

## Law Videos a Growing Trend

By Nick Gaffney

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*Lawyers are turning more and more to video as a law practice tool, often tied to Internet marketing. Nick Gaffney tells you why the use of video is growing, and who is using it. The ABA marketing conference features “The Power of Video in Law Marketing” program followed by the first-ever Golden Gavel Awards Ceremony and Reception recognizing the best videos in the legal space.*

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Viewing video on the web is nothing new. We’ve all laughed at Charlie biting his brother’s finger, the sneezing baby panda, and a host of other entertaining clips. However, in the past year, video has evolved from a novelty into a mainstream method for executives to receive business information (according to [a study by Forbes Insights](#), in association with Google, of more than 300 senior executives at U.S. companies with \$500 million-plus in annual revenues). The study found that younger executives are more inclined to not only view video, but to also create it and share it over the business-oriented “social” web. The inference is that as these young execs advance in their careers, their influence within corporate America is likely to make business-related video even more prevalent in the coming years.

More importantly, these execs are not just passive viewers. Those surveyed appear as willing to take action based on viewing a video as they do reading an article. As moves corporate America, so must the companies that serve them – or certainly their marketing departments; as the trend continues, law firms will not be exempt.

An informal survey on YouTube reveals that the majority of videos by law firms are by those who provide services for individuals, such as personal injury, family law, personal bankruptcy, etc. There are a few larger firms with their own channels providing a handful of useful and informative videos, but the number is still small. While YouTube isn’t necessarily the harbinger of business video on the web, it’s probably the best known and that’s because it makes it easy to post and host video on the Internet.

Did you know that people are 95% more likely to make a purchase after they see a video of the product they are considering (according to Internet Retailing magazine)? Lawyers may not be selling products per se, but they are selling services. Video can add a personal element, foster trust and compel potential clients to pick up the phone. Our curiosity led us to do a Google search on “top law firm” to see how many clicks it would take to find video used by a law firm. Not surprisingly the top results were ranking lists, but in fifth place was “a global relationship law firm.” Not to pick on this global, prestigious law firm, but wouldn’t a potential client be more engaged if they could see and hear their people epitomize what a “relationship law firm” does?

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Ten clicks later and we found John C. Buchanan, president of Primerus, “an international society of the world’s finest independent boutique law firms,” explaining what Primerus is and does. The video is concise and to the point. Moreover, we understand what the organization offers and when Primerus says it is driven by innovation, we believe it.

## **Still unconvinced of the power of video?**

From a 2010 [report from Cisco](#): 30% of Internet traffic is video. By 2013, 90% of Internet traffic will be video. And, by 2014, Advanced Internet Video (3D and HD) will increase 23-fold to represent 46% of Internet video traffic. In the same timeframe, online video ad spending is expected to swell from \$1.97 billion to \$5.71 billion.

Video on the web is serious business and it’s a requirement for any organization that aims for effective – and efficient – communications, both within and outside the organization.

## **Ready to get started?**

Crafting the perfect video may be more complicated than a Flip of your family’s summer vacation, but it needn’t be daunting. Here are some guidelines:

First, identify your subject. Are you doing an overview of the firm for recruiting purposes? Partner profiles to highlight your expertise and practice areas? Discussing a new hot topic to educate your clients? Or all of the above?

If it’s all of the above, you may want to hire someone to shoot your videos in a single day so that it’s more cost effective. Either way, make sure that your videos are well lit, with clear sound and no background noise. Ideally, use a high-definition camera and aim for top-quality production. Make sure that you have someone who knows about lighting and someone who can identify a good take. A plane passing overhead may be cause to try again.

To script or not to script? It helps in the editing suite if you have a strong idea of how you want to relate your story, especially if it involves multiple people, b-roll, etc. However, don’t get stuck on exact verbiage as this can make people nervous when they’re already anxious about being on camera. A script can also help keep you on track with timing; you don’t want a video that’s longer than three minutes. Shorter is better.

Remember that you want your video to be engaging. Just like a movie, have a beginning, middle and end. And, you don’t have to say everything; use text and subtitles to provide necessary but mundane information such as phone numbers. In fact, graphics and sound effects can add dazzle and polish to your product.

## **Now to that all-important SEO (Search Engine Optimization)**

Google already factors in the presence of video on a page when determining where the page ranks in its search results. If you want to get ahead of the curve and beat out other firms competing for those top positions on search engine results, start using video now!

You can submit your video to a number of outlets, including YouTube. Use the code that the site of your choice provides to embed the video on your home page -- and elsewhere on your site. Make sure that you give the video a meaningful title using keywords to help prospects find you. And, don't forget to choose a thumbnail to represent your vide as well as tags and descriptions that are search-engine friendly.

## **Practical tips: How to get the most of your online video marketing campaign**

1. Make sure it looks professional.

-You want to establish credibility and trust, so be sure to find a personable, engaging interviewer and a top-notch production crew.

2. Put the video on the front page of your site.

-Online video is an effective selling tool, so make sure it's front and center. Embed it on the homepage, so every visitor (and search engine) will see it.

3. Submit your video to other online outlets.

-Although [YouTube](#) is the clear leader, there are many other video-sharing sites worthy of consideration. Here are some you will want to check out:

- Google Video
- Yahoo! Video
- Daily Motion
- MySpaceTV
- MetaCafe
- Revver
- Veoh
- Blinkx
- Break

4. Link back to your site.

-When placing videos on the sharing outlets, put your URL near the top of your video's description. You'll get a higher search ranking and potential clients will quickly see where to go for more information.

5. Research search terms and put them in the title.

-Find out what words people in need of your services are typing into search engines, and use the most popular ones in your video's title. If you don't know what those terms are, get professional help or use some of these free resources:

- Wordtracker
- Google AdWords
- Keyword Discovery
- KwMap

6. Be mindful of tags and descriptions

-Most video-sharing sites let you tag videos with keywords and post a short text description, so get the most out of these by sprinkling in the search terms you've identified.

7. Include a flattering thumbnail shot.

-A thumbnail is a still shot from your video that appears along with search results. Don't waste this chance to present yourself in the best light possible—choose a key moment from your video, preferably one where you're smiling.

8. Monitor and respond to viewer comments.

-Most video-sharing sites also allow viewers to post comments. Use this as an opportunity to answer questions, respond to comments and further promote your practice.

9. Consider a pay-per-click campaign.

Natural search engine optimization, while effective, takes time to bear fruit. You might want to jump-start the process with a pay-per-click campaign that gives you a sponsored search listing. You can learn more at [Google AdWords](http://www.google.com/adwords) or [Yahoo! Advertising](http://www.yahoo.com/Advertising).

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10. Add new content - often.

Search engines look for it, and so do potential clients. Keep your content fresh and up-to-date. Make your firm stand out by maximizing your online presence with video.

Remember, the technology is there. Use it to your advantage.