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(marketing)

# LEGAL MARKETING TRENDS

# 2019

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## THIS YEAR, YOU'D BEST MAKE FRIENDS WITH CHANGE.

2019 promises to challenge our industry—pushing us to master new strategies and adapt quickly. To succeed, we'll need to stay one step ahead of client expectations, competitors, regulation, and, of course, technology.

To help us better understand the trends that are transforming legal, we've reached out to a group of industry experts for their thoughts on tech, marketing strategies, and business development opportunities.

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We are thrilled to share predictions from leading voices.

### Important trends for 2019 include:

- Replacing “random acts of content” with a data-focused approach
- Using tech to productize legal services
- Directories invest in digital
- Bridging data sources through CRM
- The rich opportunities of local search marketing
- Threats and opportunities in web accessibility
- An increase in budgets, hiring, and specialization within legal marketing

The standout prediction for 2019? This will be a year obsessed with data. Every forward-thinking law firm is grappling with the problem of capturing data—while complying with regulations—and using this data to drive core marketing and BD decisions. Those who can leverage data to inform strategy will gain a powerful advantage over their competitors. At the same time, a deluge of information can quickly bog a firm down in analysis paralysis.

It may be the case that, “the world’s most valuable resource is no longer oil, but data” as *The Economist* notes, but that doesn’t mean that tapping this resource is easy. In this edition of the *Legal Marketing Trends*, you’ll find plenty of insights from experts on how to approach this problem.

**Go ahead, make change your ally in 2019.**

# CREATING INNOVATIVE LEGAL PRODUCTS

The legal profession is changing. Clients purchase legal services differently and law firms need to adapt. One of the major trends driving this change is innovation. General counsel wants firms to think differently to better meet their needs, and innovation through technology is an efficient way to deliver services. Alternative legal service providers are doing this and commoditizing our profession. To stay competitive, law firms need to adapt and productizing legal services is one way to do it. Law firms usually sell services or talent, but they can also market products to open the door to their talent. Technology makes this possible and scalable. Its price point can be based on its value, not necessarily the cost to make it or the cost per user to use it. Even though it is priced on its value and can be a revenue generator, it also can be given away as a comp for relationship building. Developing and marketing legal products also positions law firms as thought

leaders. In addition to being an efficient way to deliver legal services, selling a “product” is a differentiator and is great for marketing and profile raising. It is used for strengthening relationships with current clients and creating relationships with new clients. It is a true door opener. In the future of the legal profession innovation is the new norm and legal products are one way to use technology to make the law accessible while your firm stays competitive and markets itself to meet client needs.



*Helena M. Lawrence*  
*Marketing & Business Development*  
*Orrick*

**“I think we are just starting to realize the power of collecting and acting upon such data, with much to look forward to in 2019.”**

## **2019: THE YEAR DATA REPLACES GUESSWORK AND RANDOM ACTS OF CONTENT? //**

Twice in 2018, at various LMA conferences, I found myself onstage with friends, listening to them explain to a roomful of colleagues how their firms relied on data as part of their overall content strategy.

One speaker worked in a large, global firm; the other in a small, regional firm in the American Southeast. Their examples might have been different, but in both cases the message was clear: the future has arrived and it is data-driven.

When it comes to content marketing, data connects the sometimes-marginalized discipline of Thought Leadership (“It’s just branding...”) to actual business development by providing actionable insights into specific companies (read: your clients and prospects) and identifying new or under-served opportunities in

key industries and sectors (read: the marketplaces where you grow business).

I think we are just starting to realize the power of collecting and acting upon such data, with much to look forward to in 2019.

For example, one speaker told the story of how data supported a series of marketing decisions that, at the end of the day, lead to new business for the firm. It started when her attorneys wanted to focus their writing on a specific, emerging issue; the attorneys felt it might be important and that was enough to go on (a common refrain in law firms, as we all know).

Her first step was to determine whether or not the issue truly mattered. (She knew she’d be supporting them, but she wanted to know how much priority it deserved relative to all of her other work.)

Looking at our data across the entire platform, she was able to determine that this particular issue was, in fact, a big opportunity: a lot of people wanted to know about it, not many firms were feeding the need with new writing or insights. It was a perfect greenfield.

Armed with a shared sense of purpose, the marketing team and attorneys collaborated not only on a series of posts but also a well-produced video—a big investment

but, again, one that made sense when supported by the data.

