

Marketing fundamentals for SMEs

How modern law firms can improve brand recognition to win more clients



Episode 6
of the
**Build Better
Habits Series**



Quiss

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Sarah Amies
PR CONSULTANT



W•RKPR

Build effective **digital marketing** habits

For episode six of the [Build Better Habits webinar series](#), we were joined by David Ricketts, head of marketing at Quiss, PR consultant for law firms, Sarah Amies, and SEO specialist, Sophie Majonade from WorkPR. Our expert panel shared their practical tips and advice on the digital marketing fundamentals all SME law firms should implement to improve brand recognition and win more clients.

The discussion highlighted the importance of having a strong brand and how that impacts both clients' and employees' decision to work with a practice. In a competitive market, where both employees and prospects have growing and changing expectations, taking control of your brand and marketing message is crucial to hiring and retaining staff, and winning new business.

No matter your budget or resources, there are several fundamental actions all SME law firms can take to improve their digital marketing. By utilising your employee's knowledge, putting the client at the centre of your decisions, and reviewing all client touchpoints, you can start to make small tweaks that'll have a big impact on your brand.

In this guide we discuss exactly what the term brand means and how your internal business habits impact it, why firms should be actively marketing their firm, and where to get started even if you have a small budget.

In this guide we cover:

How your brand impacts your long-term success

Why marketing is important for success

Habits firms should adopt to improve brand recognition

How law firms can market their firm on any budget

Meet our panel of legal experts



David Ricketts – Head of Marketing

Quiss has been delivering IT support services since 1988 with the aim of helping organisations of all sizes and complexity to exploit technology and applications to gain or increase competitive advantage.



Sophie Majonade – Digital Marketing Manager

WorkPR are corporate storytellers and creators of compelling content. A PR agency that helps businesses develop strong media relationships, build websites that convert and create content that engages.



Sarah Amies – PR Consultant

Sarah is a PR consultant who works with a range of clients in the legal sector, helping them develop their brand messaging and effectively communicate with their clients. Sarah helps her clients build strong reputations and win new business through a variety of channels, including PR content and media relations.

1

Why should SME law firms **actively market** their brand?

We began the discussion by going back to basics. Often, marketing can be seen as a 'nice to have', so we asked our panellists why it's important for firms to actively market their brand.

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Why should SME law firms actively market their brand?



"If I only had to put it down to one reason, it would be because we're in a very highly saturated market. There are over 10,000 law firms in England alone, so you need to stand out from the competition, especially in this current climate where people are taking longer to consider their options and make a purchase.

"You have to ask yourself, 'how can I market my brand and make it stand out from all the other lawyers and the law firms that are in the UK that run similar services?' "



"There are three reasons why you need to actively market your brand. The number one reason is to drive profitable revenue by attracting new clients. Secondly, you need to increase your visibility in the marketplace, because even if you're not actively marketing your firm, your competitors are. And lastly, it's to increase the amount of spend from your existing clients.

"Increasing your visibility in the marketplace and growing your brand are important, and it doesn't just happen overnight. If you're not currently doing this, your competition is."



"If you're not telling anybody what you're up to or what you're selling, how can you be part of the conversation?

"[Effective] marketing gives law firms the ability to have control over their messaging. And it's not always about positive news either. There may be occasions where you've got to do damage limitation. Your marketing strategy can help you manage negative reviews or crises too."

2

What does the term **brand** mean and how is it related to your **business habits**?

Our experts agree that a brand is more than a logo or aesthetics. It's the identity and personality of the business, which determines how people – your clients, employees, prospects – feel about your firm and how you're perceived in the market.

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What does the term brand mean and how is it related to business habits and marketing?



“What do people think about you in the marketplace? It’s important to recognise that your brand and reputation are intrinsically linked.

“I recommend establishing your brand values. Ask yourself, what do you stand for? We all know what we think about major brands like Amazon. To be true to your brand you need to establish those values and then have buy-in across the firm and make sure everyone is singing from the same hymn sheet.

“You need to directly appeal to your prospect’s needs and emotions, so it’s important to put the client at the heart of your decision making. Ask yourself, ‘what do our clients want and expect from us?’ “



“Your brand is the identity of your business. It’s the tangible and intangible elements such as your logo and building but also how your people behave and the service you deliver. All those elements come together to create your value and a perception of what your firm is all about.

“[A brand] is not something you can create in a week. It’s needs to be an ethos for your team because it affects every touchpoint, like the way you answer your phone, how you talk to clients, what your website looks like, etc.

“I heard that the Mercedes F1 principal, Toto Wolfe, say that when he went for his initial interview at Mercedes there was an out of date Daily Mail and an old coffee cup in reception, so he asked, ‘is this what Mercedes stands for?’

“It’s the little things that have a massive impact and create hooks and impressions in people’s minds.”

What does the term brand mean and how is it related to business habits and marketing?



