningful decisions to optimise marketing spend. With 1,000+ integrations with the world's leading applications, Ruler Analytics can sync data back to Google Analytics, your case management system or paid media solutions to give insight where you need it most.

Working with Conscious Solutions

As a **Platinum Partner Agency**, Conscious Solutions clients can benefit from Ruler's suite of tools at a preferential rate, to fully realise the value their marketing campaigns are driving. **For more information email info@ruleranalytics.com, visit www.ruleranalytics.com/book-a-demo, or speak to Rich Dibbins today.**

RULER

Close the loop between leads and revenue

Trusted by the UK's leading legal practices, Ruler Analytics call tracking and marketing attribution software tracks visitor's multiple touch points to measure and attribute value accurately across the entire conversion path, allowing you to supercharge your marketing campaigns

Book a demo to find out how Ruler can help your business measure what matters

info@ruleranalytics.com
www.ruleranalytics.com
0800 093 9290

Preferential rates for Conscious Solutions clients

CRM

You should know your clients better

More and more firms are adopting some form of CRM, and I don't mean a Practice or Case Management system. With a CRM should come some level of Business Development Management. However, I appreciate some Partners are probably thinking "I'm not going to learn another system" or "I don't have time to input into another system" and of course we don't expect you to.

But let me ask you this: you probably spend £1000s each year on marketing events and various marketing campaigns – how are you tracking the results? Are you putting it all into a wonderful colour coded spreadsheet? If you are, how many of these are knocking around the office? Who owns the master copy?

Modern law firms (and I don't mean 20-partner law firms, I truly mean modern law firms) that use technology to their advantage are the firms that will be here in 5 years' time. The legal services are constantly changing and with this, the clients are changing. More firms are investing in a Business Development Manager because sales and marketing are still two dirty words in the legal industry. But a BDM needs the tools to do their job properly. Below are the key benefits to having some form of CRM at your law firm:

1. Tracking missed opportunities – We love the ones we win. But what about the ones that got away? Why did they go elsewhere? How do you attribute the cost of sale to this opportunity?

2. Tracking marketing spends – Who has run regular events year after year because it is the same thing you have always done. But how much do these events cost and what was the return on investment (ROI)? Until you know this, you will continue to haemorrhage marketing spend year after year. With a CRM you can keep a track of campaigns, contacts and opportunities aligned to that campaign.

3. Email is where information goes to die – We all have 100s of emails every day. But let me paint a scenario – image you died tomorrow and all that valuable information you collected was stored in 1000s of emails. What would happen to it? A CRM helps to forge and protect the relationships your law firm has with your clients. We need to take the blinkers off and start sharing information with our team members, enabling firms to cross-sell into other departments. I get that people are very protective of their clients, but if you don't trust your colleagues with your clients, then what does that say?

4. I know what you bought – You will no longer need to repeat or send a list of services to clients every month or repeat yourself on all the 100s of services you offer. Instead, you can create a Magic Matrix of what your clients have purchased. Then you'll only offer them the services they haven't bought.

5. Track pipeline – This is the core of any BDM's day to day activities; it also helps a law firm to understand what is coming up. I don't understand how a law firm can just rely on what is coming through the door or what they have on their books. If you were looking to sell or merge with another firm, wouldn't it be great to not only show them the WIP but also potential incoming business? Suddenly your firm looks a lot more viable.

CRM – Client Relationship Management – in a nutshell, understanding your clients and prospects better so you can improve your relationships with them. When we speak to people, they often tell us all sorts of useful things about who they are and what matters to them. However, for most of us, our memory recall is only good for a few weeks. This is why having a proper CRM system in place is so important – it stops you from losing all of those essential insights into your existing and potential clients.

Choosing the right CRM is going to be crucial when you approach a vendor. A good provider will look into your current situation and come up with a tailored solution, not force you to go with their standard solution because "it's the best".

Consider the following 5 areas when looking at CRM systems

1. Usability
2. Portability
3. Customisations
4. Integration
5. Scalability

At Conscious we use SuiteCRM because technically it is Open Source software, which means it's free. We have adapted the software to our needs and requirements, creating a vital tool that benefits everyone in our business. There are many others out there and it's all about finding the right CRM for your needs – some even plug in to your Practice Management Software. So, talk to your current vendors and see what they have to offer. I promise, you'll soon be questioning how you ever managed without it.

SUITE CRM

RICH DIBBINS
Head of Sales
and Digital Strategy
Conscious Solutions

SUITE CRM

CRM for Unlimited Users One Flat Annual Fee!!

As the winner of the Great User Experience Award and Rising Star Award in 2017 from FinanceOnline the popular B2B software review platform. It's not hard to see why SuiteCRM is the best choice for law firms. It's a flexible and cost-effective alternative to proprietary applications.

- Already in use in 10 UK firms
- Existing integrations with some practice management systems

WHAT HAVE CLIENTS TOLD US SINCE THEY IMPLEMENTED SUITECRM IN THEIR FIRM?

"You can go at your own pace": rollout CRM at your own pace without the need to see immediate ROI on a massive investment in annual license fees.

"Better Key Account Management": get a full-picture of all interactions with major clients for a smoother account management process.

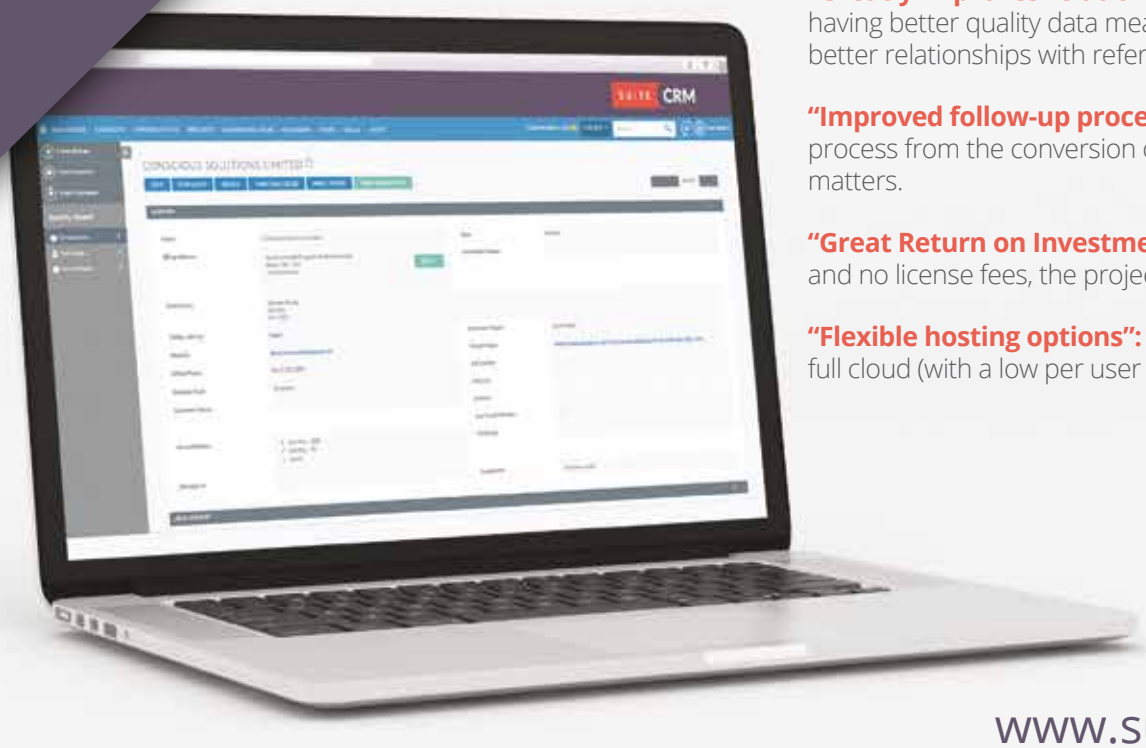
"Better focus for BD": Business Development activities can be easily focused on the companies and referrers that represent the biggest opportunity.

"Greatly improves relationship management": having better quality data means you can develop better relationships with referrers.

"Improved follow-up processes": a smoother process from the conversion of opportunities into matters.

"Great Return on Investment": with low set-up costs and no license fees, the projects have excellent ROI.

"Flexible hosting options": both on premise or full cloud (with a low per user monthly fee).



www.suitecrm.com

Confess to conscious

Are you struggling to get visitors to your website?

Perhaps you're unsure on how to **add something to your site?**

Or maybe ***your*** **social media** campaign needs some refreshing?

No fear, the Conscious agony Aunts & Uncles are here!

I want to add something new to my site's main menu – how do I know if there's enough space?

Curious Content Creator.

Aunt Grace

Customer Support Executive, Conscious Solutions

Making changes to your website, especially something that is visible on every page, can be a little daunting. How do you know if there's enough space? Will this show up on every device? Will visitors see it?

A good place to start (after taking a deep breath!) is finding out if your website is **Responsive**. The good news is most, if not all, modern websites are. Responsive essentially means that your website responds to the visitor's device, browser and screen orientation.

