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(marketing)

# LEGAL MARKETING TRENDS

# 2022

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# INTRODUCTION

## Leaning In

Three calendar years into the COVID-19 pandemic, we have adjusted our work lives—some reluctantly and some happily. With more of our time spent online than at any point in recent decades, there is now more than ever a focus on the digital. The same applies to our marketing strategies. *Digital* marketing should be a firm's marketing priority as "pandemic life" continues.

Looking back at the legal marketing trends submitted by contributors in 2021, we saw the focus on digital marketing then: from embracing new platforms such as webinars and video for virtual events, adopting new advertising methods such as paid social media advertisements and Google's Local Service Ads to ensuring digital accessibility.

For 2022, it's no surprise that our contributing experts see a continuation of this trend. Matt Parfait sees artificial intelligence, automation, and big data as crucial technological advancements to bolster online marketing efforts. Kelsey Cable points to data, metrics, and NPS (Net Promoter Scores) as crucial to backing up a brand's storytelling. Similarly, Jennifer Johnson notes that many firms have added digital marketing and data analytics roles to focus more on audience segmentation and persona development, ensuring that they're communicating what and how their clients and prospects want.

Speaking of communication, James Barclay writes that thought leadership is more important than ever—across the tens of thousands of posts created on the Passle platform, legal thought leadership saw a nearly 2.3x increase in engagement in the last two years. Lynn Foley encourages legal marketers to take the leap and try something new this year, whether video content, TikTok, or voice search optimization. For a more traditional take, Amber Bollman says that the key to strengthening client relationships lies in feedback interviews, goal-setting sessions, and client panels. Online, of course.

Feeling overwhelmed? According to Cheryl Bame, the key to avoiding communication and workload overload is prioritization and staying flexible. The fatigue and burnout caused by two full years in the pandemic is real. 2022 will likely be another challenging year. It's important to remember that we're doing our best in extraordinary circumstances. Law firms and legal marketers have demonstrated their resilience, adaptability, and willingness to get the job done. All we can do is keep leaning in.

### The Trends

- ***Building Your Brand Through Data***, Kelsey Cable
- ***Client Relationships***, Amber Bollman
- ***Shoot for the Marketing Stars—2022 is the Year for it***, Lynn Foley
- ***Business Development in the New Landscape***, Jennifer Johnson
- ***Emerging Marketing Practices in the Era of Covid***, Matt Parfitt
- ***Expect More of the Unexpected, So Prioritize***, Cheryl Bame
- ***The New Blueprint for Establishing Your Firm as the Go-To Experts***, James Barclay



# BUILDING YOUR BRAND THROUGH DATA

As marketers, we're always on the lookout for ways to bring in new clients and bolster our brand. One of the most valuable ways we can do this is not by telling the world how great we think we are, but by offering unique points of view told through the lens of our customers, journalists, and industry partners. Critical to this type of insight, however, is data.

Net promoter scores (NPS) offer marketers a great place to start. When data leads you to happy customers, it's critical to find out if they will go on record with their experience. Testimonials and case studies can be positioned as valuable tools for customers individually, to raise their personal profile within their company and to potentially position themselves as a thought leader in the industry.

While testimonials offer a great first step on the road to third-party validation, digging even deeper to uncover specific metrics that can back up a story are golden — especially in today's fake-news climate. Quantifying important metrics around your brand helps to build and maintain trust with customers and prospects alike and to keep everyone engaged in your vision.

Another way this can be achieved is by leveraging industry reports and awards. Winning a prestigious award or appearing on an industry ranking is an amazing, authentic PR opportunity as it provides that independent third-party endorsement we so crave.

The Law360 Pulse Leaderboard series, for example, gives law firms around the country a fresh perspective on how they

rank compared to their competitors across several categories, so readers can match their own ideas of success with what they find in our data. And because the data is the data (there's no interpreting numbers like there are words), these are a PR dream.

The way to then go about promoting the ranking or award isn't by beating your own chest, rather, by tastefully incorporating it into your overall marketing assets (i.e., post it on your social media channels with a nod to others who were nominated and awarded, add the badge to your marketing brochures, press releases, website, etc.). Awards and rankings, along with good old-fashioned case studies, are important marketing tools for any business — if you can back it up with data.



**Kelsey Cable**  
Marketing Director  
Law360



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## CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS

“The moment my client will accept visitors again, I need to be on a plane.”

