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WEBSITE MARKETING FOR EXPERT WITNESSES: TEMPLATES SAVE TIME AND MONEY

You know it's time for a new web site to promote your expert witness practice if: 1) your home page features a button that says "click here to skip intro;" 2) your webmaster quit over two years ago and you have not had time to find a replacement; 3) your web site still features a visitor counter; or 4) your web site uses "frames."

Today there are many options available to an expert in need of a new web site. This article will explore the use of a web site "template."

Basically, a template is a pre-designed set of one or more web pages complete with graphics, menu buttons, attractive color schemes and text areas to describe your expert witness practice. You can choose from a number of suppliers, including TemplateMonster, Templates Resource, Perfectory, Templates.net, or Boxed Art. (Please note that these are not product endorsements.)

Pros and cons on web site templates

Pro # 1: Purchase prices are affordable, generally in the range of $40 to $250 for a one-time payment.

Pro # 2: Templates are a fast way to create and launch a new web site.

Con # 1: Your web site is not unique. You may see the same web site design in use by other experts, even competing experts. You may be able to make a "unique purchase" for a higher fee, meaning that the provider will not sell the same design to anyone else. You still compete, however, with others who purchased the same design before you did.

Con # 2: You need some basic technical skills to set up the web site template. Also, customization might be difficult. If you are not technically inclined with basic HTML skills, chances are good that you will need an agreeable webmaster or designer.

Only you can decide if a web site template is the right approach for you. While you are planning a new web site, here are 5 quick tips to maximize expert witness litigation support leads from Internet marketing.

5 tips for expert witness website marketing success

1. Minimize or avoid the use of "flash." What is flash, you ask? It is a popular technology developed by Macromedia that creates visual action, animation or interactivity on a web site. While attractive, it can interfere with search engine positioning.

2. Load your copy with keywords delivered in a text format. "Keyword density" is important to get good visibility in search engines. Be sure your web designer displays the copy in text format rather than as a graphic, so search engines can read your web pages. Print pages from your web site to confirm that copy is not cut off on the right margin. If the page doesn't print properly, ask your webmaster to change the settings.

3. Display your phone number prominently. The masthead is an ideal location to let visitors know how to reach you for a potential expert witness engagement.

4. Pick the right title tags. Words like "expert witness," "litigation support" and your area of expertise belong in a page title tag to increase search engine visibility. Each page can have its own title. Metatags like keywords and description are less important to search engines now. Online photos and graphics should have an "Alt" tag that displays a textual description when you mouse-over your photo or other page graphic.

5. Think landing pages for online advertising. Pay-per-click text ads on Google and Yahoo! are an excellent way to generate inbound litigation support leads. Don't just send all leads to your home page. Consider using a special "landing page" that gives a concise description of your expert witness services, maybe even with a link to your CV. Give each web page its own URL so you can direct prospects to a specific page on your web site.

In summary, the key to any successful expert witness marketing project is to start with a plan. Identify your business objectives and work from there to create a web site that generates high quality litigation support leads.