

2021

LEGAL
MARKETING
TRENDS &
PREDICTIONS



consultwebs

P R E F A C E

“Unwavering incremental change can create remarkable and monumental results.”

- Ryan Lilly

Well, based on the amount of...underestimation on the fluctuant nature of 2020...it's hard to imagine the shelf-life of marketing advice these days, is any longer than a banana, duct taped to a wall.

However, in the human world, and in the world of effective law firm marketing, the implementation of useful advice, is a much slower process.

We predict the marketing buzz-word that successful law firms will use in 2021, is “incremental.”

This past year during the health crisis, we saw the absolute best of humanity shine through the legal community, in an historically tumultuous environment.

Head partners handing out masks, crowd-funding for struggling local business, pivoting to remote & digital operations; all while making incremental, memorable, impacts in their marketplaces & communities.

In 2021, a reliable law firm business development strategy will be built on a strong, foundational brand, with marketing tools, techniques, and partnerships, dedicated to incremental, but unwavering progress.

New innovations, like Google LSAs, and the disruption of the third-party tracking industry, are signs that change persists in online legal marketing. But the importance of compelling words, strong SEO, and Design for Conversion web design, will never go out of style.

In 2021, strong partnerships and a consistent strategy, will be essential as the latest “industry-standards” in legal marketing, quickly become buzzworthy, or get tossed in a bin.

This year, legal marketers will learn how to measure and set strategic goals, cut through all the hysteria, hype, and hope, and hone the basics of legal marketing and advertising – one step at a time.

I am extremely proud of all the hard work, research, and insight, that went into this project, and I'm proud to present our **Consultwebs 2021 Legal Marketing Trends and Predictions Report**. Please enjoy!