After gaining broad visibility for their expertise in this new area, the team revisited their metrics and saw that the issue actually resonated with companies in a sector in which they already had many clients.

Step two: informed by the new data, they focused their next content campaign on existing clients in that sector, highlighting their expertise in this emerging field and offering to help.

The result? The firm gained significant new work from existing clients.

I’d say “simple as that!” but that might suggest everyone is as systematic and data-driven in their marketing activities. Based on the conversations I have been having of late, I expect many more will be in 2019.



*Adrian Lürssen  
VP Strategic Development  
JD Supra*

# THE FUTURE OF DIRECTORIES IS DIGITAL



At Chambers and Partners, as is the case across many of the organisations that we work closely with, the future of our development is digital. We continue to invest heavily in our website to be able to provide greater transparency on our research and rankings, with a focus on data analytics.

Over the last few years, it has become evident that in-house counsel want to see more points of differentiation between law firms, and we are able to draw out these distinctions via our interview process. Our in-depth research also allows us to develop significant insight into market trends impacting specific jurisdictions.

Chambers maintains strong relationships with law firms around the world, and as our brand continues to solidify in the Canadian legal market we have also seen a change in the way we communicate with in-house counsel. We speak with many leading general counsel on a yearly basis; they are invaluable resources when it comes to our research process. This year, it is our pleasure to announce the launch of Chambers Forums; a global series of jurisdictionally significant conferences which draw together top experts on key topics within each market, and open lines of communication between Chambers Editors, leading General Counsel and recognised firms. We hope to see many of you at the Canada forum in Toronto later this year.



*Joanna Lane*  
*Editor*  
*Chambers Canada*

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## INTEGRATING A SALES FUNCTION INTO LAW FIRMS: TIME TO MODERNIZE //

If partners from a law firm in the 1950s were transported to a firm today, would they recognize it? More than likely they would be astounded by the many technological advances that have revolutionized the way legal services are delivered. However, they may find the expectations and responsibilities of lawyers have changed little. In many firms, lawyers are still expected to produce significant billable hours, bill for and collect the fees on that time, all while also being responsible for generating and managing the relationships with the clients who generate their work.

While much has been written about the ways these technologies are in fact revolutionizing the practice, less attention is being paid to the ways in which innovative law firms are deploying non-lawyer teams in both

sales and sales-enablement roles. Investment banking, accounting, and other professional services firms have long benefitted from such functions, but many lawyers remain uncomfortable with (or even unaware of) the possibility of this approach.

Firms seeking to successfully develop and implement a sales function must clearly demonstrate the “why”—that is, the benefits and return on investment (ROI) that such a function can provide. Most firms will have at least a small coalition of willing lawyers with whom the sales team can partner, by engaging in activities ranging from prospect identification and lead qualification to exploratory meetings with the purpose of identifying client legal needs to final sales meetings. The sales team can also work with relationship partners to onboard, maintain, deepen and grow relationships with new and even existing clients.

As these initial activities begin to demonstrate ROI, many lawyers (and their firms at large) are now seeing the benefit of a professional sales function as a “force multiplier” enabling an uptick in an even greater number of new clients and, ultimately, a significant increase in revenue. A key trend for 2019 will be the integration of these sales teams more strategically, broadly, and deeply

into firms’ operations. While this may result in some bumps and challenges, a key to success will be mutual communication and education between the lawyers and the sales team. Lawyers must be trained how to best use the sales function (hint, they aren’t there to collate pitch books). At the same time, the sales team must have a deep and confident understanding of the nature of the legal services that their lawyers provide and how they meet the needs of the firm’s clients.

With successful integration, coordination and cross-training, modern law firms may finally shed one of the few remaining vestiges of those ‘50s’ firms and enter the modern era of sales and client development staff functioning in true partnership with lawyers to maximize legal services to clients.



*Ashley Galston  
Director of Client Development  
K&L Gates LLP*



# THREAT & OPPORTUNITY— THE TWO FACES OF WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY //

As legal marketers, our role is to help law firms connect their expertise with the people who need it most. But what if your firm's website isn't accessible to people with disabilities?

We've seen an uptick in forward-thinking legal marketers and lawyers approaching our firm to discuss how they can address the issue of law firm web accessibility – either in relation to their new website or remediation of their current site.