This comment came from a partner at my firm in early 2021. As part of my role at Barnes & Thornburg, I work closely with the partners who quarterback certain high-revenue or strategically significant client relationships. Aiming to set the stage for continuous improvement and long-term retention and growth, we meet regularly to discuss the dynamics of those relationships – what is happening within the client’s organization, what goals have in-house leaders established for the future, and how can our firm more effectively support those endeavors.

As we began 2021, the most common refrain I heard from partners was the need for quality face-time with clients. After a 2020 spent triaging COVID-related questions and acclimating to largely virtual relationships, many attorneys were eager for a return to pre-pandemic patterns of business travel and old-school client entertainment. With vaccines rolling out across the country and many companies setting optimistic return-to-office timelines, there were plenty of reasons to be hopeful.

And, to be sure, in-person interactions with clients have returned – a ballgame here, a lunch-and-learn there, a panel of speakers live and on the same stage together (with very specific rules about microphones and masks in place, of course). But the pace of that return has been slower than expected, snarled by variants, ever-evolving international travel restrictions, and a prevailing uncertainty about who feels comfortable with what level of contact.

With in-person visits still feeling a bit iffy, my lawyers leaned into other opportunities to nurture important relationships and strengthen their connection to clients. They showed creativity and found ways to build meaningful rapport beyond the pre-COVID tradition of spending hours together in conference rooms followed by schmoozy steak dinners.

As the pandemic stretches into 2022, I anticipate that our two-steps-forward-one-step-back “return to normal” will continue and that the lawyers who are most effective at managing and cultivating client relationships will be those who focus on the fundamentals of service and who embrace opportunities to listen.

A few tactics that we have utilized to strengthen client relationships include:

- **Feedback Interviews** – There is literally no downside to seeking feedback from clients. Not only does it demonstrate that you care and are not taking their business for granted, you almost always learn something valuable about your clients’ priorities and perceptions. Armed with those insights, you can address pain points, capitalize on opportunities for expansion, identify potential value-adds, and shape long-term plans that will resonate with the client.
- **Goal-Setting Sessions** – If asking for “feedback” feels too intimidating, steer the discussion in a more forward-looking direction. Many sophisticated clients already invite their preferred law firms to participate in big-picture relationship-review discussions and goal-setting sessions for the year ahead. If your client doesn’t already do so, don’t be afraid to take the initiative and suggest it. An hour or two spent discussing the client’s key initiatives and internal goals will allow you to be more proactive with suggestions and solutions throughout the year. This can also be an easy opportunity to introduce your exciting new group of laterals, share positive results from a recent diversity and inclusion initiative, or offer up that complimentary training or CLE program.
- **Client Panels** – One of the silver linings of the pandemic has been the ease with which very impressive panel discussions can be assembled. Rather than juggling demanding travel schedules and asking important panelists to block off entire days, we can now bring together thought leaders from around the country for 60-minute videoconferences with minimal headaches. Client panels are a tremendous opportunity to learn about how emerging legal and regulatory issues are playing out in the real world and help shape your lawyers’ thinking about how they can assist and support their in-house contacts.

- **Internal Process Improvement** – As marketing and business development professionals, we spend a lot of time focused on messaging. We fill our proposals and external communications with words like “professionalism” and “responsiveness” and write at length about how “solutions-oriented” and “business-minded” we are. But actions speak louder than words, and clients will notice if you are not living up to those promises. One of the easiest ways to strengthen an existing relationship is to simply focus attention inward and make necessary improvements. If invoices are frequently getting rejected or written down due to billing errors, figure out why. If deadlines are constantly in danger of being missed, identify where the workflow is getting snarled and craft a fix. Elevating the level of service you provide will not only enhance that client’s experience, it will also give you a great story to tell the next time an RFP includes a question about how your firm demonstrates continuous process improvement.



**Amber Bollman**  
*Director of Client Service Initiatives*  
*Barnes & Thornburg LLP*



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# SHOOT FOR THE MARKETING STARS—2022 IS THE YEAR FOR IT

Have you ever had a great marketing or business development idea, but were afraid to mention it for fear of being shot down? Well, 2022 is the year to go for it.

In legal marketing, we are often faced with barriers to implementing new and innovative marketing plans be they budgetary, cultural, or just plain skepticism. But with the pandemic still firmly in the picture, law firms are becoming more open to trying new things, especially in the digital and new media space. Three areas that you might want to look at in 2022 are video in content marketing, TikTok, and website voice search.

