

THIS YEAR

32.8876

42.9841



PPC FOR LAW FIRMS:

BRAND GROWTH **VS** SALES ACTIVATION



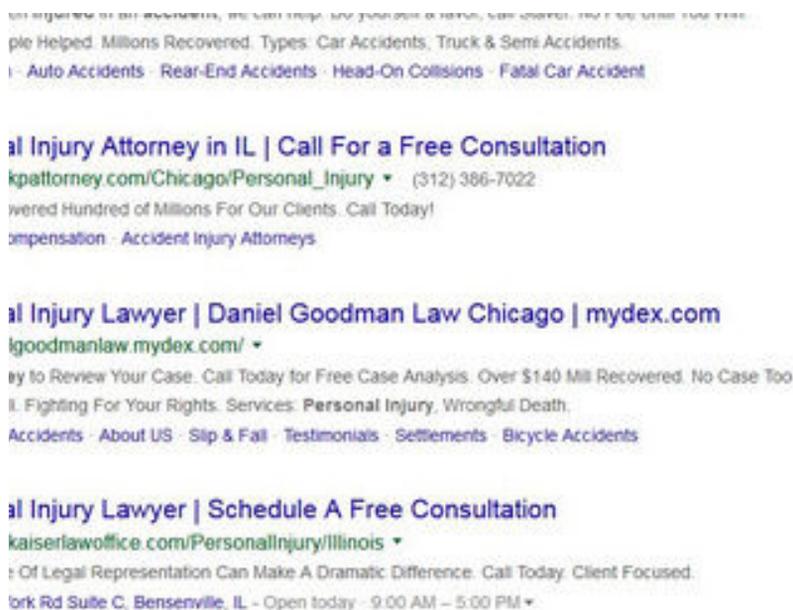
consultwebs

As a segment of a multi-channel approach to marketing for law firms, digital advertising, which includes pay-per-click (PPC), is a fantastic way to both build your brand online and activate sales. Since PPC is traditionally thought of as a solely direct-response vehicle, we wanted to explore the different uses for PPC and how it can be used to enable brand growth and how that impacts sales activation, the two main pillars of [Legal Marketing Nutrition](#).

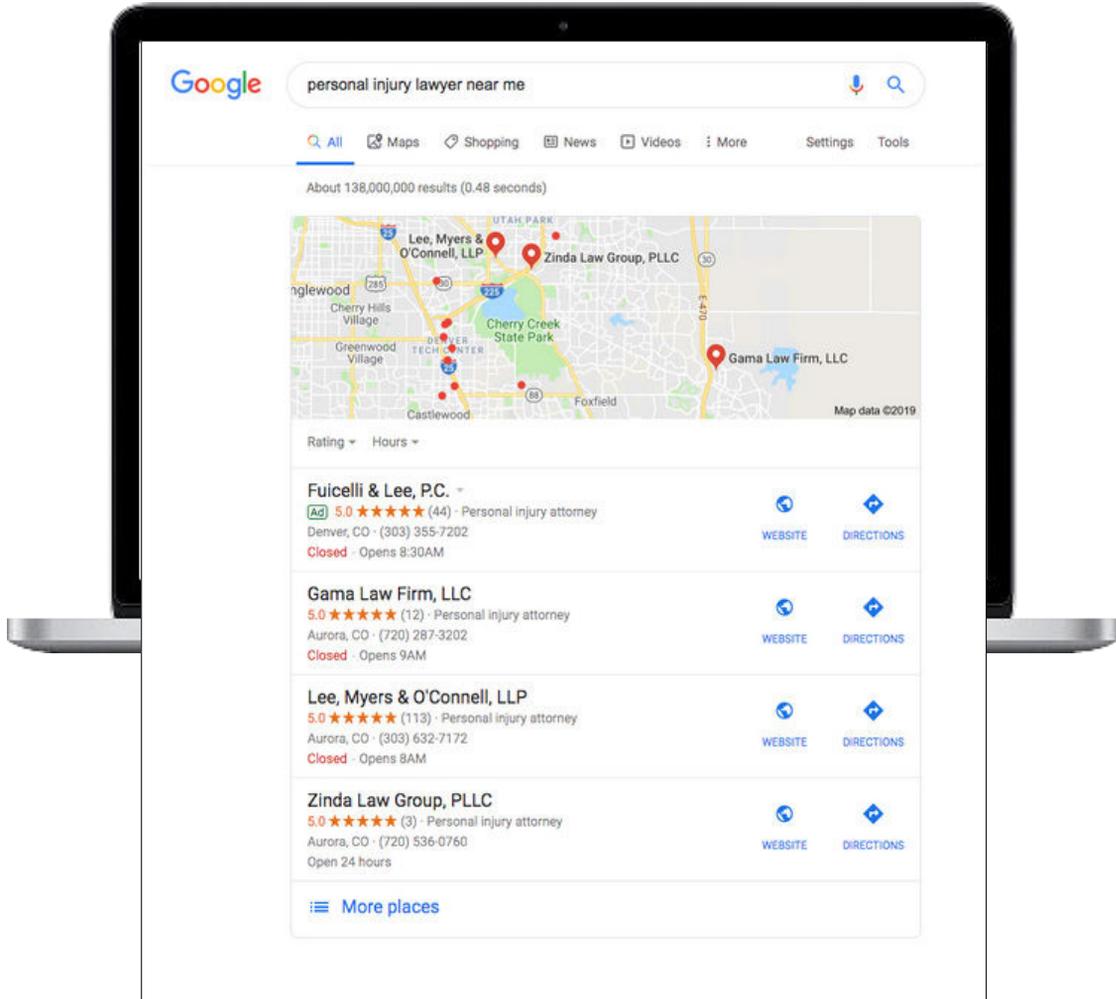
### PPC for Lawyers – Familiar Platforms and Use Cases