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WEB DESIGN

Legal web design that goes beyond the campaign



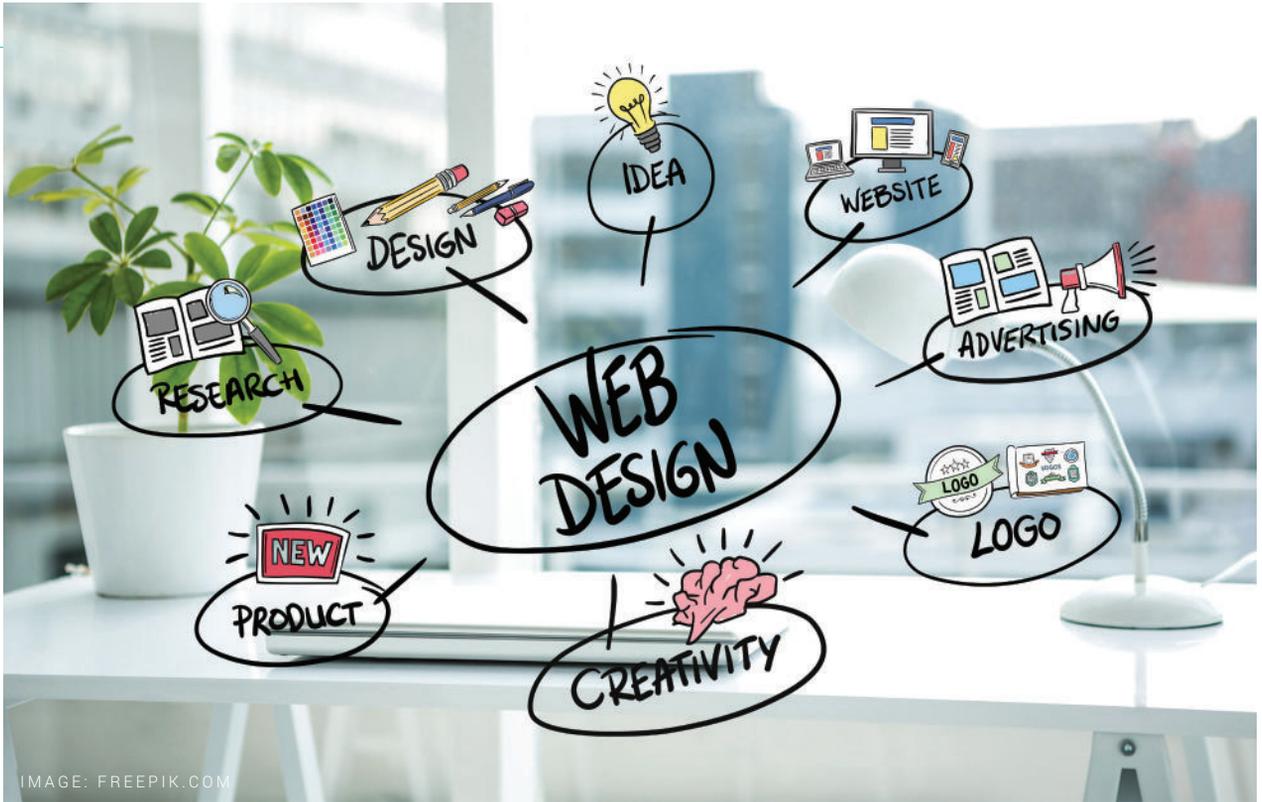


IMAGE: FREEPIK.COM

■ INTRO

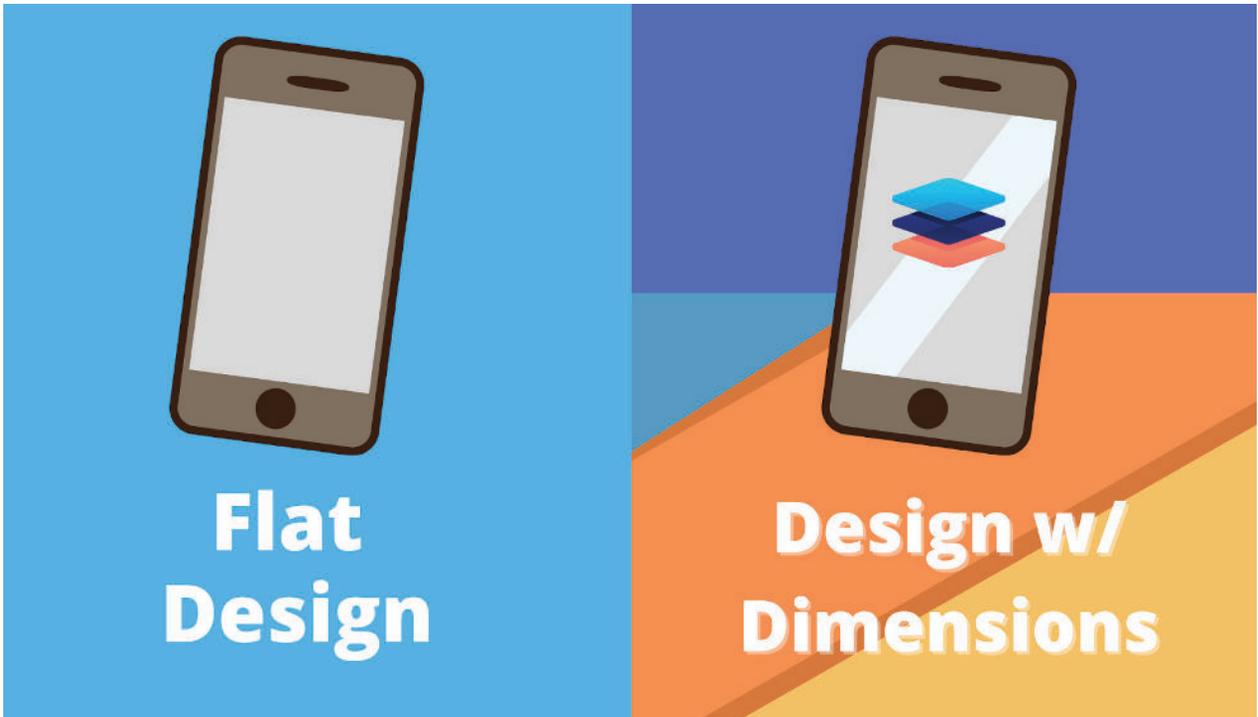
Law firms are among the many verticals grappling with the tectonic shift in consumer behaviors around digital marketing and e-commerce, catalyzed by a global health crisis.

Ensuring the integrity and useability of a law firm’s website, will be a marketing imperative in 2021, as more and more clients move towards adopting online pathways to legal services.

■ TREND/INSIGHT

Getting the user experience and user interface right (UX, UI), for a law firm’s website, are core tenets of “best-in-class” legal web design.

With the push towards more digital experiences for clients, law firm web design in 2021 should comport with client demands, and correlate with marketplace expectations.



Flat design will be replaced more and more with dimension, texture and gradients



Dark mode option on mobile and desktop will be critical for UX, but also for preference in the search engines and browsers that offer a 'dark mode' option.

SEO

Legal SEO that goes beyond the campaign





■ INTRO

Search Engine Optimization in 2021 will see an increased push to user-focused search, focused on quantity of searches, and quality of competition.

■ TREND/INSIGHT

We already know that page experience signals are here and they will become part of ranking factors in 2021. Along with that, the Google machine learning natural language processor BERT (launched at the end of 2019) has gone from impacting 1 in 10 queries to impacting almost every single English search.