So how do you know if your website is responsive? Just visit it on different devices. Does the website adjust its layout when viewed on a mobile or tablet as opposed to a desktop computer? If you make your browser window smaller, does the website make sure you can still see everything clearly, especially images? If yes, then chances are your site is responsive!

Whilst you may think you have loads of space in the main menu at the head of your website, it may not be so roomy when you reduce the size of your browser. Try clicking and dragging the corner of your web browser to different sizes to see the difference – if the blank space where you thought your new menu option would fit perfectly is no longer looking big enough, you may need to speak to your web developers to see if the layouts can be adjusted.

"Is responsiveness and spacing really that important? People will find it even if it is sticking out from the menu a little bit…" Even if you can tolerate your menu looking cramped, other users may not be able to navigate it as easily. Those with limited visibility, smaller screens, or other accessibility needs may be put off by a menu that isn't responsive or spaced out (and even those who can find it may still it discouraging, as cramped layouts or overlapping elements can look unprofessional and sloppy).

So, what if there isn't enough space? Don't Panic! Your web developers can probably help you with finding a solution. Sometimes your website can benefit from making some other elements, such as fonts, Calls to Action or logos, smaller. Other times, designers may find that they can adjust the values used to make the site responsive to create more space or move some layouts around altogether. Even if you can't find a way to work around your new item, sometimes there is an option to rearrange items that already exist on your site.

The important thing to remember is that website users will be using all different sorts of browsers and devices of all shapes and sizes to visit you – so be sure to accommodate them! Even if you see plenty of room on your computer monitor, that may not always mean there's space for more content. Check your website's responsiveness, speak to your team, and go from there. Your website has infinite potential… but maybe it shouldn't have infinite menu options!

> It's hard for my website to be seen in a sea of online traffic, how do I make sure it stands out and gets visitors?
>
> **Muddled Marketer.**

Uncle Jake
Account Manager, Conscious Solutions

Finally, you have your new website, well done and congratulations! Time for the enquiries to come flooding in, right? Unfortunately, this isn't always the case.

The first week of your site being live might lead to a few raised eyebrows in the firm when the number of visitors is reported, that's because you still need to do the legwork to attract these visits. With the law industry constantly evolving and firms improving their digital presence in the market, it can be hard to position yourself above the competition with regards to online traffic.

Not sure where to start? If you want instant traffic, PPC is a definite. PPC will allow you to create an advert that can target keywords people are using in their search engines. Customisation of these adverts allows you to show the identity of your firm and you only pay for the amount of clicks you get, so you can track where every penny of your money is going. PPC is great for getting your brand out there and driving traffic to your new and fresh website that's destined for greatness.

Now the longer game – SEO. This is key if you want your new site to rank higher with Google and increase your site's long-term visibility. By getting your site 'search engine optimised', you increase your chances of ranking within the top three results for the keywords your ideal customers generally search for. If you don't optimise your new website, you could be missing out on new customers to your competitors as their websites might be ranking higher in search engine results.

Now, you won't rank overnight and there are many variables to consider when running an SEO campaign, but you can follow a few simple steps to make sure you are on the right track to move up those rankings. One of the most important is content. Ever heard the saying "Content is King"? Good content is a must because it tells users what you can offer them, that you understand them and helps build trust. Once the user has trust, they are much more likely to pick up the phone to discuss your services.

Last but not least, is your website mobile-friendly? With the constant evolution of mobile technology, it's now crucial that your site is mobile-friendly. It's been reported that over half of all web traffic is from mobile devices, so you don't want to be missing out. There is also the element of trust to consider – in a recent survey, 57%* of users said that they wouldn't recommend a business with a poorly designed mobile site. It simply doesn't make sense to risk losing new enquiries on something that can be fixed without hassle.

I hope these tips help and wish you luck with making yourself stand out in the sea of online traffic.

*Google - Mobile Play Book – The Busy Executive's Guide to Winning with Mobile.

Uncle Nathan
Client Relationship Manager, Conscious Solutions

You've waited for the sunshine so you can snap exterior shots of your office, your opening hours are in place and all of your contact details are correct – then out of nowhere, a negative review comes crashing in from a disgruntled client, bringing a cloud over your perfect Google Maps profile.

A bad review on Google can always sting, particularly if you feel doesn't accurately represent the experience shared with the client in question. While your first thought may be to remove the negative reviews or comments, we wouldn't recommend it and in many instances, this isn't possible. After all, Google reviews are intended to be an impartial space for users to share their subjective experiences. So how can you use them to your advantage?

A diplomatic approach is best. Rather than rushing to disagree, take some time to do your research. Typically, a review will be tied to an identifiable username, so how does their account measure up with your own? Does any aspect of their review ring true? Were grievances raised during the course of your work together, and were efforts to reach out and resolve any issues accepted by the client?

Once you have more details to hand, feel free to respond to the review (without going into any details), suggesting that you would like to reach out directly to resolve any issues or take on any further feedback the client may have. And if you're unsure of which client the review belongs to, simply respond suggesting the reviewer get in touch to find out more and resolve any issues AWAY from your Google profile, and the public eye.

Responding to all reviews, be it good, bad or in between, is a clear way of illustrating your willingness to engage with clients to Google – which is important when they decide which website to show to searchers when they're looking for services you provide. So, don't think of them as a negative, even when on the surface they seem to be, as your willingness to respond and work it out is great marketing in itself.

> How do I get rid of bad reviews?
>
> **Worried Website Owner.**

Negative reviews are unfortunately not something that can be avoided entirely but remember to keep in mind that they don't necessarily represent the performance of your business. This is because a client provided with a good service usually isn't as motivated to share their experience as someone who feels they've been short-changed. So, to counter this, encourage your clients wherever possible to share their experience on Google Maps, as this is where each review will have the strongest impact for your firm. Email signatures, posted documents, meetings, business cards – these are all great places to ask clients to leave a review and, believe me, it can make a real difference!

The Interview

The nature of Keystone Law is all about relationships between our lawyers and our clients and face-to-face contact is always the best option.

Maurice Tunney

IT Director, Keystone Law

Q Technology is constantly evolving; how do you keep on top of the latest trends?

Networking is probably the most important source for me. There are a number of networking events related to legal IT and the industry is very community minded and happy to share what they're up to, both good and bad. Obviously if there's something that's giving us competitive advantage then we'll keep that to ourselves. But in terms of software we're using, the hardware we're looking at, the projects that we're involved with – whether they're going well or not – we're more than happy to share.

There are also various legal publications such as LegalWeek, The Lawyer and a few legal tech publications such as Briefing and The Orange Rag which are good for keeping up to date with what people are doing, new technologies and trends. The National Cyber Security Centre is a great resource for keeping an eye on current threats. Various online blogs are also useful. I have a fairly long commute so I either save things to my iPad or go old school and print out articles to read them on the train. However, reading about it is no replacement to face-to-face conversations and meeting people in the industry to discuss ideas.

Q Look forward ten years. In your opinion, if there was one form of technology that you have not seen yet, that a firm could use, what would it be and why?

The nature of Keystone Law is all about relationships between our lawyers and our clients and face-to-face contact is always the best option. However, all of our lawyers are remote workers, working wherever they feel comfortable, so if the technology existed that could replicate face-to-face meetings as much as possible (think holograms!) than that would be great for us. Clients are increasingly global and not easy to get to but they still require legal advice and they want it from someone they know, like and can trust.

Q Cyber security is a hot topic at the moment. What would you say is best practice for firms?

For me, it's all about awareness and training. Regardless of the investment in software and hardware – human beings are always the weakest link. It's imperative to get the lawyers to understand that even the smallest loss of concentration can be extremely dangerous to themselves, the client's data and to the firm as a whole. We should all stay up to date with the latest threats and invest in the software and tools to keep threats at bay, but there's no amount of technology that's going to stop human error. Without proper training and guidance, the technology can be rendered obsolete very quickly.

Q What does the future hold? Is Maurice to be rendered obsolete by robots as artificial intelligence (AI) comes to dominate legal services?

I think a number of roles will be made obsolete. I think new roles will be created as a result, but I don't think there will ever be a substitute for humans in terms of emotional awareness and relationship building. AI will definitely play a part in legal services in the future – it already is in large data transactions. But I think in time, more and more automation of processing will happen. Do I think it will make my role or the role of a CIO obsolete – heck no! Because I think where we come into our own is the application of those technologies and seeing the strategic benefit to the firm and our clients and implementing them at the right time and place.

Regardless of the investment in software and hardware – human beings are always the weakest link. It's imperative to get the lawyers to understand that even the smallest loss of concentration can be extremely dangerous to themselves, the client's data and to the firm as a whole.

Pricing Transparency

Unless you have been asleep for the last year or two, you will know that from 6 December 2018 the SRA & CLC mandated that regulated firms must be more transparent with their pricing in eight different areas of work.

The rules apply to conveyancing (residential), probate (uncontested), motoring offences (summary offences), immigration (excluding asylum), employment tribunals (unfair or wrongful dismissal), debt recovery up to £10,000 and licensing applications for business premises.

