



Lights, Camera,

ERIN BRERETON

# Marketing!

Could your firm benefit from video testimonials online?



When the Massachusetts-based Legal Insight Media video production company helped a mid-sized Northeastern firm create a video highlighting its diversity policies several years ago, the original intent was to use the video to recruit new employees. However, during a preliminary search for firms that placed an emphasis on affirmative action, Legal Insight Media President Peter Marx said that a large retail chain happened to stumble across the diversity video – which helped influenced their decision to hire the law firm. “It turned out to be a marketing tool as well,” Marx said. “The retail company didn’t hire the firm just because of the video; it had to have the capabilities – but it convinced them that the firm’s commitment to diversity was authentic.”

Video ads aren’t a new method of marketing. However, they are becoming an increasingly popular choice for firms that want to present visual evidence of both their technical skills and company culture.



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In the United States alone, eMarketer Research is predicting online ad spending will reach \$40.5 billion by 2014 – a trend that, according to principal eMarketer analyst David Hallerman, reflects “how most forms of Internet advertising are now seen as more of a ‘sure thing’ than most traditional media.” Online video ads appear to be a highly effective way of reaching – and influencing – an audience: 52 percent of executives at U.S. companies with at least \$500 million in revenue say they watch work-related YouTube videos at least one a week, according to Forbes’ 2010 “Video in the C-Suite: Executives Embrace the Non-Text Web” report.

In addition, 42 percent report having made a business-related purchase after watching a video – one potential reason that, according to eMarketer Research, online video advertising spending is projected to grow 39 percent in 2011. Could online video ads work for your firm? Consider the following:

#### **WEBSITES OFFER TARGETED PLACEMENT**

There are more than a dozen print publications covering aspects of the legal industry and the industry in general. However, more than 50 law-related blogs exist – Law.com alone hosts links to more than 20, some dedicated to highly specific legal topics like the concerns that can arise from social media use and labor and employment issues specific to attorneys practicing in Texas. Have a certain practice area or area of expertise you’re hoping to promote? Video ads may offer more opportunities to reach your target audience. “To target clients who not only want an intellectual property lawyer, but an intellectual property lawyer with trial experience in the pharmaceutical industry, a video can be a way to demonstrate that specialty to a general audience,” said Silvia Coulter, a Managing Director who works with

clients on growth, development and client retention at service industry consultant Hildebrandt Baker Robbins.

#### **VIDEO ADS OFTEN AREN’T CHEAP**

Marx estimates that video ads typically cost \$5,000-\$15,000 to produce. “Many people try to do it on the cheap using a relative, a student or a one-person shop that will shoot, provide audio, edit and distributes all themselves,” said Linda Orton, President of visual strategy consulting company Intelligent Video Solutions. “It can be done, and there are plenty of talented people who are growing their business doing videos for \$2,000-\$3,000.”

However, the former marketing director also said she’s aware of many professional law firms that pay hundreds of thousands for branding, creative, brochures, Web design and more. “A 3-minute trailer – with scripting, full lighting, audio, make-up, shooting graphics, a few rounds of editing, multiple people being interviewed and b-roll should cost anywhere from \$20,000-\$50,000,” Orton said.

#### **VIDEOS DRAW TRAFFIC TO YOUR SITE**

Videos provide more than just a nice visual: According to a 2010 study by Forrester Research, videos are 53 times more likely to appear on the first page of search engine results than text pages or other elements. You can increase your video’s likelihood to be recognized by search engines by inserting keywords into your videos’ titles and description, hosting your videos on YouTube and embedding the YouTube videos into your firm’s site (Google’s algorithms take how many times a video has been viewed into account), according to a January 2009 column by Forrester analyst Nate Elliott.

Another potential distribution source for your ad: video site Hulu, which, according to digital business analytics provider comScore, Inc., generated the

## QUESTIONS TO ASK A POTENTIAL ONLINE AD PRODUCER

### 1. DOES YOUR COMPANY'S PERSONALITY MESH WITH MY FIRM'S?

You want to ensure the video producer will be able to understand and accurately portray your firm's personality. "Like any professional service, you're going to be working with the people," said Legal Insight MediPresident Peter Marx. "Even if their portfolio looks tremendous but you're not at ease, you're probably not going to work well together."

### 2. CAN YOU WORK WITHIN OUR TIMEFRAME?

Marx's company typically needs at least a few weeks to complete a video; however, Marx suggests dictating the deadlines and confirming the producer can deliver. "Rather than asking the person doing the video, 'How long does it take?' look at your firm and say, 'How many powers that be need to get involved?'" he said.

### 3. CAN YOU WORK WITHIN MY BUDGET?

Not every firm can afford a \$50,000 ad. However, when your firm's image is at stake, you want your ad to look professional. "It's a pitch, it's just not a live pitch," said Silvia L. Coulter, Managing Director at service industry consultant Hildebrandt Baker Robbins. Also consider that the ad will likely be a permanent or semi-permanent part of your firm's website, so it may be worth investing a little extra in. "Why would you do one of the most visible or longest shelf-life items your firm will have [done] on the cheap?" asks Linda Orton, President of visual strategy consulting company Intelligent Video Solutions.

