

Praise for *Digital Marketing for Law Firms*

“*Digital Marketing for Law Firms* is a comprehensive guide on how to create and build an engaging online campaign to attract new clients. A must-read for any lawyer who is serious about growth in this highly competitive environment.”

—Andy Citrin, Andy Citrin Injury Attorneys

“*Digital Marketing for Law Firms: The Secrets to Getting More Clients and Better Cases* offers exactly what its subtitle claims: it takes the mystery out of online marketing. This helpful guide explains in simple terms not only why, but also how, to adopt internet marketing strategies that will result in a return on investment for your law firm. *Digital Marketing for Law Firms* is broken down into seventeen easily digestible chapters. My (nonlegal!) advice? It’s worth the purchase just for the opportunity to read and implement the steps described in the first chapter, on building a brand, and the sixth chapter, on writing online content that will turn potential clients into your clients.

—Amanda Narvaes, partner at Drew Cooper & Anding, director-at-large at Women Lawyers Association of Michigan, 2018-2020

“Informative and insightful. Chip has taken what he has learned from his years of experience and put that information in an easy to understand format that provides answers to what works in digital marketing.”

—Matthew R. Myers, Myers Law Firm, PLLC

“The foundation of all marketing is defining your brand, being true to your brand, and being open to the evolution of your brand as your firm grows. ‘Build it and they will come,’ stay true to your brand and the results will come!”

—Jason A, Plotkin, Esq., CEO of the Pinder Plotkin Legal Team, a Maryland Personal Injury and Workers’ Compensation law firm

“LaFleur breaks down what it takes to take [your] law firm to the next level. This book offers practical guidance to law firms of all sizes, but I especially like that the solo practitioner can implement these strategies and tips.

—Kari Santana, Law Offices of Kari Santana

DIGITAL MARKETING FOR LAW FIRMS

The Secrets to Getting
More Clients and Better Cases

Chip LaFleur

with

Steven Kent and Leigh Ebrom



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To my wife, Sarah, whose support and trust helped me complete this project, and to my sons, Lucien and Leif, who did everything they could to foil her efforts.

—Chip LaFleur

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This book is intended for practicing attorneys. This book does not offer legal advice and does not take the place of consultation with an attorney or other professional with appropriate expertise and experience.

Attorneys are strongly cautioned to evaluate the information, ideas, and opinions set forth in this book in light of their own research, experience, and judgment; to consult applicable rules, regulations, procedures, cases, and statutes (including those issued after the publication date of this book); and to make independent decisions about whether and how to apply such information, ideas, and opinions to their own marketing activities.

Although the authors mention various legal restrictions that apply to attorney advertising and marketing, this book is not a compliance manual. Attorneys are cautioned to satisfy themselves that their advertising and marketing activities are consistent with applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

All references to the trademarks of third parties are strictly informational and for purposes of commentary. No sponsorship or endorsement by, or affiliation with, the trademark owners is claimed or implied by the author or publisher of this book.

Recommendations of third-party providers of goods and services that may be useful in attorney advertising and marketing are based on the experience of the authors in using these resources. No endorsement of these providers, and no endorsement of this book by these providers, is stated or implied by the authors or the publisher. Readers should satisfy themselves that the third-party providers are appropriate for their needs.

This book contains illustrative examples of advertising and marketing issues that focus on a law firm called “Webster, Webster & Cohen” (sometimes referred to as “WWC”) and its various personnel, vendors and clients, all of which are wholly imaginary. The firm name is a

light-hearted and parodic homage to the fictional brokerage firm that appears in the film *Cool Runnings*, an iconic artifact of American pop culture. No connection between the film and this book is claimed or implied. Any similarity between the fictional names of individuals and business entities and those of real persons is strictly coincidental.

The author and publisher disclaim any liability or responsibility for loss or damage resulting from the use of this book or the information, ideas, or opinions contained in this book.