Firms have to display not only the price, but:

- What services are included within the displayed price.
- Any services not included in the price that might reasonably be expected to be included.
- Details of the experience and qualifications of teams/individuals who will carry out the work.
- Typical timescales and key stages of the matter.

The aim of the new SRA transparency rules is to make sure consumers have the information they need to make an informed choice of legal services provider, including understanding what the costs may be.

How many firms are complying with the new rules?

In March/April 2019 the SRA did a 'sweep' of 500 randomly selected firms. The sample featured websites operated by a variety of firm types, locations and sizes. They specifically targeted firms who provided at least one of the services covered by the new rules, although 118 of the firms included in the web sweep did not publicise that they offered the relevant services on their websites. In those cases, the review was confined to checking whether the firms provided the required complaints information.

Of the selected sample, 53 sites were found to either not be working or were still under construction. The following results are based on the SRA's review of the remaining 447 sites. Of these sites:

- **25% were fully complying**
- **58% were partially complying**
- **17% were not complying with the rules at all**

In one geography when looking at the before and after prices, every firm below the 'middle' raised their published prices to 'the middle'

What has the effect been?

In our conversations with law firms, no-one has seen a drop off in work due to them being more transparent with pricing information on their website.

Some industry commentators were suggesting this would drive a 'race to the bottom' in terms of price. We have not seen this, at best it's been a 'race to the middle'.

Also, I believe it's helped firms by encouraging them to improve the skills of their staff so they can have more open conversations with potential clients when they come armed with the pricing information from their website.

Iain Miller, regulatory partner at London firm Kingsley Napley, told the Law Gazette that it is very likely the regulator will extend price transparency requirements to more areas of legal service, as well as potentially being more prescriptive about what should appear on each website. So be warned.

Results from Google Analytics data

In March 2019, we analysed a number of our clients' websites to see what the traffic levels were like to the pricing pages they had published. The results are in the table on the right.

% of All Page Views (March)
2.21%
2.05%
1.60%
1.52%
1.14%
0.24%
0.04%

More Obvious

Less Obvious

Overall, the volume of traffic to the pricing pages was VERY low with an obvious difference between firms who had published their pricing information in a more obvious way e.g. a link from their home page, or an obvious menu item from their top navigation.

Firms who 'buried' the information in the footer or only covering it by an obscure link from a Services page got tiny page views. One issue to note here is that if (or should that be when?) the SRA find pages like this, I do not believe it will pass the 'prominence' test that the SRA mandated.

Conclusion

This is not the end of the matter, just a first toe in the water for the SRA & CLC. I think Iain Miller is right – the SRA will extend this to more service areas and be more prescriptive about how the information should be displayed. However, I am not taking bets on when!

DAVID GILROY
Managing Director of Stuff and Things
Conscious Solutions

UWE Bristol University of the West of England

Clients and agencies: Getting the most out of the relationship

The Applied Marketing Group, Bristol Business School, University of the West of England have been researching aspects of the client-agency relationship for the last five years. In addition to conducting a number of rounds of research with both clients and agencies, the findings have been shared in presentations and workshops involving Bristol Media, the Design Business Association, the Direct Marketing Association, the Professional Marketers' Forum, and the Bath and Bristol Marketing Network. **Over 700 agency staff have been involved.**

PROFESSOR TIM HUGHES

PROFESSOR MARIO VAFEAS

The context for the research is a marketing world that is changing as a result of digital transformation. This has thrown up new challenges for agencies and clients in working together.

Evolution of technological channels and marketing agencies

Contact Centres CRM	1990's	Largely traditional agency model Pressure on remuneration
Websites Digital sales	2000's	Emergence of specialist digital agencies
Social media	2010's	Digital spend matches TV spend Consultancies merging with agencies

The transformation can be seen from the 1990s when new consumer channels started to develop and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) became a major issue. As commerce through the internet developed, the agency world became far more fragmented with the emergence of digital agencies rather than traditional advertising agencies. With the emergence of social media in the 2010s we've got to a point where digital expenditure is likely to take a greater share of advertising budgets than TV.

Commentators worldwide recognise that these changes are presenting new challenges to marketers both in clients and their agencies:

> *The whole world is becoming more complex. It's changing quicker than brands and companies can deal with.*
>
> Anatoly Roytman, MD of EALA at Accenture Interactive. The Drum, Oct 2016

> *Digital disruption and the rapid growth of data usage will fundamentally change the role of agencies, so much so that the way we know them today will not exist five years from now.*
>
> Ashish Bhasin, Chairman and CEO of Dentsu Aegis Network South Asia

It is against this background that the research has been conducted. The overarching aim has been to explore how to maximise value from the client-agency relationship. Quality outcomes and experiences depend upon both partners fulfilling a specific role. It is what we call a co-creative partnership. We asked agencies what they needed from their clients in order to provide a quality service and meet the expectations of their clients. Similarly, we asked clients what they needed from their agencies, given the turbulent business environment in which firms are now operating.

What do agencies need from their clients?

1. Information

Information is delivered to the agency through the briefing process and this is probably the biggest issue that agencies have: poor briefing. It's the 'rubbish in, rubbish out' syndrome. Agencies complain of receiving insufficient information, a lack of clear objectives, and a drip-feed approach to briefing, with information seeping through after a job has started. In our survey of 136 agency personnel, only 11 per cent said they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: in general, clients are good at writing briefs. Many expressed a view that this was in part due to a lack of expertise; junior marketers 'let loose' with insufficient knowledge about how to manage the agency relationship, often resulting in conflict. One agency director put it thus:

"We have one client where the calibre of people is exceptional. I often find myself evangelising about them because they show up the shocking state of the rest of the industry."

2. Autonomy

Many agencies complain of clients restricting the freedom of their creative staff. Rather than presenting them with a problem, some will suggest the solution too. This prescriptive approach not only defeats the object of hiring an agency, but is also demotivating for agency staff.

3. Risk

Linked to autonomy is the issue of risk-orientation. Agencies feel that client-side marketers are unprepared to take risks for fear of failure. The need to demonstrate a higher return on investment each year means that clients look for incremental gains rather than radical change. Agencies also feel that larger clients rely too heavily on focus groups. The result is that creativity is diluted and determined by the lowest common denominator.

4. Time

Agencies are finding that less time is being allotted to the creative process and argue this restricts creativity because there is insufficient time for idea generation. It is particularly difficult to understand when, having submitted their concepts, the client appears to hit the 'pause button', with nothing happening for several weeks.

5. Stakeholder management

Agencies argue that senior managers are involved too late in the process. Agencies respond to a brief from a junior manager only to find that the decision-maker had other ideas about the direction the work should take. The result is that the project is re-briefed with even less time available than before. As one Creative Director said:

"Clients waste money by sending a design up the chain and then it comes straight back down. There's something the junior guys didn't know. Why didn't they tell us that in the first place?"

While this all seems rather negative, this is not to say that there aren't instances of good practice. One example is the involvement of the agency in the development of the brief so that it can ensure it has all the information it needs and so that there is alignment over what is expected. But agencies argue this type of practice is the exception not the norm.

What do clients expect from their agencies?

We can sum this up using six Cs:

1. Content

Clients are looking for agencies to deliver insight. For example, the answer to the question "What will my industry look like in three years?" In addition, given the proliferation of in-housing, clients look to agencies to deliver 'big ideas'. They expect the agency to do what their in-house team can't; exploit its multi-sector experience to deliver ideas that don't necessarily fit the industry norm or to use their deep vertical sector knowledge to save them time and money by not reinventing the wheel.

2. Context

In order to deliver quality content, clients expect agencies to have a good understanding of the context in which the client works. Furthermore, clients want to see agencies develop their knowledge of the client's industry wherever possible. An example might be a site-visit with a member of the client's sales team to develop a deeper understanding of the end customer.

3. Communication

Clients spend surprisingly little of their time on agency-related work. They have an ever-increasing list of responsibilities; so, communication from the agency needs to be sufficiently frequent so that the client feels they are receiving adequate attention (particularly from senior agency personnel) but not so much that they feel they are being bombarded with agency money-making initiatives.

4. Coaching

Given agency complaints of widespread lack of expertise, clients say they would welcome agency involvement in the training of junior staff. Training days are welcome, particularly on topics such as writing a brief and evaluating creative work.

5. Customer care

Clients are looking for agencies to become an extension of their own marketing team and to make the life of the client easier by, for example, being proactive. One example might be the preparation of briefing notes that the client can use to present the agency's creative concepts to senior managers.

6. Charging

Clients want greater clarity from agencies about what is included in a cost, plus evidence of return on investment. This is probably easier to demonstrate with digital rather than creative work. They would also like to see evidence of commitment from agencies. As one client put it:

"Agencies put a cost on everything. One even charged us for the time spent getting to know us. Their behaviour is transactional not relational."

Maintaining client commitment and loyalty is obviously an agency priority, particularly given increased competition from in-house agencies and management consultants. However, research suggests that customer expectations are rising. A customer satisfaction score of 9.0 or above out of 10 increases customer loyalty by 52 percent compared with a satisfaction score of 8.0-8.9 out of 10 (Source: UK Customer Satisfaction Index, 2019).