Nearly 1 in 5 people in the US and 15% of the Canadian population live with a disability. Powerful regulation protects their rights, including Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 508 Amendment to the Rehabilitation Act, and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

The uncertainty regarding the application of these regulations to the internet has left private companies open to litigation. During the first six months of 2018 more than 5,000 lawsuits were filed in federal court alleging businesses were in violation of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), according to a mid-year report from Seyfarth Shaw. High profile companies that have been the subject of accessibility lawsuits in the past few years include Netflix, Five Guys Enterprises, Hobby Lobby, and Winn-Dixie Stores.

Ultimately, enforcement of ADA falls to the Department of Justice (DOJ). While the DOJ has previously dropped hints that ADA may apply to the internet, it has not taken a decisive stance. In 2017, the Trump Administration placed web accessibility on a list of "Inactive Actions". It appears that, under the current administration at least, the DOJ will take no action to define web accessibility regulations.

This leaves us to navigate a patchwork of conflicting court decisions and a landscape rife with litigation. A lack of federal regulation has created a vacuum, which makes it hard to predict how vulnerable your firm might be to litigation. And having your law firm sued by a non-profit would be a true public relations disaster.

But there is a silver lining; accessibility can lead to better design. You don't have to be visually-impaired to benefit from clean design and text that is easy to read. In lieu of government regulation, the tech community has moved ahead with devising their own standards, outlined in the WCAG 2.0. (Designers looking to ensure accessibility usually look to meet the standards under Level AA.) These standards are considered best practices— as you work to meet them, you're likely to confront and fix design issues that were a problem for all your users.

As an added bonus, Google grants websites that meet accessibility standards a higher ranking in search. The way a search engine like Google "reads" a website is similar to how blind person would: not being able to view an image, Google "reads" the alt text. When you include accessibility features into your firm's web design, your site's Search Engine Optimization (SEO) benefits!

Whether there are regulations in place or not, it makes good business sense to ensure that your law firm's website is accessible to the public. Making your expertise accessible to as many people as possible shows a commitment to prioritizing the needs of your clients and the community within which your firm practices.



*Lynn Foley*  
*CEO and Co-Founder*  
*fSquared Marketing*



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# CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY – WHAT ARE CLIENTS EXPECTING OF THEIR OUTSIDE LAW FIRMS? //

2019 will be a watershed year, I predict, in law firms embracing more robust Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability programs. Occasional pro bono cases, a stand-alone Diversity program, a “green team” recycling committee, these will no longer meet the growing expectations of clients, employees or other stakeholders.

## Growing Client Expectations

Since the 2015 launch of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs), an increasing number of companies have signed onto the United Nations Global Compact – thus committing to working toward the achievement of these Goals by the target date of 2030. When a company becomes a member of the UN Global Compact, one of the goals to which they are aligning is Goal #17 – Partnership for the Goals. This includes developing partnerships and collaborating with others to have a greater impact toward achieving the UNSDGs. As such, UN Global Compact companies are assessing their supply chain and vendors, including outside professional service providers such as law firms.

According to the 2018 CSR and Sustainability Industry Report published by the Law Firm Sustainability Network and Amity Advisory, 85% of respondents reported seeing specific CSR & Sustainability questions in RFPs. There are also growing expectations of stakeholder

groups and increasing awareness of a company’s values and behaviors influencing the buying decisions of consumers and businesses.

## Law Firm CMOS Can Take These Three Steps to Prepare their Firms

1. Gather as much information about what your firm is already doing in CSR, D&I, Pro Bono, Environmental Sustainability efforts, etc. Be prepared to tell that story holistically, at the firmwide/global level. You will then be prepared to respond to questions in RFPs regarding your firm’s CSR & Sustainability efforts and how you are measuring your firm’s global impact.
2. Know which of your clients are signatories of the UN Global Compact. This is relatively easy since most UN Global Compact members talk about their work on their websites.
  - a. Which goals are your clients working toward?
  - b. How do the values and social impact efforts of your clients align with your firm’s efforts?
  - c. Include exploration of your client’s UNSDG goals in your annual client relationship management discussions. Are there ways your firm could contribute to what your client is trying to achieve, thus attaining greater impact?

3. Whether or not your firm has joined or will join the UN Global Compact, consider aligning your CSR & Sustainability efforts and story with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, focusing on those which are most relevant to your firm’s values and programs. Doing so will help communicate your firm’s story more holistically, as the UNSDG framework has emerged as the “standard” among the global business community.

## Conclusion

In addition to these Phase I measures, which are largely defensive in nature, there are more proactive steps which firms could (and should) undertake which could be market differentiators for those who embrace this opportunity.