Google, Bing, their extended companies (like YouTube and Yahoo) and most search engines have digital advertising platforms, and this is the most common form of pay-per-click advertising. Marketers set up PPC campaigns by writing ad copy, selecting the keywords and phrases they would like the ads to be shown in relation to, and choosing a suitable landing page, aligned with the strategy. Unlike CPM advertising (cost-per-1,000 impressions) you only pay the network when your ad is clicked on.

Most people are familiar with the four ads above locations and search engine results on Google:

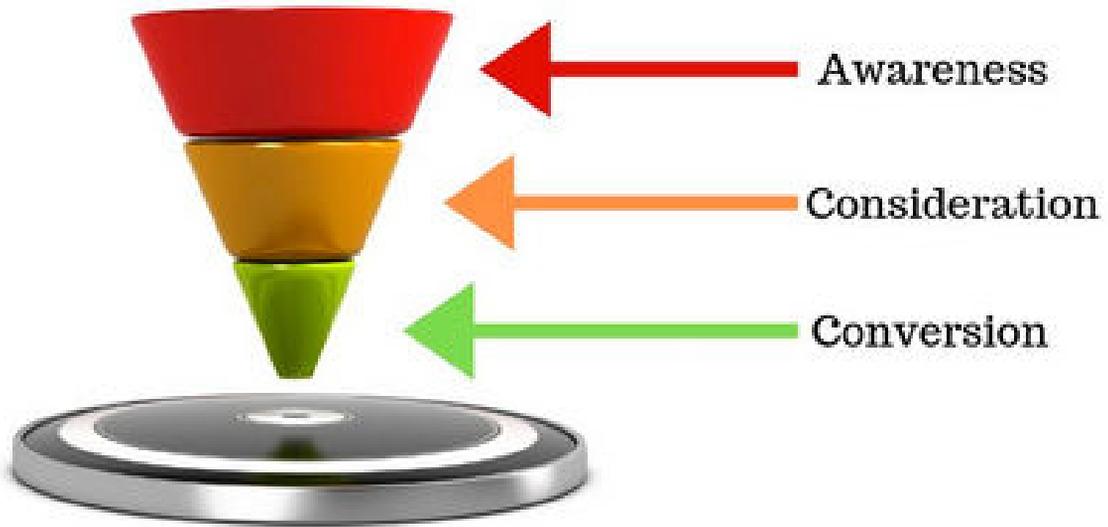


## You can also show up in the local section:



Typically, the keywords targeted in a law firm Adwords campaign will be high-intent, service-related keywords such as “car accident lawyer” or “attorney for car accident injuries.”