Conclusions

All the clients taking part in the research confirmed that technology has had implications for working with agencies because of changes in the nature of marketing communications. Technological change, leading to media fragmentation, has been disruptive to the traditional client-agency model and in particular, there has been a growth of specialist agencies. At the same time, as digital matures, many companies are supporting this with in-house resources.

As illustrated in table below there has been a growth in the middle column of a crossover of services that may either be provided in-house or by an external agency:

External and internal marketing services provision

Service most likely to be internal	Service most likely to be either internal or external	Service most likely to be external
Provision of a brief	Managing customer contact	Creativity
Management of the marketing plan	Development of digital and social media content	Branding development
Management of agencies	Building and managing websites	
	Data analysis	
	Media buying	
	Copywriting, design and production	
	Development of marketing strategy	
	Management of Public Relations	
	Market research	

Source: Hughes, T and Vafeas, M. (2019) Journal of Business to Business Marketing

Not only has the nature of service provision changed, but also the potential client base for agency services. Most businesses now have a web and social media presence, but would not necessarily have invested in marketing communications in the past. Clients now have to consider the best fit of resources/services with their agencies. This client needs to consider where the agency can add value and where it is better to use an in-house resource. Therefore, they need to develop the knowledge and experience to know how to unlock and access the appropriate resources offered by agencies.

Agencies need the ability to align their service offering with the needs of their clients. It is crucial that agencies recognise the needs of their clients and the scope and types of resources that their agency can offer to win and retain them. In particular, agencies need to understand what services are better provided by the client and where the agency can add value. There are particular opportunities relating to the resources that agencies offer that are less likely to be available in-house (creative skills; ability to bring in cross sector expertise; a new viewpoint, etc). This will of course vary client by client.

Dan Hodges

Head of Account Management
Conscious Solutions

Dan Hodges is Head of Account Management at Conscious Solutions. He has over 14 years' experience in the Legal Sector. Based on the findings of the research conducted by Professors Tim Hughes and Mario Vafeas at the **UWE Bristol** Dan gives his views on how we were able to use this research to develop a better approach for our clients.

Q How did you first become aware of the research around the client-agency relationship by the Bristol Business School?

Four years ago, I met Tim Hughes, a Professor at the Bristol Business School where he was talking about the research he was conducting. At the time we were going through a big change and it was really relevant for where we were. Historically, we listened to our clients' needs and acted upon it. However, this was limiting for the client and for building a long-term client and agency relationship. So, based on some of the findings of the research we were able to develop a better approach for our clients.

Our new approach is to have a holistic view of the business as a whole and look at how their digital marketing plays a part in their overall business strategy. We want our Account Managers to become 'trusted advisors' for the law firms they work with and go that one step further, beyond selling our services, to advise them even if it means losing the initial business. We want to help the client from the outset and build that trusted relationship from the start.

Q When a new law firm is looking for an agency, what are the key things they should look for?

A law firm needs to shortlist two or three agencies and the key things they should be looking for is sector knowledge and experience. When it comes to the legal sector it's important that an agency understands a law firms' expectations and the employees who work there. For example, Solicitors are experts in their own field. An agency needs to know how to relate to them, deal with their expectations, understand that a decision is often not down to one person and to give them the space to make the decisions. Some questions a law firm should consider when looking for an agency are: Does the agency have a good working relationship with their existing clients? Can this be demonstrated through testimonials and client references? Can you relate to the agency you are going to work with? Do you think you can you get on with the team?

Q What makes a good client and agency relationship?

Both sides have to be accountable for their individual parts and the brief on who's doing what needs to be clear from the start. The people we have the best relationship know that things are not going to be sunshine and rainbows all of the time but, with openness, honest feedback and the willingness to work together, you can build a great partnership. Another important factor is having a point of contact throughout the whole journey and understanding what they want to achieve. For example, by having clear goals from outset i.e. more traffic or more leads from a website and knowing your key performance indicators from the start or being willing to work towards those numbers is a great starting point to the end goal.

Q What are some key things that cause issues between clients and agencies?

Unclear briefs, assumptions on both sides and lack of picking the phone up and talking things through. Sometimes clients don't understand how long it takes to do things but also there is lack of explanation from the agency on what needs to be done to achieve the results they want. Sometimes the best solution is to pick up the phone a have a detailed conversation to manage expectations from both sides.

Q What does Conscious do well that other agencies don't?

I don't know because we don't compare ourselves against other agencies. One thing we have developed since I joined the business five years ago is focusing on the law firm's overall business goals not just their digital marketing. We will challenge our clients if needed, by questioning why they want a new brand, a new website, or if SEO or PPC will get them the results they want, most importantly we want to make sure that any work we do fits in with the overall business strategy.

Law League – Understanding Your Firm's Potential

Understanding and monitoring how your firm is viewed by clients and staff gives you a business advantage. Clients are in the best position to judge how well you're doing and, as a services provider; your staff are your greatest single asset. The question is, how do you go about measuring this?

When it comes down to surveys, law firms tend to go for paper based ones. These can be effective, but they cost more than just the postage. Here is a break down of what goes into a typical printed survey:

Print out the survey along with a covering letter – make sure it is on headed paper

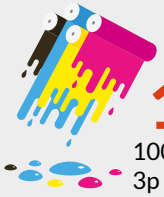
Insert into an envelope... with a pre-paid envelope for them to send their feedback

Stamp or frank it 1st or 2nd class

Send to client

Await a reply

Based For Paper Based Surveys



1. 100 printed at 3p per page = £3

2. 100 DL envelopes 5p per envelopes

3. Folding letters + collating pre-paid envelope = 1.5 hours for an admin person at £12 per hour

4. Postage – Small letter 2nd class stamp 61p x 100 = £61

a. Return pre-paid envelope (better chance of them replying) £61

5. Collate 10% of the replies, input onto an Excel spreadsheet and benchmark previous data = 2 hours of admin £24

So, the total cost for a hard copy survey is £163 per 100, based on an average cost. Furthermore, the typical return of hard copy surveys is under 10%.

The above is only taking into account how your firm performs. What if you wanted to know more?

This is where it can be more cost effective and efficient to choose Law League as your digital platform to receive feedback from clients and staff. The questions have been developed in conjunction with law firms, so you know the right areas are being covered to receive honest, objective feedback. By making the move to focus on client feedback to develop their firm, Law League users have noticed a significant improvement in their firm's performance.

What Does Law League Offer?

- 14 question Client survey with logo and personalised message
- 22 question Staff survey with logo and personalised message
- Unlimited use of surveys for 12 months
- A chance to benchmark your results
- Monthly, quarterly & yearly trend analysis
- Downloadable PDF files of your results
- Compliance support with procedural client care requirements in Lexcel, CQS & WIQS
- Evidenced outcomes for SRA's Outcome Focused Regulation
- Real time reporting – access your results 24x7
- Free help desk support
- Ease. It's ready to use in 2 hours, so won't eat into your busy schedule.

5 REASONS LAW LEAGUE WILL HELP YOUR FIRM:

1. Retain current clients and see where and how to attract new ones
2. Identify new revenue streams including cross selling opportunities
3. Assess staff loyalty and satisfaction
4. Identify how to increase productivity
5. Evaluate results through peer group comparison

"We found it very straightforward to set up and use. Overall the layout is clear, it summarises everything really well and fives us all the information we need."

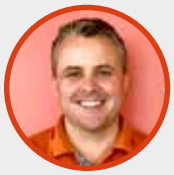
Fiona Curnow, Marketing Director at Gardner Leader Solicitors

"Law League has allowed us to collate feedback quickly and easily in order to help future clients and better our business."

Laura Jones, Marketing Manager at FBC Manby Bowdler Solicitors

Law League measures your performance whilst ensuring that you can demonstrate compliance with the SRA's Outcome Focused Regulation the Law Society's Conveyancing Quality Scheme and Lexcel.

Law League
performance & compliance, measured



RICH DIBBINS
Head of Sales and Digital Strategy
Conscious Solutions

What is Symphony LEGAL and why should your firm join?

Viv Williams
Consulting Director
Symphony Legal

Symphony Legal Services

Below you can find a summary of how we can assist your law firm.

Here at Symphony Legal we aim to support and assist your law firm around your business objectives. This can be anything from training and compliance to finance, people management and future planning.

We have a fantastic membership with a tiered approach; this is backed up with our legal centric consultants, all of whom have a wealth of knowledge and credibility within the legal industry.

But why join a membership group? All our members benefit from our various workshops to network, discuss issues and support each other. Your law firm isn't alone in the problems or challenges that wait ahead. We want to help you overcome these challenges, and get you doing what you do best, servicing your clients.

As well as the membership, each year we have the Symphony Awards Conference. This is a day of engaging presentations and great speakers all finished off with an awards ceremony for an array of categories. This is an event not to be missed in the legal social calendar.

Here are just some of the key benefits all our members receive each year:

- One free place to our annual conference in November.
- Free access to the following helplines – HR, Compliance and General Business.
- Dedicated legal focused job board – new for 2018.
- Discounts from 20+ vendors including Professional Indemnity Insurance.
- Initial annual or strategy review.
- In your 2nd year, two days' consultancy on a number of areas.