## Use of Video in Content Marketing

As legal marketing evolves and moves closer to the mainstream, we should be looking at moving our content marketing delivery with it. In 2022, you should look at adding video to your content marketing plan, making it a **key element of your website**.

According to the **Wyzowl** Video Marketing Statistics Report for 2022, 87% of video marketers reported that video gives them a positive ROI, and 86% of video marketers say video has been effective for generating leads, up 2% from 2021 and up 5% since 2019. With those metrics, it's glaringly obvious to see the opportunity when only **24% of law firms** use video marketing.

But if you're going to do it, do it right. You should aim for the highest quality video with the most professional direction and editing you can afford for your budget. Your video should enhance your brand not cheapen it. Be bold and put in a budget request that allows you to hire a videographer to shoot and edit your video. If that's out of your budget, then purchase the

highest quality equipment you can to set up your own in-house "studio." If you can get your lawyers in the studio, shoot enough for a whole campaign of videos. You can edit them later if needed, but you may not get the lawyers in front of the camera again.

There are so many outlets for video from your website to your (and your lawyers') social media feeds, giving them a large potential reach. Video marketing is a great way to improve SEO. Properly optimize this content for accessibility and you gain more still.

## TikTok is the New Ruler of Social Media

If there is one social media trend that is almost guaranteed in 2022, it's the ongoing domination of TikTok. In case you're not sold on TikTok, and so many in our industry aren't, here are a few statistics that might help to persuade the naysayers. In 2020, TikTok was the world's most downloaded app. During the first half of 2021, there was a 61% increase in TikTok mentions year over year which converted into new users. TikTok became the first non-Facebook app to reach **3 billion global downloads**.

With numbers like these, and the low barriers to entry, you may want to spend a few moments to see if there's a place for TikTok in your legal marketing toolbox. How can the legal industry capitalize on TikTok's dominance? The first challenge to get your head around is to step back from more traditional legal marketing campaigns and instead look for innovative ways to





engage with your target audience, preferably leveraging current trends (you really do want to end up on those “For You” feeds). With **60% of users part of Gen Z**, this could be a great place to start. If you’re not ready to jump in with both feet as part of your mainstream campaigns, start with one niche area – recruiting.

Remember, if you feel you’re narrowing your audience too much by using the platform, you can always repurpose videos and share on other more “mainstream” platforms including LinkedIn to reach those who hang out in more traditional social media channels for the legal industry.

### **Ensuring Your Website Wins the Voice Search Race**

By 2021, 30% of web browsing was performed by voice and **48% of consumers** are using voice technology for general search queries. With numbers like these, we should consider where voice search sits in our marketing plan.

Contrary to popular belief, voice search doesn't have a great deal to do with how your website is built. So long as the backend of your site is properly configured for SEO, optimizing for voice search is, for the most part, a content design and copy writing play. That's because one of the main differences between voice and typed search is that when we do a voice search, we typically say full sentences in a conversational tone. This means that optimizing your content will require looking at your law firm website content from a question-based approach.

For example, when we interact with a smart speaker, we tend

to ask questions that start with “who,” “when,” “where,” “what,” “why,” and “how,” which makes voice search keywords longer compared to text search keywords. An example may be, “Who is the best estate litigation lawyer near me?”

Google's current algorithm is designed to favour websites that are designed to help users. One way to get started is to create a FAQ page that reads like a conversation, not a formal document, addressing the questions that you think your clients and prospects may ask.

These are just a few examples of areas that may warrant your attention and your marketing capital this year. No matter if these sound like good ideas, or you have a whole load of others, take the chance in 2022. There may never be a better year to get a yes.



**Lynn Foley**  
CEO  
*fSquared Marketing*

# BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEW LANDSCAPE



The pandemic has forced lawyers to ask for help with business development in the new landscape (that is still unfolding!), and we have many anecdotes from our law firm clients where they have told us they are receiving unprecedented engagement from their lawyers. Because of this, we are seeing marketing teams working at over 100% of their capacity with many teams putting in anywhere from 8-20% more than the weekly standard workweek hours account for. Because of this, firms are actively adding headcount to their teams across the org chart; the most common roles we're seeing are at the specialist and coordinator level. Teams are needing more people focused on production versus strategy, which has elevated the higher titles to be able to think at a higher level which is in line with what lawyers are needing when asking for help.