*Pamela Cone  
Founder & CEO  
Amity Advisory*



# LOCAL SEARCH MARKETING

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Local search marketing is a good idea for any business with a local presence, but it's especially necessary for those in the legal niche. The proof is in the statistics:

- 49% of survey respondents research their legal issue before hiring a lawyer. - Juris Digital
- 27% of people that look for local information are actually looking for reviews of a particular company. - Google
- Quality/authority of inbound links to your website is the #1 local-organic ranking factor - Local Search Ranking Factors 2018, Moz

Clients turn to the web in search of education, nearby providers, and signs of a trustworthy reputation. They count on law practices to be there at each phase of their buyer's journey with:

1. An optimized, authoritative website that answers needs and is discoverable via search
2. Accurate information on the Google Business Profile, taking advantage of as many Google features as possible (images, bookings, Google Posts, videos, Q&A, hours of operation, description, etc.)
3. Accurate business information on general directories (Yelp, Citysearch, Foursquare, etc.) and industry-specific directories (Avvo, FindLaw, Justia, Super Lawyers, etc.)
4. Active reputation management, with real customer reviews on the major platforms (Google, Yelp, Facebook, etc.) and professional replies to these reviews from the business owner. Accessibility on social platforms (Twitter, Facebook, etc.) matters, too.
5. Real-world, world-class service and an excellent online reputation

All of your legal marketing should hinge on reaching clients who need to be able to find, understand, and trust you before they ever pick up the phone.

## 3 Challenges and Strategies for Legal SEO in 2019

1. Google controls an increasing number of local user experiences, keeping people within Google's own interface instead of sending them to legal practices' websites.

**Strategy:** View the Google Business Profile and the first page of the organic results as your alternate homepage, and take control of as many features and entries as possible. Pay Google for advertising when necessary.

2. Websites don't have the power they used to, but a Moz case study found that 75% of companies ranking in Google's local results also have page-1 organic rankings. Don't neglect your website; it's your key to boosting signals that contribute to local rankings.

**Strategy:** Publish useful content and participate within your physical community to earn organic-boosting links. Sponsor local groups and events, speak at local conferences, and develop B2B relationships.

3. The legal industry is inundated with Google My Business spam. Keyword stuffing, using fake locations, and other forbidden practices often reward bad actors as Google fails to penalize transgressors. This can be extremely frustrating for honest legal firms.

**Strategy:** Learn Google's guidelines by heart so that you can spot and report spam, cleaning up the web for both practitioners and clients.

## One Last Pro Tip for Busy Lawyers

Especially for legal practices with multiple locations, investments in smart SEO software can be sanity-savers. There are things you can't automate, like writing the most brilliant antitrust article on the Internet. But other efforts, like managing data accuracy on directories or getting alerted to incoming reviews, shouldn't be manual tasks that steal your precious time.



**Neil Crist**  
VP Product & Engineering  
Moz

# CRM IN 2019: THE YEAR OF THE BRIDGE



Law firm leadership is experiencing data overload when trying to make decisions for the future. While the law firm business model is based on relationships, the financial data that drives firm management is often disconnected from the relationship data. It isn't just financial data we struggle with either. Data resides in many places besides the CRM system: ERM systems, eMarketing systems, social media, and experience databases. 2019 will be the year of the bridge—between the data silos and the CRM database.

We will see more firms building an information workflow with CRM at the center. The firm that can figure out the value of the individual data sources and augment their CRM with this data, will be more competitive and faster to market. Some argue that CRM has low adoption and is often overloaded with bad data. We would argue that CRM is about information and acting on your data. Actionable data drives next steps.

## Which Bridge is Right for You?

- eMarketing systems: By bringing in analytics and potential business development activities gathered from email campaigns and events, CRM profiles will provide a broader picture of relationship touch points.
- Financial systems: Enhancing the client profile with historical billing data, firm revenue ranking and analysis of white space will not only provide an enhanced view of the relationship, it will help support cross-selling efforts. Industry information from the billing system or other systems can help build segmented lists in the CRM.
- Intake process: Understanding where new clients come from and connecting this information back to the CRM allows the Business Development teams to analyze win/loss ratio data, time to contract, missed opportunities and referral segmentation.
- External data sources: Social listening, competitive intelligence and other data sources you are already subscribed to can be integrated in to your CRM. Ongoing, real-time market intelligence incorporated into the CRM allows attorney and marketing teams to see both internal and external relationship profiles, providing a full picture of the relationship and its potential.