This is the standard-use case really – and while not very imaginative, it is effective. If you think of the different stages users go through when making a buying decision, it can be illustrated like this:



These high-intent keywords are the ones we see used toward the middle or bottom of the funnel, in the “consideration” and “conversion” stages. This is also what makes them so competitive and expensive – people call them “buying keywords” for a reason – these are the search queries used when making a decision regarding a purchase. This is 100 percent sales activation.

So, what about the top of the funnel? Awareness. What’s happening there and how does it relate to PPC? Can PPC be used to create brand awareness – and perhaps give us the edge with regards to recognition at the time of purchase? It can, but in order to start reinforcing that brand and getting that crucial brand recognition effect, we should make sure “brand” is clearly defined.

## Is Your Law Firm Name Your Brand? If Not ... What Is Your Brand?

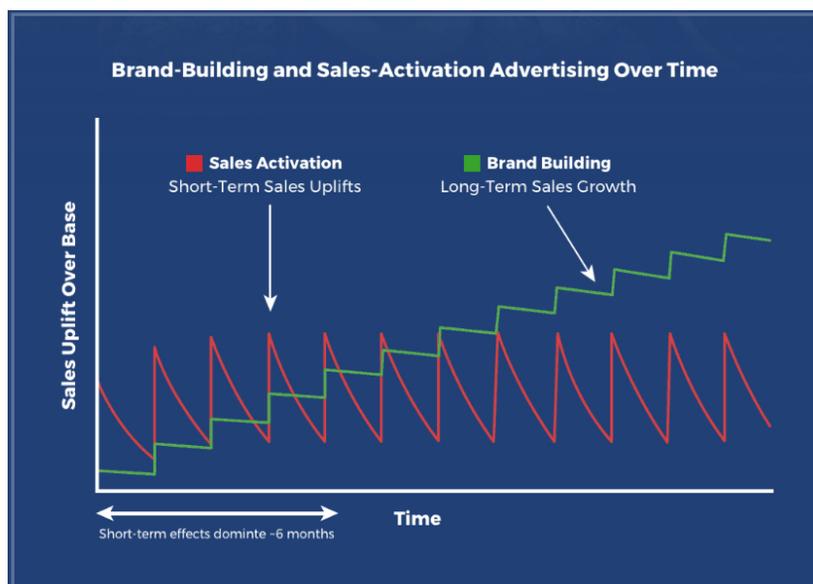
We've written extensively about [law firm branding](#) and why it's so much more than a keyword, a font, or some colors. Your brand is an important asset to develop not only to help focus content and keywords, but to guide your marketing strategy. To summarize:

Your brand is what your clients think about your law firm, what's in their heads, how they experience your service, and then how you encapsulate this experience into your brand.

With a concrete vision of your brand, and the law firm marketing strategy it informs, the tactics required to defend and promote your brand online most successfully will be clear.

## Why Should I Spend PPC Budget on Brand Awareness?

We're going to get into specific examples and scenarios a little later in this article, but let's think big-picture strategy first. Take a look at this graph:



In particular, note the middle portion, where the Sales Activation and Brand Building lines intersect at several points. These points are where your brand messaging will help your sales, which then helps reinforce your brand. Trust and recognition are key points that can give your sales a big lift, and the messaging that brings those points home should come from how you are telling the story of your brand.

With the above graph in mind, let's take a look at some of the different tactics, tricks, and tips for brand awareness using PPC.