### 4. CAN YOU HELP ME DISTRIBUTE THE AD?

If your company hopes to do more than just post the ad on its site and on YouTube, make sure your video producer can also advise you on placement and buying ad space. Intelligent Video Solutions, for example has bought ads linked to key words on LinkedIn, Google and Facebook for clients. "The key is to understand targets and do buys carefully and creatively," Orton said. "You can garner great results with a small spend."

highest number of video ad impressions among U.S. viewers – more than 1.2 billion – in March 2011.

## RECEIVE IMMEDIATE FEEDBACK

In addition to attracting more viewers to your firm's sites, online ads allow firms to track page views on their own site and measure viewing ROI on external sites like YouTube. "It's [essentially] getting live market research constantly," Coulter said.

However, you can't just upload and hope to assess a video's success. "Video must be tagged properly wherever it resides to show up in search engines and must also have analytical code placed on the page to track views either through the host server or through a specialty company like Wistia that can show trends, drop-offs and additional information about viewers," Orton said.

## A PICTURE SAID A THOUSAND WORDS

Employment and labor law firm Littler Mendelson, P.C., which employs more than 750 attorneys worldwide, has produced videos highlighting the firm's diversity and inclusion philosophy – and personality – since 2005. Littler's award-winning "Diverse by Design" video features bulleted notations listing the number of associates and attorneys who are women and persons of color and firm members, including shareholder Dionysia Johnson-Massie, discussing their experience interviewing and working with Littler.

Some firms may also opt to show background images of firm members' community involvement, firm activities and other lifestyle-focused examples to convey the firm's personality. For example, if your firm features a relaxed, business casual dress policy, you may not want to have firm members appear in your video in suits. "In Silicon Valley, for example, a lot of people may want to hire a business casual firm," Marx said. "On the other hand, if you're not, you wouldn't want to shoot the video on casual Friday."

## SOCIAL MEDIA SPREADS THE WORD

Posting a video ad on your firm's site is one way of promoting it; but to truly get the word out, consider folding it into your firm's Facebook, Twitter and other social networking marketing efforts.

The time consumers spent viewing video on social networking sites grew 98 percent



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from October 2008 to 2009 – swelling from 503.8 million minutes to 999.4 million minutes, according to the Nielsen Company. Facebook was the most popular choice for social networking video viewing.

### RECRUIT NEW HIRES VIA VIDEO

Firms aren’t just using websites and video to market themselves to new clients. Eighty percent of companies have used or are planning to use social networking to find and attract job candidates, according to a 2009 survey from recruitment solutions provider Jobvite.

One large firm Marx worked with a couple of years ago opted not to put its video ad, featuring interviews with young associates, on the Web – but instead show it on a weekend when summer associate candidates came to see a day of presentations about the firm. “Firms do that a lot with lateral hires, as an example of how to show your firm culture so a lawyer thinks this is place for them,” Marx said.

Littler’s videos, for example, serve a dual purpose: In addition to attracting clients, they were also created to promote the firm’s workplace to potential job candidates. The firm’s LGBT video includes interviews with firm members discussing the firm’s inclusion policies as well as their own experiences with the coming out process. “Associates say, ‘The videos made a difference to me, I got a chance to see a workplace or lawyers of color who are shareholders;’ in the marketplace, that’s an important message,” Johnson-Massie said.

### LETTING CLIENTS SING YOUR PRAISES

The video that Legal Insight Media produced for Goulston & Storrs, a 200-attorney firm with offices in Beijing, Boston, New York and Washington D.C., features a financial services firm client raving about his experience working with the firm intertwined with footage of a firm member at work. Having a satisfied client describe how your firm operates – instead of a

firm member – can offer a strong endorsement. “In video ads, firms come alive, get attention,” Marx said. “And if it’s done well, people can relate.”

### KEEP IT BRIEF

According to March 2011 comScore statistics, viewer attention span isn’t long: The duration of online videos viewed that month was 5.2 minutes; online video ads were, on average, just 0.4 minutes. A 0.4 minute ad may not be long enough to convey all your firm wants to say. However, both Coulter and Marx advise creating ads that around one to three minutes, or risk losing a viewer’s interest.

### WHATEVER YOU FILM, FILM IT FAST

Clients want to be able to go online, forward links to your firm information and send video ads to colleagues to help others involved in the hiring process get a feel for your firm members and expertise. A video ad can offer a more dynamic impression than an attorney or firm bio – and demonstrate that your firm is on the forefront of both technology and marketing. However, that cutting edge advantage won’t last forever. “There’s a very brief window of opportunity, and soon everybody will be doing it, so it won’t be a way to differentiate your firm,” Coulter said.

And – whether you choose to feature a client testimonial; highlight firm diversity or other initiatives or show firm members at play – make sure your video lets potential clients know that you can meet their professional needs. “That’s the key thing that clients tell us: Understand my business; show me why you’re different and how you add value to my business,” Coulter said. “If you can do all that in a video, then you’re hitting a home run all the time.” ✱

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#### *About the author*



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