FOREWORD

All good trial lawyers have one thing in common: the ability to take complicated, nuanced topics and make them seem simple—even crystal clear. Most of an effective courtroom advocate’s knowledge is not acquired in law school; they learn it later on. Successful lawyers know that they must understand their cases’ subject-matter well enough to converse with experts and cross-examine any opposing doctor or product engineer.

However, the ability to translate sophisticated legal, medical, or technical issues into plain English takes time and practice. We work diligently to become armchair experts.

Imagine that your next trial is on the subject of digital marketing. How would you prepare? You would probably read books and articles on the subject. You would ask questions, lots of questions. You would consult with your own experts. You might question the other side’s experts. You would attempt to become conversant in the field of digital marketing because the better you understand it, the more likely you will be successful in your case.

I believe that developing a good understanding of digital marketing is just as important to your practice as winning your next trial. It is the present and the future. Lawyers who hope to market their firms on the web must learn enough to converse intelligently with digital marketers. That’s where this book comes in.

Like the practice of law, marketing has its own language and alphabet soup. Marketers love to talk about PPC, SEO, CTRs, and KPIs as if everyone understands these terms. Unless you’ve built up your expertise, it’s easy to spend too much money on misguided marketing efforts. For example, I know lawyers who believe that paid advertising is a scam because of their negative experiences with unscrupulous or inexperienced paid advertising managers.

Admittedly, my early experiences with large legal marketing companies tarnished my opinion of the industry, too. Before I founded Crosley Law, I worked for a firm that spent massive amounts of money on advertising. To me, the legal advertisers I encountered seemed more concerned with separating law firms from their money than with delivering measurable results. I recall meeting with website reps who wanted to upsell me additional services and tried to pressure me into matching what my competitors were doing. Every law firm's website started to look and sound the same, and we were all paying outrageous amounts of money for cookie-cutter content and designs. I figured there had to be a better way.

In 2005, as I began to build Crosley Law, I wanted to chart my own marketing path. I needed to stand out, and I didn't want to waste my money on ineffective tactics.

Based on my research, I concluded that phonebook advertising was a dying industry and that TV ads were too pricey. I decided that the web was my best option. I built a basic website and started to look for people who could help me stand out and connect with the right clients. That's when I met Chip LaFleur.

At the time, Chip worked for an SEO (search engine optimization) firm in San Antonio, Texas. Unlike the typical digital marketing professional, Chip valued transparency and education. There wasn't much geek speak. Instead, he took the time to answer my questions, explain his strategies, and empower good decision-making. He gave me the time and information that I needed, just like I would with one of my clients.

Quickly, I realized that Chip wasn't just a marketing provider; he was my partner. He didn't want to hide behind technical jargon and the typical smoke and mirrors used to overcharge attorneys. Instead, he believed that candor, client education, and meaningful data are mutually beneficial for lawyers and their marketing teams.

When Chip opened LaFleur Marketing, Crosley Law was one of its first clients. His team continues to teach my firm about the latest

advances in digital marketing. We're continually improving my online presence, and his team is always ready to answer my tough questions.

This book is a continuation of Chip's mission to educate lawyers about the power of digital marketing. In it, you'll find detailed information about how to build your law firm's brand, create a website, and connect with people through compelling blogs, ad campaigns, and social media platforms. The text is filled with practical information, examples, and anecdotes. Even after many years of working with Chip and his team, I learned some new things while reading it.

Even if you decide to hire an agency to build and implement your digital marketing plan, *Digital Marketing for Law Firms* is a valuable tool. As you read, you'll gain the expertise and confidence you need to make smart decisions, identify the best partner, review proposals, and assess their performance. Pretty soon, you'll be able to poke holes in an unscrupulous salesperson's assertions, just like you would an independent medical examiner's report. And if more complicated questions arise, you can always follow my lead and call Chip. He'll happily answer your questions.

