

# Business of Law

## Tools and Strategies to Keep the Social Media Monster at Bay

Contributed by  
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Having implemented social media campaigns for many of the world's leading professionals (lawyers, Fortune 500 executives, doctors, consulting firms, etc.) for more than six years, we know how overwhelming social media can seem. The effort to create ROI (return on influence) and ROR (return on relationships) can seem daunting—and not executing social media properly (i.e., not making meaningful business connections) certainly makes it a waste of time.

Fortunately, approaching social media strategically—and utilizing some of the many available tools—can optimize your time and efforts, giving you a much higher return on all forms of your investments.

### Have a Goal

Attorneys are busy, and their first and foremost responsibility is servicing clients, so time spent elsewhere should have a strong justification. You first need to identify why you want to be on social media. (“Because everyone tells me I should” is not a compelling enough reason.) Identify your primary two or three reasons for embarking on a social media campaign and then have goals for the different campaigns you launch. The biggest mistake I see attorneys making is engaging on social media with no real reason or direction as to why they are doing so.

Possible goals are:

- Attract new clients;
- Create new referral partner relationships;
- Attract affiliates/downlines;
- Position yourself as a thought leader or subject matter expert;
- Drive traffic to your website;
- Share information about your firm;
- Find promising associates or lateral candidates; and
- Find a new position.

### Keep an Editorial Calendar

People in the PR business have always known the importance of editorial calendars. And since social media is a form of public relations, it is critical to map out, at least generally, what newsworthy events, launches, presentations, publications, articles, etc. are coming up so that you have the full coverage you need on all the platforms, when you need it.

### Utilize a Scheduler

There are several social media schedulers that will let you schedule and post to platforms (notably Twitter) on your time. Hootsuite.com is one of the most popular applications, but you might also try Tweetdeck.com and BufferApp.com for other options. That way you can look at your editorial calendar and schedule your posts for the week, month or year. (That is not to say there should not be any spontaneous posting, but at least this way the important dates are covered.)

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### Create a Checklist

Social media can be a rabbit hole you fall into and can never escape. To avoid this, create a checklist of daily, weekly, monthly, and quarterly tasks to keep you on track. If you are one of those people (like me) who has shiny object syndrome, set a timer to track how much time you are spending and whether it could be spent elsewhere.

### Use a Contact Relationship Manager

No matter who your “clients” might be, you need a way to manage and keep up with them. Many law firms have internal customer relationship manager (CRM) systems, but there are also inexpensive or free options that work well and sync nicely with social media platforms. We like ConnectedHQ.com and JibberJobber.com. Of course if you use Outlook, the Outlook Social Connector is a great option. The most important thing is keeping your network organized and your important relationships top-of-mind. In the noisy world of social media, it is too easy for your connections’ voices to get lost in the crowds.

### Monitor Your Brand and Your Presence

Whether you have established a corporate brand, a personal brand, or both, it is very important to monitor all that is being said about you, your firm, your clients, and your competition. Radian6 and Omniture are some of the best-known (and most expensive) monitoring services, but you can always set up your own social monitoring system by using:

- Google Alerts for general web monitoring;
- Twilert for Twitter monitoring;
- Socialmention for a general social platform monitoring; and
- LinkedIn.com/signal for LinkedIn update monitoring.

### Be a Resource

People do business with people they know, like, and trust. Therefore, it becomes very important on social media to create and share content that your network finds valuable and might want to share with their network. The key is to set up a system that helps you create and share content in an organized, efficient, regular, and effective way.

### Connect

Don’t just grow your network so the numbers look impressive. Instead, develop and nurture meaningful relationships in the amount of time you are able to commit to social media. Investing time to create authentic relationships is a far more fruitful investment than simply going through the motions for the sake of going through the motions. There are many ways to artificially boost your numbers on social media, but if you are not growing real relationships, it’s all smoke and mirrors. When at all possible, meet with members of your network in person, send them an email, or talk on the phone. Take your online relationships into real life as soon as you can. A great iPhone tool to look into is HereOnBiz, which allows you to see other LinkedIn members in your own hometown, or in the cities or conferences you are visiting.

Finally, most importantly, (and perhaps the hardest to thing to do of all): nurture your relationships before you need them! After all, relationships are about a lot more than LinkedIn, Facebook & Twitter.

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