Business Support

- **Strategy** – Having an agreed strategic plan in place is the start of any business's journey to success.
- **Marketing** – Having a clear plan for acquiring new and returning clients is essential to help your firm grow.
- **People Management** – Your people are the lifeblood of your law firm. Having the right person in the right job with the right motivation and attitude is one of the biggest determining factors to your success.
- **Succession & Exit Planning** – All firms need to have in place an effective plan to deal with succession, retirement pay-out and client retention after this happens.
- **Financial Management** – It is essential that the owners of law firms, like any other businesses, understand their financial position. This will not only ensure business success but also financial compliance.
- **Mergers & Acquisitions** – If your law firm is considering achieving profitable growth through mergers and acquisitions, we can help both acquirers and sellers.
- **Change Management** – Taking the whole firm on a journey to implement your strategy is where the real hard work starts.
- **In-house Training** – We can deliver in-house training programs around almost all of the business support areas that we cover.

Compliance Support

- **COLP Support Service** – Our aim is to alleviate some of the pressures of undertaking the role of COLP.
- **COFA Support Service** – Our aim is to alleviate some of the pressures of undertaking the role of COFA.
- **File Review Service** – Reviewing files properly takes time but is essential to ensure that everyone within your firm is adhering to regulations.
- **SRA Relationship Support** – The SRA requires firms to interact with them more regularly than ever before and we are here to help with all aspects of that interaction.
- **Obtaining and Maintaining accreditations (LEXCEL, CQS, WIQS, STEPS)** – This can help give clients and insurers confidence in what you do.
- **Compliance Training** – We deliver CPD accredited training and interactive workshops which enable your team to have heightened awareness of the trips, traps and trends in regulation.
- **Anti-money Laundering** – Having the right procedure, policies and training in place around anti-money laundering, anti-fraud and anti-bribery guidelines.
- **ABS and new financial applications** – We can help you to decide whether your firm should consider adopting the Alternative Business Structure model and can then help with the application.

Pricing starts from £199 +VAT PER MONTH
for a minimum term of 6 months.

We make law firms **better businesses...**

We provide additional levels of membership available to match your needs. If you would like further details, just give us a call on **0333 320 9979** or **enquiries@symphonylegal.com**

Symphony Legal are here to support your law firm and your staff in achieving their goals.

VICKY SIMPSON
Compliance and Business Consultant
Symphony Legal

Could it be happening in my firm?

We all read about compliance and the articles published in the Law Society Gazette or Legal Futures, that then are shared throughout social media. How often do you really read them and ask yourself the question of "could it be happening in my firm?".

Compliance has so many layers; it's easy to get bogged down in the detail without seeing what's really going on and having the clarity to step back, undertake a root cause analysis, and put measures in place to ensure an incident doesn't happen again. I hear all the time "it wouldn't happen where I work" but how sure can you really be?

We have some big changes coming in this year and for SRA regulated firms, we have already seen the new CQS regime which will be assessment/audit based. I am really pleased to see these changes; it has been a concern of mine for some years that, whilst there are some really fantastic firms out there, there are also those firms who take a smoke and mirrors approach. These are the firms that have accreditations and use them merely as a tick box exercise without embedding the compliance functions into the culture of the firm. I feel this dismisses the true value and work that other firms put in to obtaining and maintaining these accreditations.

Taking a risk-based approach, what is one of your firm's biggest assets but also its highest risk? Yes, of course your staff. I have said it on many occasions, but you are only as good as your weakest member of staff and that could be the person who lands you in hot water. Compliance is your safety net to minimise the risks that you may face. It underpins your business.

There are the firms that have accreditations and use them merely as a tick box exercise without embedding the compliance functions into the culture of the firm.

Keeping up-to-date with compliance means updating and reviewing your policies and procedures at least annually. I come across many firms who do not have written policies/procedures and I am unsure how they expect their employees to be compliant on any level.

I have seen and dealt with many situations that could have been so easily avoided. I had one firm who were representing a client in criminal proceedings. The client was then referred to Civil Litigation to deal with a Freezing Order under the Proceeds of Crime Act, who subsequently referred the same client to the Conveyancing department who very helpfully transferred their property to another individual for nil consideration. I asked whether that client was grateful, and the response was "Yes, he bought myself and my secretary a Prada handbag each". You seriously couldn't make it up, but people do take these risks and, more worryingly, the staff involved didn't think they had done anything wrong!

The point is that you can have policies and procedures in place, but do you know whether they are being adhered to? Do you provide training? Do you stress test the policies? With this particular firm, training was key. In addition to this, file reviews were not carried out on a regular basis.

Think very carefully and revisit what you are doing; if you were faced with a similar situation, what would you have done differently? If there is a change to a policy, change the policy as opposed to sending an email round to staff. These emails get lost or forgotten and do not provide a reference point.

We rely heavily now on Case Management Systems and these are fantastic tools. Think about how you use your CMS from a compliance function and how it can not only assist you on a day to day basis, but in driving compliance values, embedding compliance, and running matters more efficiently, leading to increased revenue and happy staff.

The culture of a firm cannot be underestimated. We talk a lot about mental health well-being so look out for any trigger signs of a colleague who may not be on top of things. Quite often there are tell-tale signs, complaints, reduction in time recording, non-compliances on file reviews, appearing withdrawn.

It may be that you are doing all the right things and I see just as many good firms as I do those who need to make improvements. What I would say is, leadership should be shown from the Managing Partner and filter down, "top down, bottom up", have regular training and never assume that everyone knows everything.

Embrace compliance, engage with your employees and embed it into your culture.

The Interview

Angie Gurdon

Practice Manager – hpjv solicitors

Q Congratulations on winning Criminal Team of the year at the Wales Legal Awards, what have the team being doing to ensure they keep this prestigious title?

It's business as usual! The award is recognition of the high standard of work that we do. It spurs us on to retain it next year and inspires us to achieve national accolades, as well as entry into the Legal 500.

The team continue to put client care first; providing accurate, realistic and robust advice and achieving excellent service and outcomes for clients. We continue to be available for our clients 24/7, 365 days a year.

We're regularly involved in large, complex national cases and intend to continue doing this work as well as maintaining our roots as a local firm.

Q So, why did you join QualitySolicitors and why did you leave?

Prior to joining QS in 2011, the legal sector was facing significant change with the threat of greater competition from large, commercial organisations such as banks and supermarkets who were able to operate as Alternative Business Structures (ABSs). To compete, we decided to join the network to minimise the predicted impact. The potential of accessing clients on a national basis through the QS network and the nationwide marketing initiatives were also attractive prospects.

In 2018 we decided to leave the network as the legal sector was not impacted by ABSs as initially anticipated and it felt the time was right to re-establish ourselves as the independent brand we'd always been.

> *Preparing for standards and regulations keeps me awake the most, as the consequences of not being compliant are huge.*

> *The team here at hpjv are a great bunch, and without sounding trite, it really is like a big family.*

Q What three things as a Practice Manager keep you awake at night?

Preparing for standards and regulations keeps me awake the most, as the consequences of not being compliant are huge.

The new SRA Standards and Regulations are definitely in my top three - November 25 is stamped on my brain! Similar to GDPR which definitely kept me awake in the run up last year and still does with the increased vigilance required to avert data breaches.

Preparation for the new CQS Standard and our Lexcel accreditation gave me a few sleepless nights but it paid off as this year we were reaccredited with 28 areas of good practice under the new Lexcel v6.1 and, with the help of our conveyancing team, we produced a thorough and compliant manual for the new CQS standard.

Q What do you find the most rewarding about your role?

I'm very grateful that I love my job and I've not always been able to say that about previous roles! I enjoy the regular challenges that arise and how varied each day can be. The team here at hpjv are a great bunch, and without sounding trite, it really is like a big family. I thrive on the relationships with my colleagues and the things I can learn from them.

I get great satisfaction from developing procedures and processes that can facilitate smarter working practices and time saving solutions.

There's nothing better than negotiating a better deal from suppliers. This doesn't necessarily mean cheaper, if we can secure added value then that's a good result.

Q What are the plans for growth of the firm?

Following our departure from the QS brand, the company's objective is to continue being a leading player in offering Legal Services in South Wales under our new branding and to develop the business in areas of work covering Family, Crime, Residential Conveyancing and Wills & Probate. We envisage our new Commercial Property service to be a growing area.

We're always on the lookout for suitable acquisitions to join our growing team of enthusiastic and committed professionals.

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Google

Search Engine Updates 2018/19

1 AUGUST 2018

"Medic" Core Update

The first and most important update that Google made over the past year was the "Medic" update. Google called this a normal core update, but the SEO community has determined that over 40% of the sites affected by the update relate to the health niche.

It is believed that the purpose of this update was to show users more authoritative and trustworthy sites for important medical searches and other key topics such as those related to finance and law.

For example, if someone is searching for a medical condition, Google would prefer to show the NHS's page about the condition than a site selling an unproven supplement. Other sectors were also affected, but not to the same extent.