—Tom Crosley, Founder of Crosley Law

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Like everything we do at LaFleur, this book was a team effort. I am humbled by everyone's dedication, attention to detail, and sacrifice. I especially want to thank my cowriters, Steven Kent and Leigh Ebrom, who helped put my thoughts and approach to digital marketing into words, and Catherine Smyka, who kept the project on track and encouraged us at every step.

However, we were never alone in our effort. Jason Brower and Sowmya Padigi pitched in, offering their expertise and insight into the world of paid advertising; Jason gets cowriting credits for the chapter on paid social media advertising. Falon Peters and Jane Newton had the unenviable task of reviewing and reading our first draft; their feedback was invaluable. Nick Wright created the majority of the graphics in the book. Amy Hinman helped craft the title. Our project and account managers, Eric Rosbury, Rosemarie Falsetta, Becky Zobl, and Pat Kose, provided support and managed our workloads and client relationships to give us time to breathe and focus on the book's content. Our friend Kyle McCarthy helped get this project off the ground in the early days and contributed to our discussion of paid advertising.

I also want to thank Tom Crosley for writing the foreword and putting his trust in our skills. I'm proud to work with an attorney with as much integrity and intelligence as Tom.

Personally, our families deserve a lot of credit. Sarah LaFleur, Matt Ebrom, and Regina Berlin gave us an incredible amount of support and encouragement throughout the writing and editing process. Similarly, Leif, Lucien, and Drew get thanks for (occasionally) being patient while Dad or Mom wrote a book.

INTRODUCTION

Beyond Winning: Leverage Your Success and Get More Clients

Most lawyers are good at winning. They win in courtrooms, in negotiations, and in casual discussions over a few drinks. Winning propels them forward in their careers and, in some cases, to start their own firms. But a lot of lawyers struggle when success at their vocation doesn't translate to success as a stakeholder or owner at a firm.

Part of this struggle stems from gaps in training. Most lawyers we've spoken with have taken a handful of business or marketing classes over the course of their career, and even the best of those classes at law schools and CLE events have been described to us as "cursory" or "required." High praise.

The other primary struggle that attorneys have is one of capacity. If you're like the lawyers we partner with, you're a quick learner and you are good at a variety of things. But even if you could meticulously plan out the ten thousand hours you need to invest in new skills to truly master them, no one person can keep a firm running, deftly manage their case-load, respond to clients (let alone everyone else), carve out enough time for themselves to maintain their sanity, and, of course, effectively market their practice to get new clients and (hopefully) hire some more staff who can free up some of their time to focus on more important things.

Digital marketing isn't a panacea for the perennial struggles that attorneys face as they set out on their own, grow their practice, or try to maintain their established position in the market. Digital marketing can, however, give law firms of any size a scalable, sustainable model for revenue growth. It can also provide frameworks, methodologies, and tools that will improve the way your law firm operates as a business.

Most importantly, a well-developed holistic marketing strategy can take one of the most difficult and time-consuming aspects of running a law firm (attracting new business) off your plate so you can focus on what you do best: winning.

The Inspiration for This Book Is ROI

The inspiration for this book stems from a professional relationship and friendship with an incredibly talented trial lawyer whom I have been working with for nearly ten years. As it turns out, great trial lawyers also tend to be some of the most demanding—and rewarding—digital marketing clients.

Long before I opened my own digital marketing agency, that attorney, Tom Crosley of San Antonio, Texas, challenged me to show him the return on his digital marketing investment. In response, I showed him a graph, lists of keywords, some charts, and other data points that I (at the time) thought looked polished and compelling.

Like the great negotiator and lawyer that Tom is, he saw that what I presented was superficial. He kept coming back to the original question, and it's one that we return to every day and in every marketing tactic that we consider and execute:

How can we clearly determine and report return on investment (**ROI**) for lawyers?

The Only Metrics That Matter: Clients and Cases

Finding an answer to that question is challenging, and the solution is rarely neat and tidy. But with diligence and inquisitiveness, we have mapped potential client journeys, tracked their interactions, and built a model for legal marketing success. That's a model we'll be sharing with you for the rest of this book.