## Buying Your Brand Name

Most people hate this, and do it grudgingly as a sort of “blocker” move to prevent other firms from buying their firm's name and then running ads to it. Here's an example:

glen lerner injury attorneys

All Maps Images News Videos More Settings Tools

About 177,000 results (0.62 seconds)

**Personal Injury Attorney In IL | Injured In An Accident?**  
 Ad [www.accident-lawyers-now.com/](http://www.accident-lawyers-now.com/) (312) 219-2114  
 How Much Could You Be Entitled To? Find Out Now - No Fees Unless We Win. Call Now. Hablamos Español. 35+ Years Of Experience. Free Consultation. No Recovery - No Fee. Speak To An Attorney. 5-Star Rated By Clients. Types: Auto Accident, Motorcycle Accident, Truck Accident, Slip and Fall.  
 Client Reviews · See Our Location · Your Potential Case · Attorney Profile · Injured in An Accident?  
 Chicago · 180 N Upper Wacker Dr

**Personal Injury Attorney in IL | No Fees if You Don't Win | kpattorney.com**  
 Ad [www.kpattorney.com/Chicago/Personal\\_Injury](http://www.kpattorney.com/Chicago/Personal_Injury) (312) 386-7022  
 We've Recovered Hundred of Millions For Our Clients. Call Today! Free Consultations. We Come To You. No Win, No Fee. Available 24/7. Multilingual. Services: Accidents, Workers' Comp, Slip & Fall, Personal Injuries.  
 Accident Injury Attorneys · Workers' Compensation

**#1 Injury Attorney | Call The Attorneys Who Care**  
 Ad [www.winninginjurylawyersil.com/Award-Winning/Free-Evaluation](http://www.winninginjurylawyersil.com/Award-Winning/Free-Evaluation)  
 Decades of Personal Injury Winning! Matt Was Voted "Best of the Best" by his Peers. BBB A+

**Injury Attorney | Pay Nothing Unless We Win | coplanecrane.com**  
 Ad [www.coplanecrane.com/Personal-Injury/Free-Consult](http://www.coplanecrane.com/Personal-Injury/Free-Consult) (708) 808-4673  
 Protect Your Legal Rights. Call Us 24/7. Experienced Oak Park Injury Lawyers. Get Full

Notice – none of these firms are [Glen Lerner](#), and the really sneaky ones have generic URLs – “winnininjurylawyersil” could be anyone, including Glen. It’s deliberately vague. However, it’s important to note that the branded term that I searched for is not represented in the ad results, and say what you will about Mr. Lerner, he is great at advertising. He knows how to brand himself and his business, so he must have a reason for not buying his branded terms in Google Ads – or else the campaign exhausted its daily budget by the time I Googled him.

In our experience, it’s not a bad idea to pick up the keywords for your law firm name. This ensures you are at the top of the search engine results pages (SERPS) – always good for those lazy click mobile phone searches – and you add to the number of times you appear on the page, which has been shown to be beneficial.

[According to Searchengineland](#), running paid ad campaigns that 1) offer precise messages and 2) are located next to your organic listings on Google can increase overall click-through-rate (CTR) and lead to a higher return on your investment.

## Got a Slogan or Catchphrase? BUY IT!

“One call, that’s all.”

“In a wreck? Get a check.”

“Personal service, effective results.”

Any of those sound familiar? Pretty common taglines – some have been turned into jingles on TV commercials – but do this: Google them.

Not a lot of ads are there. Maybe none – at least in the examples I checked. This is a low-cost, high-reward opportunity. You take the top of the SERPS, you get to use ad copy to define what message is associated with the phrase – and bonus, if it’s yours, you’ll probably get a couple spots on the page, which is a good thing.

Side note: You can buy whatever phrase you want here – even if it's not yours – but depending upon state bar rules, this may or may not be ethical, so tread lightly here.

Beyond that, just ... use your imagination.

## Word Association

This isn't quite as easy for lawyers, but let's step back for a minute and look at some cars as a good illustration of this technique. Most car makers have worked very diligently on their one-word "identity":

Ford = tough  
Volvo = safe  
Subaru = reliable

This is a little more "blue sky," but one tactic the big advertisers with a strong word association employ is buying that word and running branded ads. You need to be very intentional and mindful here because a LOT of money could get blown if this is set up even a little bit wrong. However, it's an intriguing concept.