We are also seeing firms adding new headcount focused on key accounts and creating an account-based marketing framework and infrastructure. Additionally, we have seen numerous roles being added, focused on digital marketing and related data analytics – are we saying the right things in the right way to the right people AND are they engaging? Firms are realizing that if you build it they might not actually come and are putting a lot of focus on audience segmentation and persona development to ensure they're communicating what and how their clients and prospects want.

The war for talent has never been as acute as today; firms are offering between 10-20% higher salaries from this time last year in an effort to attract talent to their firms. I don't believe

this is sustainable because when it boils down, people want to work at a place where they feel included and appreciated and often a higher paycheck doesn't always correlate with that type of culture. Firms need to have a marketing hat on when thinking about how to attract and retain their talent. Too often, you see job descriptions that all look exactly the same from one firm to the next – how can you reframe the positioning of the roles you have open to feel less sterile and more relatable? The best talent on the market is not applying to jobs online and if they do, make sure your process is tight and efficient – if you take weeks (months!) to make a decision, you will lose people more often than not.

At the end of the day, many law firms have realized that an effective marketing engine directly supports revenue generation and a smart CMO will ensure that their team's efforts are aligned to dollars in the door by making sure they have the right people doing the right things in the right way and articulating this regularly to management.



**Jennifer Johnson**  
CEO  
*Calibrate Legal*

# EMERGING MARKETING PRACTICES IN THE ERA OF COVID

2021 has been a difficult year with COVID causing most firms to reassess how they work. Marketing spend was significantly pivoted in 2021, and most large capital projects were put on hold until 2022. While we still don't see an end to COVID, firms are now beginning to plan for the new world in earnest.

## Every facet of a firm's operation is being assessed

Hybrid home/work models are here to stay, and many firms are looking at how every facet of their operation will work in the future. Senior management teams are open to using technology to scale the output capabilities at individual employee levels.

Marketing teams have typically been the earliest adopters of new ideas and technologies, and we see this trend going into overdrive. Universal recognition that data sits at the centre of marketing along with the commoditization of previously inaccessible technologies will in 2022 see firms using more artificial intelligence, automation, and big data, working together to supercharge the efficiency and effectiveness of marketing teams.

## Key automation technologies firms are going to be adopting will be

- Consolidation and normalization of the multiple data silos firms have
- Automatically targeting & delivering niche content across multiple channels
- Automated cleaning and managing of data quality
- Automated consent and data privacy
- Automated BI (Business Intelligence) and opportunity spotting

The result of just these items is better targeting to more of the right contacts and a much clearer view of marketing ROI.

Matt Parfitt is President at Cirrom.com, Artificial Intelligence that brings together data across multiple systems to improve CRM data quality and data privacy.



**Matt Parfitt**  
President  
Cirrom



# EXPECT MORE OF THE UNEXPECTED, SO PRIORITIZE

If we learned anything from 2021, it's that communication in all forms must be a priority. As we weather the end of the year, and once again see return to the office pushed back, clients working remotely indefinitely (if not forever), and a workforce that is clinging to remote work, the "Zoom Era" is not ending anytime soon.

From the steady flow of meetings via video to the unpredictability of meeting in person, 2022 will create even more unpredictable circumstances for law firm communications professionals. Early in the pandemic, we saw an increase in information overload. Lawyers were busier than ever and their demands and expectations for getting in front of clients and potential clients rose with the demands. In 2022, lawyers will continue to be as busy and the requests on the firm's communications team to distribute news releases, client alerts, stories of client success, and the need/desire to develop winning nominations won't slow down. So, how do we manage it all? It's simple: prioritization.

## Start at the Top

Schedule to speak with firm management at least once a quarter (ideally monthly) and do the same with the firm's marketing and BD leadership throughout the year to know priorities and initiatives. Then, set your communications strategy based not on what happened, but what is planned. Then, determine that what you want to do is doable based on both internal and external resources.

Burn-out of professionals was top of mind in 2021, and it will continue to be an issue so prioritize and manage expectations internally. Firm leadership

often challenges the return on investment communication brings to a firm so set the goals, share them, get buy-in on the plan, and execute. Of course, priorities change over the course of the year, so ongoing communication with firm leaders to manage expectations and guarantee their understanding is critical to a successful year.

## Too Many Tools, Too Little Time

In 2022, we will see the ongoing and increasing interest in podcasts. In some cases, firms will be reexamining the use of videos as an effective communication tool. What we know is new technologies will be introduced in 2022 that will benefit how a firm communicates its story (or sometimes are just a flash-in-the-pan distraction). So how do you determine the best approach for internal and external communication strategies for your firm? While I am a big fan of using all tools necessary to tell a firm's story and demonstrate expertise, firms will have to again prioritize based on time, budget, and resources. Determine what works best for your firm and focus on what will get you the best results.