A disciplined approach to evaluating data sources and defining the perceived benefit will allow you to set priorities and rank investment.

- Information Assets: Each department operates from a set of internal data critical to their success. Often this data is not shared with the other departments, leading to errors and inefficient workflow. Firms will understand the need to inventory data sources. Smart firms will go beyond the obvious sources we have mentioned and consider other data being utilized within practice areas and administrative teams.
- Contact Data: Contact data is central to managing your firm's information assets. Relationships are the backbone of a successful firm. Firms that can provide critical reports like "who knows whom" and robust client profiles are the firms that can leverage relationships at annual events, thereby generating definable ROI for business development efforts.

## Delivering Value

Actionable data will drive this year's CRM strategy for many firms. Data—evaluated quickly and accurately—will allow firms to beat out their competitors for new business. The cost to market will be distributed over a higher win/loss rate allowing the firm to recognize higher ROI on their client development efforts.

The smart marketer who invests in a fully integrated CRM as core technology for their department will be on solid footing for client success going forward.



*Jennifer Whittier*  
*President*  
*Cole Valley Software / ContactEase*

# TRENDS AND PREDICTIONS IN LEGAL MARKETING RECRUITMENT

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Legal marketing is trending in some positive directions and yet, we still have room to grow. The 2018 Calibrate Legal/ALM Intelligence study on compensation for legal marketing and business development professionals across North America, informed by almost 900 responses, validated some suspicions and revealed a startling salary gap. What follows are four of the most important trends from this study.

## Budgets are increasing

Our joint study indicated that virtually half of firms' marketing/BD budgets are increasing as much as 20%, with only 15% of firms planning to reduce their budget. With 85% of firms either making no changes to their budget or increasing their spend, it's safe to say there is confidence in a meaningful correlation between marketing budgets and bottom line results.

Of further interest is the allocation of budgets: 30% of the total budget is dedicated to direct forms of BD and 12% is assigned to technology investments. Our prediction is that both of these

numbers will increase over the next few years, particularly in technology spend.

## You are hiring

Another healthy portion of the increased marketing budgets is for salaries with the greatest areas of growth in the hiring of managers, directors and coordinators and, the second largest group is external client-facing relationship executives.

We saw a large portion – a whopping 55% – of our community are currently deployed along practice area lines. Firms of 200-300 lawyers and larger are realizing the benefits of segmenting their marketing resources and imbedding marketing talent into industry groups such as healthcare, banking, energy, and other key areas.

## Specialization is trending

We're seeing specialization by way of marketing operations positions. These marketing/technology/data analysis hybrid positions, often sitting at the manager or director level, are nestled within marketing and BD teams and are typically assigned to provide data analytics to inform marketing strategies and measure ROI.

We expect to see more specialized roles in 2019 and suspect, in the senior ranks, these positions will be charged with client experience responsibilities. Under the remit of marketing, these professionals will oversee the client experience over the whole lifecycle of the client from client intake, end-of-matter interviews, and everything in between.

## Pay equity for women will improve

Nicolas Bruch, Director, ALM Intelligence penned a startling article on the findings of gender compensation following analysis of our survey results. He states, "The area that immediately stood out was the difference in compensation between men and women...marketing and business development is one of the few areas within the legal industry where women outnumber men, especially in leadership roles. In fact, nearly 80 percent of the professionals in legal marketing departments are women. Seventy-four percent of directors in marketing and business development departments are women and 69 percent of department heads are women." Women who lead their departments, in particular, earn less than men. "At the largest firms, the gap between average compensation between men and women's pay is over \$100,000."

Our prediction for 2019 is that the gap starts to narrow. Do join us in this effort.



*Susan Van Dyke*  
*Chief Client Officer*  
*Calibrate Legal*

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## MARKETING LEGAL SERVICES IN 2019 //

2019 will be a year that rewards bold thinking as well as those who can effectively leverage marketing technologies. While tech offers new tools, professional development and business development strategy is still essential for achieving lasting success.

Thanks to all of the experts who shared their insights on legal marketing trends in 2019. From all of us here at fSquared Marketing, we wish you all the best in 2019 and beyond!

Looking to get ahead of the curve? Get legal marketing insights, industry research, and resources for growing your law firm at [fsquaredmarketing.com](https://fsquaredmarketing.com).

Have a legal marketing question you'd like answered? Get in touch with fSquared Marketing today.