■ INCREMENTAL STEPS

We will need to continue to create great content and improve it by supplementing it with video, images, semantic markup, and more.

A “best-in-class” SEO strategy in 2021, will be focused on improving results for search, and built for user experience, filtering for quality. It is a win-win for all searchers. For marketers, it means fiercer competition is coming and the need for great content in all forms (articles, video, podcasts, images) will continue to grow so we can provide more linkable pathways to your law firm online.

■ CITATIONS

Sources:

<https://webmasters.googleblog.com/2020/11/timing-for-page-experience.html>

<https://searchon.withgoogle.com/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BERT_\(language_model\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BERT_(language_model))



CONTENT

Legal content that goes beyond the campaign





■ INTRO

In 2021, be deliberate with your content plan. Make sure your basic content foundations are solid, build out your supporting pages and location silos, and expect creative content strategies to catch potential clients in different parts of the sales funnel.

■ TREND/INSIGHT

It's tempting to spend your content budget chasing trending topics. But before you follow the pack, make sure your content strategy as a whole sets you up to be a leader.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Legal content that goes beyond the campaign





IMAGE: FREEPIK.COM

■ INTRO

The shelf life of popular trends can be short, the pace of change frenetic, but that doesn't mean marketing your law firm through social media has to match.

The successful legal marketer in 2021, will have a firm grasp on media habits of actual clients, a balanced budget between brand and sales goals, and the ability to measure the efficacy and ROI of social media.

- Plan out a 3 month window and budget, and measurements -

Common digital marketing goals and associated metrics

GOALS	COMMON METRICS
Brand Awareness	Website Traffic - Views - Downloads - Mentions - Referral Links
Engagement	Comments - Likes/Shares - Forwards - Inbound Links
Lead Generation	Form Fills - Newsletter Subscriptions - Conversion Rates
Sales	P & Ls - Intakes - Conversion Rates by Channel
Retention/Loyalty	Returning Visits - Open Rates on Email - Percentage of Client on Social
Up-Sell	Form Fills - Newsletter Subscriptions - Conversion Rates

- and take it, one step at a time!

PPC

Online legal advertising that goes beyond the campaign





IMAGE: FREEPIK.COM

■ **INTRO**

Data is going away (or at least changing) and cookies are going away too. Traditional advertising fundamentals are going to be more important than ever.

■ **TREND/INSIGHT**

Google Ads is limiting/halting access to information such as search term reports*. Whether it's by design to push users into automating more portions of their campaigns (and thereby relying on Google's tools and algorithms to manage ads), or in response to privacy concerns, the days of robust datasets and user tracking are coming to an end.

■ INCREMENTAL STEPS

The importance of solid copywriting and conversion optimization techniques to work alongside the targeting available, is going to be key to successful legal SEM campaigns.

Set benchmarks and run A/B tests to continually discover and refine what works best.

Reviewing patterns of search behavior, rather than individual search terms - may have to split into bigger buckets such as branded vs non-branded.

■ OUTRO

Have a deep understanding of your audience. Not just the typical demographics things like age, gender, income, but fill those personas out as best you can, because the big guys (Google) aren't going to make it easy for you anymore.

Start doing your own research and compiling your own data. Use the information you collect to create compelling ads that speak to your audience using the language and affinities that they share, and put them in places where your potential clients will be. Set benchmarks, A/B test to determine effectiveness.



WHAT WILL 2021 TRULY BRING TO LEGAL MARKETING



The trends and predictions covered here can guide your legal marketing campaigns, when strategically applied, in piecemeal or broad fashion, to your business development problems in 2021. Let's briefly cover what we learned...

We discovered that high converting law firm websites in 2021 will be focused first on accessibility, experience, and load times. Success in legal web design will be dependent on the balance between design & performance.

A "best-in-class" SEO strategy in 2021, will be focused on improving results for search, and built for user experience, filtering for quality.

With the loss of tracking and the concept of cookies crumbling before our eyes, the importance of solid copyrighting and conversion optimization techniques to work alongside the targeting available, will be key to successful legal SEM campaigns next year.

Content efforts and budgets in 2021 should be balanced between creating expertise & value online, and curating offline experiences that legal marketers can build their book of business with.

And regardless of the latest social media platform, smart legal marketers in 2021 will be planning their marketing campaigns from an audience-first perspective, going where their most valuable clients are, not just the vanity clicks.

We hope you can use these insights to help grow your law firm in the new year. If you have questions, comments, or would like to schedule a website audit, contact us [here](#).

For more information, visit www.consultwebs.com, subscribe to our newsletter, follow us on social, or listen to our podcast LAWsome www.thelawsomepodcast.com.