"We work with firms who are so concerned about their colour scheme or their logo, wondering whether it's memorable enough.

"And aesthetics are important, especially in the digital space. But, when it comes to law firms, your brand is only as successful as your lawyers. Your solicitors are your brand.

"You could have the best website, but if your clients have a negative experience with your solicitors, that can have a huge lasting impact on your brand."

"It's important to recognise that your brand and reputation are intrinsically linked."

3

How can law firms – especially those with a **limited budget** – implement **digital marketing** across their firm?

There are various marketing fundamentals that all law firms can leverage in order to stay competitive on a small budget. The focus is to ensure every touchpoint your clients have with your practice is intentional and represents your values.

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How can law firms – especially those with a limited budget – implement digital marketing across their firm?



“Utilise your lawyers as much as possible. Ensure your lawyers are active on LinkedIn. And I don’t mean just liking your company posts, but ensure they’re trained to know how to use LinkedIn to their advantage.

“Everyone can play a part in contributing to the marketing message, but one person has to have control of the message. It’s important that your message and content is consistent.

“When it comes to your website and social media, I always say quality over quantity. A blog of 2,000 words is going to have more value to your brand than multiple 300 word articles.”



“If you only spend ten percent of someone’s role on marketing, you’re going to get fragmented results. You need to be relentlessly consistent.

“If you’re serious [about growing your firm] you need to have somebody dedicated to this role because it’ll be the lifeblood of your firm. When numbers are looking down and your scratching around for work you’re going to ask, ‘where are my opportunities’, but you can’t just turn them on and off like a tap.

“Things I would focus on include: define your target audience, segment existing customers to share different messages with them, optimise your website, leverage social media, and implement email marketing.”

How can law firms – especially those with a limited budget – implement digital marketing across their firm?



"If you can't afford to recruit someone to manage your marketing function then you need to at least dedicate some time.

"You can sit down at the start of the year and decide your PR strategy. Look at what you'll be doing over the next 12 months and create a calendar of activity. You need to think about how you can keep your brand in the minds of potential clients.

"Another key thing is make sure there isn't anything out there that is devaluing your brand. Such as an unfair Google review. You want to make sure someone is keeping an eye on that."

**"When it comes to law firms, your brand is only as successful as your lawyers.
Your solicitors are your brand. "**

4

What are the key **marketing habits** all SME law firms should adopt?

The panel agree that modern law firms should focus on the following marketing habits to increase brand recognition and win new clients:

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Nine marketing habits law firms should adopt

1 Track and measure

If you have little resource, it's important you're putting your time and money into the right channels. David explains, "you can't manage what you can't measure. Utilise digital tools – some are free, some you'll already have – to track and monitor your digital marketing performance."

2 Work on relationship building

"You want to look at how you build relationships with your clients and create a strategy that includes a referral scheme. This should detail how it works when clients or employees refer clients to your firm", David recommends.

3 Showcase expert's knowledge

Your employees are your biggest brand advocates and a great way to share the human side of your brand. David recommends having "a strategy for how you can share your expert's knowledge and understanding of a particular practice area."

4 Be client-focused

Sarah warns that, "your marketing message needs to resonate with your target audience else you're wasting your time." Your marketing strategy needs to have a client-centric approach; they should be at the heart of your operation. "You want your clients to become evangelists for your business, so it's important they have a great experience."

5 Don't try everything

To get the most value from your marketing investment don't try to do everything at once. Sarah advises, "to be careful and strategic about your investment, especially if you're time poor. Simply pick out one idea, channel, or practice area and start there." It's then easier to test, optimise, and track performance.

6 Focus on reviews

"Encourage your team to ask for Google reviews", Sophie recommends, adding that "Google reviews are paramount to local SEO, which is how most people will search for your services." Often, when looking for a service, people will type 'near me' at the end of their query. "So, I would definitely make reviews part of your lawyers' workflows."

"I'd also recommend responding to all your Google reviews, especially the negatives ones because Google will see you as resolving the problem."

Nine marketing habits law firms should adopt

7 Optimise service pages

The content on your website is your digital store front, so you need to treat them as your pitch. Sophie suggests that firms, “optimise your service pages if you don’t have time to write blogs. If the text on your service pages is only 150 words long then it’s not enough. It’s not enough text to tell you customer what you offer, your approach, how knowledgeable you are, about your team or your case studies.”

8 Work on backlinks

“A backlink is a link to your website from another website. The more backlinks you have, the more authority your website has, and the more Google favours your site.” Sophie continues, “to start with, make sure you’re on all the online directories, for example thesolicitors.com, The Legal 500, and Yelp. Then you can start thinking about digital PR.”

9 Ask for advice

You don’t have to go it alone, even if you have little budget. Sarah advises firms to, “reach out to consultants or agencies for advice, even if you can’t afford to keep them on a retainer for project work, you can pay for one-off consultancy sessions that can help guide you in the right direction.”

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