

# Google Yourself, Your Firm and Your Competition

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At some point in the selection process, a future client is going to use Google to check you out. Whether it's a general counsel researching a "short list" of law firms or an executive who has a business problem – they will Google you.

If you have a mediocre website, you will actually disqualify yourself. If you answer the potential client's questions, you may get the call. Google is far and away the top choice for conducting an online search as of March 2010, according to comScore qSearch. The table below shows the market share for each of the five largest search engines in the U.S.

Google	65.1%
Yahoo	16.9%
Microsoft	11.7%
Ask	3.8%
AOL	2.5%

## Google yourself.

Type your own name in the search box at Google.com. The worst thing that can happen is that you turn up nothing. This means you are invisible on the Web. Nowadays, many people use the Web to look up phone numbers, driving directions and any professional they're considering. To be missing on the Web is a truly notable absence.

The best thing you can hope for is that Google turns up substantive articles you've written for other Web sites. With good luck there will be a link leading to one of your public appearances or an announcement of a seminar where you are a panelist. Ideally the top link will lead to your website or LinkedIn biography, listing your extensive legal experience, examples of matters successfully handled and well-known clients you have represented.

I Googled myself and found The LawMarketing Portal ([www.LawMarketing.com](http://www.LawMarketing.com)) my blog (<http://blog.larrybodine.com>), my LinkedIn profile, articles I've written and references to me from other websites.

The point is that you should start writing articles for Web sites and publications that have an online presence, so that searchers can find you. For starters, put your articles, speeches and public appearances on your own firm's Web site. The next step is to offer the material for publication on *somebody else's* Web site. Editors of trade, industry and association Web sites are often hunting for fresh content and may have an opportunity to publish you online.

You should also beef up your bio on the Web. Make it easy for people to reach you by including all your contact information, including:

1. Your land address
2. Email address
3. Phone number
4. A professionally-taken color photo

Surprisingly, some lawyer bios omit this key information. Your address and phone number may be somewhere on the firm site, but make sure they appear in your bio.

Include the kind of information that executives and in-house counsel want to know about you:

1. The industries in which you have experience
2. A list of representative clients
3. Examples of results you've achieved for them.

For an article about what to put in your bio, see "Watch What You Say About Yourself" on JDSupra.com at <http://bit.ly/aMdhJC>

## Google Your Firm.

Let's act as if we were a potential and Google your firm. If you have a Web site and type in the exact name of your firm, chances are it will be the top item in the roster of choices. This of course assumes that the Googler already knows your firm name, remembers how to spell it and is looking for it in the first place.

So let's make the test more realistic, and not use the name of your firm. Why don't we type in "lawyer" and an industry, like "franchise" and a city like "Chicago." Does your firm appear in the first 10 links? If not, you're going to be pretty hard to find.

What you *will* find is a list of firms that have put a lot of content on their sites and updated them frequently. More than anything else, search engines are looking for Web pages with newly-updated content. Make sure your important keywords appear in the

<title> tag, headings, hyperlinked words, and your body text, especially in the first sentence or paragraph. More information on revamping your Web site so that it generates leads and makes your phone ring can be found at <http://bit.ly/13pPnh>

You might argue that it's "not fair" to Google a firm based on an industry and a city. Thinking like a lawyer, you might feel it is more appropriate to search by area of law. After all, most law firms are organized by practice area. But that's not the way that clients think. *They don't view themselves as customers of a practice group; they see themselves as a member of an industry.* And they don't view their problems as legal issues; they see them as business problems.

### Google Your Competition.

Now let's conduct some competitive intelligence: Google a competing law firm. Search for it the same way as we did before -- type in the exact name and see what happens. Do they come to the top of the list? Then type in a few terms that the firm is known for - - such as the names of their well-known lawyers or the clients they represent. Does this make their Web site pop to the top?

Link popularity (the number of incoming links to your site) makes a lot of difference, too, especially with Google. In other words, the more often other sites link to your firm's site, the better. This alone is an incentive to put your articles on other Web sites, especially there is a link back to your site.

As the New York Times noted, many people are even checking out their blind dates by Googling them. Get yourself ready when others Google you.

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