Source: www.seroundtable.com/google-medic-update-26177.html

12 MARCH 2019

March 2019 Core Update

The March 2019 Core Update was a fairly large update that some in the SEO community speculated was an update to the previous Medic update due to the types of sites that seemed to be affected by it.

In the legal sector, we noticed that the sites that seemed to benefit from the update were the largest firms with very authoritative domains such as Irwin Mitchell and Slater & Gordon. The sites that were negatively affected tended to be secondary sites related to specific services; for example, where a firm might have a main site and also a site for personal injury claims, the secondary site (the personal injury claims site) would have seen reduced rankings while the main site would be unaffected.

Many sites that were affected by this update recovered after the Core Update on 3rd of June, so we speculate that Google rolled back some of the changes that they made in this update.

23 MARCH 2019

De-indexing Bug

The Google de-indexing bug started on 23 March and it took until 11 April for Google to fix it. The bug resulted in about 4% of Google's index being removed and many site owners saw popular or important pages dropping completely out of the index. The fallout of this bug lasted even longer as it can take months for Google to re-crawl every page on a site.

3 JUNE 2019

June 2019 Core Update

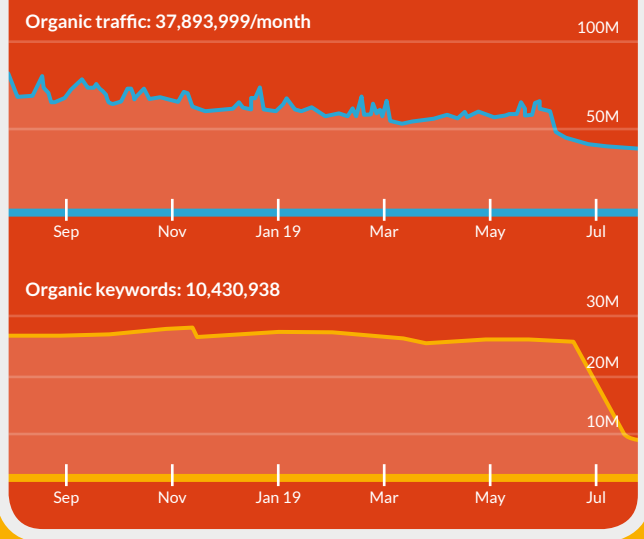
Google announced this as a "core" update, however, did not give any details about the effects they expected it to have. We noticed that sites affected by the previous update due to having multiple domains seemed to recover from the previous core update. We also observed that certain UK news sites were hit especially hard by this update, with The Daily Mail losing half of all daily traffic.

6 JUNE 2019

Site Diversity Update

The Site Diversity update was an important update that targeted something complained of by Google users for a long time: the dominance of large sites for certain keywords.

For example, while previously, you might see sites like Amazon ranking for most of the page one results, pushing competitors lower onto page two, you should now only see one listing for each domain on page one of search results. However, there are still some searches where this won't be the case, such as branded searches.



How do I know if my site has been affected by one of these updates?

The best way to determine if your site has been affected by one of these updates is to look in Google Analytics. Once logged into Google Analytics, click "Acquisition" on the left menu then "All Traffic" followed by "Channels". You will then see a list of the channels that bring traffic to your website in the main window. Click "Organic Search" and then organic traffic (traffic from search engines) will be shown. Select the date range in the top right corner of the screen and you should see a line chart similar to the image below.

This image shows an example of a site that lost traffic due to the March 2019 Core Update and then recovered after the June 2019 Core Update. If you see any similar decreases or increases around the time period for each of the updates mentioned above, then it is likely that your website was affected by the update!

If you are unsure whether your website was affected by any of these updates feel free to get in touch with us at Conscious and we can check if your traffic or Google rankings were affected.

JAMIE STEVENS
Search Marketing Manager
Conscious Solutions

Local Law Firm SEO Strategy for 2019

It seems like the past year has been a series of endless Google algorithm updates. There was even an update (YMYL) that specifically targeted the legal and medical industries. (The YMYL update now demands that legal industry websites that dispense life-changing advice need to demonstrate their expertise and online authority.) For the most part, however, best-practice for local SEO has not changed dramatically in the past year, but certain aspects have grown in importance, while being joined by a few newcomers like GDPR compliance and the need to demonstrate E.A.T. signals.

The following top 10 tips are the key areas all local legal industry website owners should be focussing on in 2019.

CHRIS MUNDY
SEO Manager
Conscious Solutions

1. Proximity

Having a brick and mortar premises in your target location is still one of the biggest local business ranking factors. Ideally, you want to be the only law firm at the address, so sharing serviced offices with many other lawyers will never be of as much benefit and could even be counter-productive.

2. Relevance

Websites still need to demonstrate to Google that their site contains the best answer to a user's search query. The best way to do that is still to include your target keyword in your page's URL, meta data, and on-page text, especially in the use of H1 H2 and H3 tags. Focus on one target keyword per page of well-formatted, value-adding content that answers user questions and adds value to the conversation. Increase internal relevance with internal links. Dust off your neglected blog and keep it active, as well as linking back to your key service pages.

3. Mobile Responsive Design

Google finally switched to mobile-first indexing in March 2019. This means that any website that is not built using a mobile responsive design will inevitably fare badly in the SERP wars moving forwards. Simply put, if you don't have a responsive design, it is probably your single biggest negative ranking factor right now.

4. Reviews

Reviews are now more important than ever. Cultivating positive reviews as well as replying to any negative reviews you receive is a positive ranking factor, but do not ever risk penalties by faking reviews.

5. Local Citations and Google My Business (GMB) listing

Maintaining a fully optimised GMB listing for each location and a presence on all of the major business and legal directories is still essential to ranking locally. Strive for 100% consistency in your Name, Address, Phone Number (NAP) across all directories. Eliminate all duplicate listings and previous brands that may have shared your address to eliminate Google confusion.

6. Contact Page

Multi location businesses need a unique contact page for each location. Embed a Google Map with your branded details rather than generic address. Use local business "LegalService" schema on your NAP details. If you have several locations make sure to point your citations to the relevant contact page.

7. Local Links

Links build the authority of your website. Local links from even small, niche business, "what's on" or local news sites can be incredibly valuable to your local rankings so do seek them out. Encourage these links by participating in local events and don't be shy when it comes to asking.

8. Expertise, Authority, Trust (E.A.T.)

Due to the YMYL update it is now necessary for law firms to demonstrate their expertise and industry trust. Membership in governing bodies and having relevant accreditations has become crucial and you should declare these in your about us section of your website, footer and or relevant service pages. Display your awards, memberships and accreditation logos. Blog authors should have expert bio pages and be quoted in external publications wherever possible. Having a secure website with an appropriate SSL certificate also sends a positive signal to your site users and to Google.

9. GDPR Compliance

Make sure your website is fully GDPR compliant so that you have one less thing to worry about going forwards. GDPR has not yet been openly declared a ranking factor, but it feels inevitable at some point in the future.

10. User Experience

The user's experience on your site sends an important signal to Google. How long did they stay? Did they go elsewhere and ask the same question again? Did they complete a contact form, click on a phone number or use some other element of your site to contact you? Having a well-designed site that loads quickly and is easy for a user to navigate and find what they want is very important. The more value-adding content you have the better. The easier it is for the user to contact you, the better. The longer they stay, the better.

5 tools to help you prove ROI for your online marketing...

...and some of them are free!

SAHRA TULLOCH
Account Manager
Conscious Solutions

You've finally had the call – your new website has gone live and all of the world wide web can see the fruits of your labour! Congratulations!

Now comes the real work. Because for modern law firms, your website shouldn't be a one-off project that you tick off and never re-visit. It should be an evolving, living part of your marketing that you are continuously monitoring and updating to make it as effective as possible.

But how do you know what is happening on your website and what you need to do to maximise the returns you see for all that hard work and financial investment?

These 5 handy tools will help you to ensure that every penny spent on your website leads to money earned. They'll tell you where people are going on your site, how they are using it and how you can make it better, so you can keep on winning more business through your website.

Google Analytics

Most people rely on Google Analytics for basic information about the performance of their website. You can use this to measure a whole array of important metrics, such as where people have come to you from (Google? A link from another website? Your Twitter feed?), how long they spent on the site, how many pages they looked at and even where they were, how old they were and what device they were using.

This information is vital and can inform your wider marketing strategy. If the biggest demographic on your site is 18-30 year olds and your core service is conveyancing, are you making sure that first time buyers can contact you in a way that suits them? **(Hint: they probably don't want to ring you)**.

Once you're comfortable with the basics, you can create specific goals in Google Analytics to track how often people are taking certain actions on your site. For example, you can track how often visitors are downloading your guide to pre-nuptial agreements, or filling in a form, or using your conveyancing calculator to get a quote.

If you're not getting the result you want, you can then look at making changes, such as moving key elements like contact forms and tweaking the language you use on your site to encourage visitors to take the actions you want them to take.

RULER

Software such as Ruler Analytics helps fill in the gaps. Ruler analyses engagement at the visitor level and thus can look at the journey an individual has taken, including whether at the end of that session they decide to pick up their phone and call you.