Throughout, we will help you do the following:

- Understand your potential clients and how they pursue legal services.
- Determine whether your marketing efforts are effective at attracting actual clients.
- Analyze how your marketing budget correlates with new client acquisition.
- Improve your marketing efforts to more effectively target your ideal audience and increase ROI.

We're not interested in creating a cloud of mystery around digital marketing. Yes, it can be very technical and demanding. But you should never get distracted by software, the alphabet soup of acronyms, or any of the other trappings of digital marketing.

Whether you're hoping to launch your first **website** or you've been at this for forty-five years, all of your marketing should help you bring in more—and better—clients and cases.

What This Book Is Really About: Helping You

This simple fact leads us to the purpose of this book. We know you don't like spending your marketing budget on tactics that don't produce ROI. Many of our clients come to us after they've sunk money into strategies that didn't pan out. We don't beat ourselves up over every experiment that doesn't succeed. Instead, we learn from every tactic and initiative, whether it delivers results or fails, and we've been learning with law firms from across the United States.

Who Is LaFleur?

When I founded LaFleur, my mission was to create an agency that created brilliant digital marketing for law firms. In my opinion, too many marketing agencies use smoke and mirrors to upsell law firms on services and tactics that they don't need. We do things differently, creating legal brands, websites, ad campaigns, and content that is unique, compelling, and effective. Headquartered in Grand Rapids, Michigan, our Midwestern work ethic and practicality is reflected in everything we do.

While we've broadened our clientele over the years, legal marketing is still our main focus and passion. We've worked with attorneys who are just starting out and firms that have been succeeding for decades. Our clients have come from across the nation and from a vast range of practice areas. We've partnered with attorneys in personal injury, tax law, family law, estate planning, business law, mediation, and a wide variety of other areas.

My team includes talented writers, editors, designers, web developers, paid advertising experts, video producers, and project managers, many of whom contributed their time, words, and insight to this book. Of special note is our content team; my first hire after I created the company was a writer; my second was an editor—because the importance of outstanding content within a marketing strategy cannot be overstated. We take a conscientious, strategy-first approach to every initiative we employ on behalf of our clients. We familiarize ourselves with their businesses, their unique needs, and their specific goals to develop a customized suite of marketing services that delivers maximum value.

This careful analysis helps us understand exactly how you can tell your story online in a way that resonates with your audience. Then we apply proven marketing strategies that attract the right people and convince them to hire your firm.

The knowledge and data we've been able to acquire through years of learning and refining is highly valuable, and we don't believe you need to hire an agency like ours to benefit from it. We know that we're good at what we do and that we can execute the tactics and strategies we lay out in this book.

Because of our confidence, we're open to sharing—in detail and in a way that you can use—the approach we've taken to help our clients achieve success in digital marketing. We wholeheartedly invite you to review the chapters that follow and apply the experience we've gained for your own benefit.

In each of the chapters that follow, we'll outline the approach from a crawl-walk-run perspective. We'll address what you can do right now and what you could do if you applied some budget or people to the strategy. We'll also discuss what you could do if you hired a marketing coordinator or director and what you could do if you worked with an agency or freelancer to help you.

Each chapter closes with a checklist to help you start implementing these strategies and tactics. The checklist will also serve as a quick reference you can share with your team to track progress and increase accountability as you work on implementation.

Finally, we realize that, like law, marketing has its own vernacular. To help you build your marketing literacy, we've included a detailed glossary of terms. When you see a word or phrase in bold, you can find its definition in the glossary.

We trust that you'll enjoy this book, but more than that, we hope the proven strategies and tactics you learn will grow your practice and allow you to serve more clients who need your knowledge and expertise.

One final note: we are not compensated for referring software, providers, tools, and so on. Our recommendations throughout this book simply come from experience in marketing and with law firms in particular.