## Trends

This is an old trick, but worth checking out – if you want a bunch of traffic quick, use Google Trends to find trending search terms/queries, then buy them. HOWEVER, you better be careful with this because there is a lot of potential for negative feedback.

The key to it is to make a catchy/relevant ad – you will need to somehow tie the trending search into your brand message – and then lead them to a page that further reinforces this while at the same time giving your brand a lift. You really need to be on-the-spot with these, and I believe someone may have set up a Google Ads script to incorporate Trends data, but it can be quite effective – check out what Converse did (and this is about 7 years old!):

**Converse Domination**  
from Ross Martin

Google

Search Query	Results
what should I do with my	48,900,000 results
what should I do with my life	329,000 results
what should I do with my 401k	30,300,000 results
what should I do with my money	6,840,000 results
what should I do with my hair	1,340,000 results
what should I do with my life quiz	197,000 results
what should I do with my mutual funds	7,690,000 results
what should I do with my investments	488,000 results
what should I do with my 401k	11,800,000 results
what should I do with my stocks	881,000 results
what should I do with my savings	20M

03:02

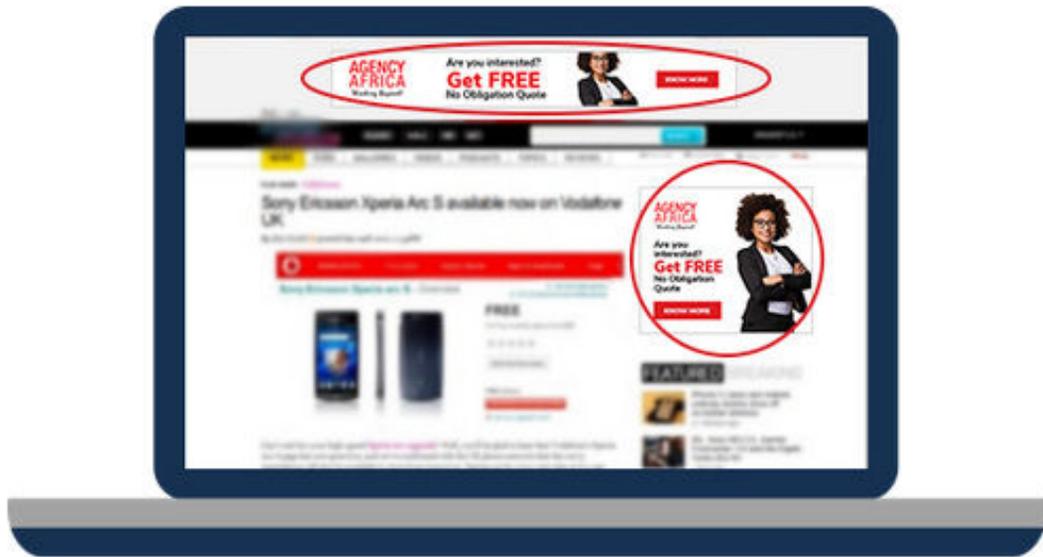
vimeo

## Moving Away from the SERPS

Once you start to consider the possibilities for creative keyword bidding and branded text ads outside of the more typical direct-response, sales activation-focused methods you may be used to, you'll see that the only limit for testing some of these brand-building campaigns is your imagination. However, the SERPS aren't the only place you can use PPC for brand awareness.

## Display Ads

Everyone who's online should be familiar with these, depending upon how effective your ad blocker is. Display ads are banner, text, or animated image ads shown on publisher sites in various locations – above the fold, below the fold, sidebar, etc.



Display ads generally have a lower click-through-rate, primarily because it's a different approach than ads in SERPS. Display advertising is disruptive – you are interrupting an article the user is reading or the video they are watching, whereas in SERP ads you are appearing when a user is actively looking for something, in the context of results to a query.