By delivering a unique (but still local) phone number, even when their journey with your website ends, your ability to track their journey with you doesn't. A bonus is that you can listen back to the phone call later. This helps not only with making sure that incoming calls are handled as you would expect, but also assists in closing the loop. You can really attribute how much of your online spend directly led to new business.

mailchimp

There are lots of ways to get people to your site, but one of the fastest and easiest methods is to harness your database of clients, potential clients and referrers (that you hopefully already have!).

Make sure your list is GDPR-friendly and then get going with your e-marketing. ROI is easily measured through open rates and click-through rates and once you've got them on the website, Google Analytics or Ruler Analytics can take over. You can also tack a handy little bit of software on during a mailshot....

canddi

Never miss out on a prospecting client again! CANDDi is the perfect tool for someone marketing a distress purchase, such as divorce, litigation or debt recovery. Using CANDDi you'll get a notification when a prospect is visiting your site, allowing you to follow up with them at a time when you know they are already considering your services.

So, if you see that the MD of a large company you're courting has been browsing the dispute resolution page of your website, a timely call to her 'to check in' could easily lead to a new piece of work.

The tool is perfect for firms relying on business from a large pool of repeat customers or prospects as your business development activity can be really focussed.

crazyegg hotjar

Heatmapping software such as Crazy Egg or Hotjar is useful for finding out what the real user experience on your website is. It produces a visual representation or 'heat map' showing you which parts of an individual web page visitors are most frequently interacting with.

That beautiful button you designed to take people through to your pricing page – does everyone realise it's a button? Are they actually clicking on it? Heatmapping on your site will also answer the age-old question of whether people actually scroll. Spoiler – they do!

Use heatmapping to make sure your website is as intuitive as you think it is – and make sure you act on the results! If everyone is clicking on your header image of staff expecting it to take them through to the team page, then make it so.

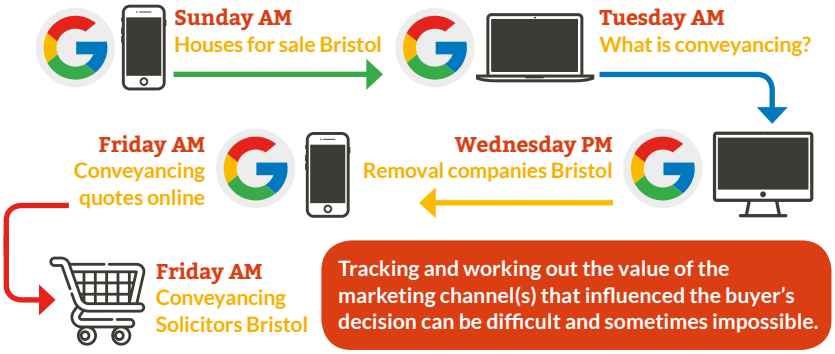
Ensuring the user experience is right is a vital step in conversion rate optimisation ("CRO") – once you've paid (in your time, your money, or both) to get people to the site, make sure they actually convert.

COLIN HARRISON
Paid Search Manager
Conscious Solutions

How to measure your Paid Ads ROI

If you are spending money on marketing your law firm using paid advertising on Google Ads, Bing, Facebook or any other paid channel, how do you know you're making a positive ROI?

Let's face it, tracking the true ROI of your marketing efforts is difficult. User journeys have changed and are now more complex. With so many touch points influencing a user's decision to contact you, how can we identify which marketing works and which doesn't?



Tracking and working out the value of the marketing channel(s) that influenced the buyer's decision can be difficult and sometimes impossible.

A recent survey by Hubspot shows that 43% of marketing teams find proving the ROI of their marketing activities is their biggest challenge.

Now, obviously for business owners this presents a big problem. After all, you don't want to be spending money on marketing if you can't clearly see what you are getting in return. So how do you make sure you are measuring ROI on paid ads and other channels?

The following are some of the key insights we think are worth knowing.

What can we do to track ROI?
Myth: Facebook, Google and Bing Ads show accurate conversion data and ROI you are getting within their platforms.

What the heck?
Fact is, the numbers being reported for conversions in your Google Ads, Facebook and Bing are not just inaccurate for you, they're off for everyone.

Hang on a minute, what is a conversion?

Good question. A conversion (or 'goal' as they are called in Google Analytics) is defined as an interaction by a user on your website. Some common conversion goals you may be tracking:

- Website completion form (higher value)
- Phone call completion (higher value)
- Email text click (higher value)
- Website chat conversation (medium value)
- Video view (medium value)
- Website session duration >2 minutes (low value)

Every time a website visitor interacts with one of the above, it's recorded in Google Analytics and imported into Google Ads, for example. We as PPC managers use this to steer the direction of the campaign.

How much is a conversion worth?

This depends on you. What percentage of website conversions lead to billable work for your firm? How much is that work worth on average? Do different types of conversions typically lead to more or higher value work than others?

If we as marketers can discover the true value of a case by getting details from your law practice about the average value of different types of conversions, then we can use this data more intelligently in steering ads in the best direction.

Since there has been little available in terms of technology to connect a firms CRM system & data to marketing platforms like Google Ads, it comes as no surprise that few are really understanding the true ROI of their efforts.

To provide a more accurate PPC ROI, what should you do?

Embrace the technology that's available to help feed your database to paid advertising channels. By ensuring you are tracking accurate data from phone calls to case closed and assigning a value, this can then be used to further determine how to steer the Google Ads campaigns and get you the best ROI possible.

We would only suggest setting this up on campaigns with a monthly spend of more than £2k.

Automate it!

Closed Loop Attribution. Sounds good hey? It will sound even better if your law firm is able to feed it into Google Analytics true conversion data - why? Because we can, by adding some of Google's AI, feed information to it so that it works on increasing ROI and not only conversions in the traditional sense of 1 or 0.

Conclusion

If you are spending on Google Ads or other paid ad channels and are not tracking it accurately, then this could be costing you. It's time to make the change and start embracing the systems that are available to you so you can start improving your law firm's ROI.

The Interview

Lucy Harttrup

Head of Marketing and Business Development, Barcan+Kirby

> *I'm a firm believer in embracing the whole marketing mix. Online is incredibly important and we have moved a lot of our spend into this area.*

Q In the past 10 years marketing has seen a remarkable change and law firms used to be more inclined to do intangible marketing including events, launches etc that were difficult to track. Has it made things easier now a lot of marketing is trackable, or has it made it harder as you have to prove every little spend?

I'm a firm believer in embracing the whole marketing mix. Online is incredibly important and we have moved a lot of our spend into this area as well as recruiting a dedicated digital marketing executive, but it is not enough on its own. PR, off the page advertising, events and general business development all still have their place. Even direct mail when used in a responsible way can be hugely effective.

As a full-service, high street law firm, our clients are very diverse in terms of age, gender, background etc and therefore we need to make sure that our comms reflect this. Some things aren't trackable, but I feel lucky to work for a firm where this is understood.

Q What is your best advice for getting buy-in from partners? Especially when they are agreeing to marketing activities they may not understand e.g. SEO

Marketing is all about understanding what is important to people and explaining what you are offering in a way that makes sense to that group or individuals - getting partner buy-in is no different. I try to put myself in their shoes, use real life examples of things they may have experienced and back up my case with stats and data. My best advice is in a nutshell is to "make it real".

Q The firm is pretty active with its external PR via an agency. How do you measure the ROI on that spend?

It's always difficult to measure this, and to some extent we don't really. When we interview people, we ask them what they knew about the firm before they considered a career with us (if anything). One person I interviewed last year said he hadn't heard of the firm until he got his good front garden award (a local community-run initiative that we sponsor). Someone else told me that they had seen a piece in the local paper about the Gromit sculpture we sponsored last year. We can't always prove the ROI but we can feel it and sometimes that's OK.

Q Your previous background is in insurance, what have you brought in from that industry that has benefitted the firm's marketing?

Above all, discipline. Discipline in planning, budgeting, measurement and accountability. In the insurance industry, retention and cross-selling is crucial and during my 18 months at Barcan+Kirby I have helped the firm to see the importance of this. We now have an ongoing programme of change across all areas of the firm. We have a huge focus on the client journey and identifying where we could be making improvements. We have a greater understanding of the client touchpoints and what clients want from us. We also have a better understanding of our competition and asking ourselves all the time "Why Barcan+Kirby?".

> *Marketing is all about understanding what is important to people and explaining what you are offering in a way that makes sense to that group or individuals - getting partner buy-in is no different.*

KATIE BLAKE
Marketing Executive, Conscious Solutions

Tools we know and love

Canva

slack

mailchimp

SUITE CRM

Hootsuite™

Wunderlist

Canva

A beautiful tool that will allow you to create easy designs for Instagram, Facebook and Twitter or for flyers and presentations. It allows you to drag, drop and upload features to your heart's content. Not a tool to be missed if you want to jazz up your social feeds.