## What's Old Will Be New Again

We can expect continued information overload in 2022. We saw it in 2021, in 2020 before that, and continually as the industry matures. But what never gets old is a good, timely story; the kind that offers great details, data, and analysis told by legal experts who are responsive and understanding of media requests. It is important to continue to cultivate great relationships with reporters who are willing to listen to your pitches and then pursue them. Just like with firm leadership, proactive efforts yield a

greater ROI. There were hundreds of reporter job changes in 2021, and this will absolutely continue in 2022. Across all social media platforms, Twitter will continue to be the best place to monitor changes in the media, with LinkedIn being a close second. We may likely see the shuttering of some news outlets in 2022 and the growth and increased relevance of others. It's imperative that communication professionals monitor those developments as well as the quickly evolving news of the day.

## Be Nimble and Adaptable

It will be, as always, important for communication professionals to be nimble in 2022. Continue to expect more of the unexpected. Stick with your firm's priorities but be flexible as internal crises at a firm are inevitable. Disruptions in business due to the pandemic remain likely and changes in law from local, state, or Federal governments will force action and response. When these events divert your efforts and sideline other projects, being nimble, calm, and assured is the greatest asset to your team and firm.



**Cheryl Bame**  
*Principal*  
*Bame Public Relations*

# THE NEW BLUEPRINT FOR ESTABLISHING YOUR FIRM AS THE GO-TO EXPERTS

In the last two years, clients faced with uncertainty have demanded more support from their law firms. At the same time, firms have had to find new ways of engaging their clients and new ways to win and retain business.

Ambitious firms and their marketing teams took this opportunity to position themselves digitally as the go-to experts in their respective markets. They became destinations for key clients and top talent.

As a thought leadership software platform, Passle has worked with many of the firms setting this new blueprint for growth. We've combined those insights here with our research to help share best practice for legal thought leadership and a digital strategy for growth.

## **Anxious Clients and Prospects Consumed 136% More Thought Leadership**

Across the tens of thousands of posts created on the Passle platform, and the millions of readers, legal thought leadership saw a nearly 2.3x increase in engagement in the last two years.

It's important to note that this was not an even and equal increase across the board. Those firms that delivered the right kind of content benefitted; firms that did not

adapt experienced next to no uplift.

The average time spent reading a piece of content created by lawyers is just over 3 minutes - enough to digest 300 words.

A general counsel might have a few minutes a day. Delivering these key clients and future clients something helpful, useful, and relevant in that time on a regular basis was often the difference between a new request for business and the relationship going cold.

## **Establishing Your Firm as the Go-To Experts**

It might seem like there is an overload of thought leadership. The reality is that **the average lawyer in a top 200 US firm creates less than one piece of thought leadership per year.**

The law firms we're seeing succeed at this now have several things in common. These firms:

1. Have a clear idea of how they are going to grow
2. Place demonstrating genuine expertise at the forefront of their strategy
3. Empower a wide cross-section of their lawyers with the knowledge

and ability to publish content

4. Communicate the impact that thought leadership has on business development

The opportunity is there for firms to demonstrate their knowledge and become the go-to experts.



**James Barclay**  
CEO  
Passle





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## MARKETING LEGAL SERVICES IN 2022 //

As we enter another year of the “new normal,” it’s more important than ever that our marketing efforts stand out in the digital landscape. 2022 will see firms continue to advance in their digital marketing endeavours by honing their online presence, developing their communication strategies, and making the most of technological advances.

Furthermore, audience engagement must come from a place of authenticity. Which firm values are important to communicate? What wisdom can a firm impart through its messaging? Niche content and thought leadership is fundamental to standing out.

As we’ve learned from our contributors, technological innovations continue to play a critical role: artificial intelligence, automation, big data, and user-friendly websites are just some examples. Then, center to all our marketing efforts: people. Connecting with clients, with potential clients, with community. At the end of the day, a firm is successful because of the strength of its client relationships. Conveying this is paramount, no matter the medium.

We are grateful to all the experts who shared their insights into 2022’s legal marketing trends. From everyone at fSquared Marketing, we wish you all the best, this year and beyond!

Have a legal marketing question you’d like answered or want to learn more about our services? Go to [fsquaredmarketing.com](https://fsquaredmarketing.com).