Mailchimp

Probably my favourite and most used tool! Mailchimp is a web-based email marketing service. Mainly used for email campaigns and newsletters, it allows you to focus in on audiences and ensure the right message is reaching your desired target market. The easy layout and template system make it effortless to create lead generating email campaigns in no time. Oh, plus you can analyse your results after, right down to seeing if a certain person has opened an email. If you haven't used Mailchimp before, what are you waiting for?

Hootsuite

Want to bulk upload tweets? Schedule posts in advance? Or simply see all your mentions, newsfeeds and posts at once? Then Hootsuite is the tool for you! You can see various social media streams all at once and easily analyse data from these platforms. What's not to love?

SuiteCRM

Do you have great relationships with your clients? Sadly, our imperfect human brains prevent us from remembering every little detail of our clients' lives. A CRM system makes it easier to maintain these relationships, allowing you to find out what previous conversations you had and even what their favourite biscuits are, all within seconds. Don't mess around with spreadsheets of data anymore (I won't even mention that old friend GDPR) and keep everything in one place that everyone in the firm can access! A real must-have tool for any progressive law firm.

Slack

Spend all day emailing back and forth, when something could be fixed by a quick instant message? Cut back on emails and integrate Slack into your firm. Slack is essentially a chat room for your whole company, designed to ease up communication. It also allows you to organise group discussions as well as private messages to share information and files. The best message here to our general channel at Conscious HQ is always: "There's cake in the kitchen!".

Wunderlist

This is simply the easiest way to make sure all your tasks get completed. Got a task? Got an idea? Got a project? Create different lists for ongoing projects, add tasks and then, more importantly, tick them complete once done! A great tool used here at Conscious HQ that allows us to easily keep on top of agency and client work.

5.4 million adults still don't have a Will:

New software to help law firms get more leads

Research by Royal London, You Gov, IRN Research and Orchard has revealed some interesting statistics about Wills, including:

5.4 million adults do not know where to begin when it comes to **writing a Will.**

Around 54% of adults **do not have a Will.**

Six in 10 (59%) parents do not have a Will or have one that is **out of date.**

This makes uneasy reading, but it does highlight the importance of making information and solutions widely and more easily accessible.

This presents a massive opportunity to law firms and a new service, called My Legal Checkup, is now available to law firms to help address this issue.

Conscious Solutions is always looking for ways to help law firms get even more out of their online presence and to generate more opportunities. With this in mind, Conscious has partnered up with My Legal Checkup, a branded tool that can be integrated on a law firm's website and provides information and support to their existing clients, as well as creating new opportunities for law firms.

My Legal Checkup is a quick and easy to use interactive questionnaire which can be added to law firms' websites to help educate their clients about the legal products and services they need. The tool is customisable and tailored to each law firm, including brand colours and logo.

Through answering 7 questions, My Legal Checkup makes it possible for an individual to receive a personalised report highlighting their legal needs, whether that is a Will, Lasting Power of Attorney, a Pre-nuptial agreement, a Trust or another solution. This is aimed at them then getting the expert advice they need from the law firm.

Commenting on the new service, legal sector marketing expert Clare Fanner, who is working with My Legal Checkup, says; "Whilst most of the population understand what a Will is, there are still too many people that don't understand just how important it is to have your legal needs properly assessed and then to put in place the right solutions."

> *My Legal Checkup was developed for two core reasons. Firstly, to make it easier for the UK population to get access to the legal protection they need by providing them with personalised guidance. Secondly, we wanted to provide law firms with a branded support tool that they can tailor and use with their clients and as a means to generate new opportunities.*

Start Asking Questions

My Legal Checkup®
make sense of your legal needs

The tool is very easy to use, and it takes just a couple of minutes to answer the 7 questions with a valuable, personalised report being produced as an output. You can see a mock-up of a branded law firm version of the software on this link: https://buttlerandmorgan.mylegalcheckup.uk/

5 reasons why law firms should get My Legal Checkup

1. Generate qualified, GDPR compliant leads
2. Enhance your client experience
3. Educate and empower your clients
4. Provide 24/7 access to personalised reports for your clients
5. Create more opportunities for conversations with website visitors and clients

Would you like to get involved?

We have a special offer for the first 10 law firms to purchase the software.

For the first 10 law firms to buy My Legal Checkup we are offering 50% off the setup – so just £500 as opposed to £1,000 plus a licence fee of £100 per month.

Contact **sales@conscious.co.uk** to find out more.

My Legal Checkup

make sense of your legal needs

ENHANCING CLIENT EXPERIENCE

A branded tool on your website that enables visitors to generate a legal needs report in just 3 minutes.

EDUCATE AND EMPOWER YOUR CLIENTS

GENERATE QUALIFIED, GDPR COMPLIANT LEADS

PROVIDE 24/7 ACCESS TO PERSONALISED REPORTS FOR CLIENTS & WEBSITE VISITORS

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR MORE CONVERSATIONS WITH WEBSITE VISITORS AND CLIENTS

*** **SPECIAL OFFER** ***

FOR THE FIRST 10 FIRMS TO BUY MY LEGAL CHECKUP WE ARE OFFERING 50% OFF THE SETUP – SO JUST £500 AS OPPOSED TO £1,000.*

GET IN TOUCH NOW TO FIND OUT MORE

sales@conscious.co.uk

www.mylegalcheckup.uk

* My Legal Checkup costs £1,000 for the setup (reduced to £500 for the first 10 law firms to sign up) plus £100 per month licence fee. All costs exclude VAT. VAT will be charged at the prevailing rate.

Free Stuff

We have lots of **freebies** at Conscious, and who doesn't like a freebie?

RICH DIBBINS
Head of Sales and Digital Strategy
Conscious Solutions

We are always looking to improve on these, if you know of a great freebie. **Let us know.**

Website Health Check

Want to know how well your website is performing?
How it compares against your competitors?
What your Social Media footprint is?
We can show you all of this and so much more.

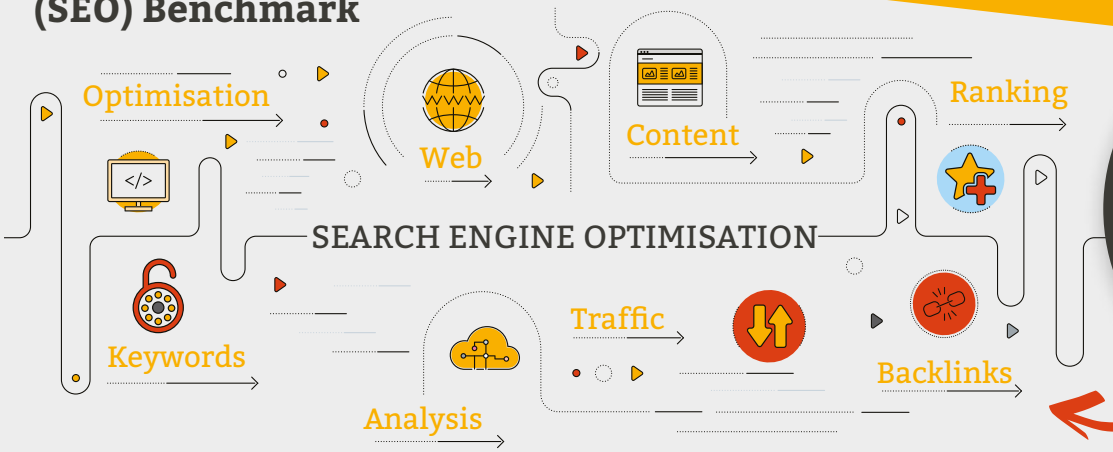
30 Minute Digital Review

One of our most recent freebies is a call with me to assess your website and how to make some real improvements. Without breaking the bank, I will tell you in simple terms how to improve your site and what's missing.

Tips Booklets

Loads of different tips booklets, ranging from LinkedIn to Pay Per Click. All of these short and to-the-point tips booklets will help you to build your digital strategy.

(SEO) Benchmark



Further analysis on your competitors and how their site is performing. Anyone looking to embark on an SEO campaign needs all the information possible to help build their strategy.

Funny Bit At The End

"After analysing all the data, I think we can safely say that none of it is useful."

Word Search

We all love these, right?
See if you can find all ten words!

- Biscuits
- Google Analytics
- Social Media
- Website
- Champagne
- Orange
- Sunshine
- Molly
- Reg
- Tilly

G C J J A E O F M C G N S S B
J O X Q G H W B H N W T S T S
M R O N C E I A L I F L P I O
M O A G Y Q M B F V L W Q U C
E R L N L P I E C L O U P C I
O E C L A E E R H X T G B S A
O B Q G Y D A T L X G W R I L
Y B N E C J E N Q C O T E B M
P E A Q B H Q N A Z V X G G E
D Q Y C Z F C W I L A I K L D
T I L L Y F K K W H Y V Y W I
T T R M R U I D Y O S T O B A
R H Z L A B O I R H J N I Q S
L J N N S E T I S B E W U C X
Q Y A I Q L K Y Y H P H E S S

Spot the dogs!

Throughout the magazine, you'll see some cheeky dogs scattered around here and there. See how many you can find and tweet the number to **@conscioussol** along with what your main marketing goal or business objective for this year! We will pick one lucky winner each calendar month who will receive a free social media workshop.

conscious.co.uk