Compared to search ads' average cost-per-click, display ads are usually pennies to the dollar, if even that. The low cost combined with the broad targeting options available means the typical approach many law firms take for establishing brand awareness is: "If people see my ad everywhere, eventually it will stick." This is why oftentimes branded display campaigns will be more focused on views and impressions instead of clicks.

As long as you use category exclusions to eliminate some of the more questionable/sketch areas of the display network (ie porn and gambling) and you have the budget for it, this isn't necessarily a bad approach, particularly on a local level.

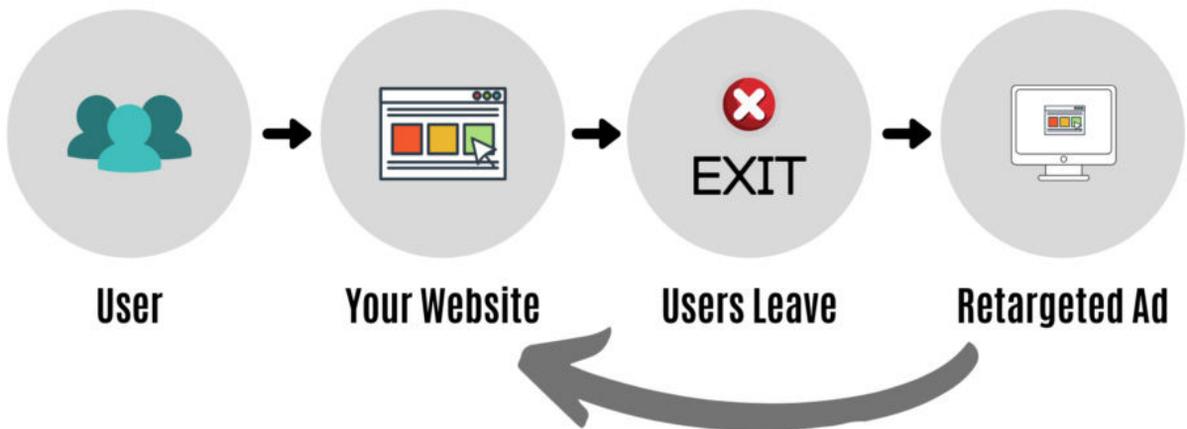
Similar to the more imaginative search ad targeting methods, you have a lot of options on display – in fact, many more. Audience, interests, in-market segments – there's a lot of room for experimentation here. So if you have identified a particular market segment to target – say, 34- to 45-year-old men who like NASCAR and hockey – you can do it.

One point to make with this – and it is a word of caution. Brand association is a real thing, and it should not be far from your mind when building audiences or implementing different targeting methods. Your ad will be shown on a website, therefore it is building a connection with that site in the users' mind. Do you want your law firm to be associated with funny cat memes or pirating software? No? Then pay attention to your placements and keep that stuff out.

## Retargeting

Retargeting, also called “remarketing,” uses cookies to track website visitors and show them ads after they leave the site. For example, a person who searched for a deal on a cruise, visited Travelocity.com, but left without purchasing may be shown an ad with an offer for a certain percentage off if they book now. At its best, remarketing is used as a means to re-engage users who left a website or landing page without taking the desired action. If you want an example of this, go to Amazon, put a few items in your cart, and leave without checking out.

# RETARGETING IN DIGITAL ADVERTISING



The cool thing about remarketing is that you can make all kinds of audiences based on user behavior – pages they visited, pages they didn't visit, returning visitors, etc. So, for a brand reinforcement in this scenario, you may want to try a more direct sales message for the first 48 to 72 hours after they leave your site, but after that, go for a more general branded ad. This will give you visibility and keep your firm top of mind in those cases where a potential client is stuck in the research phase of their search for legal help. Please note: These timeframes are arbitrary. Your best bet is to look at your new vs. returning data in Google Analytics to determine the different opportunity windows for your remarketing ads.

## Brand Reinforcement Is Good for Your Digital Marketing Bottom Line

[This article from Moz](#) should be the final word on why grabbing that branded traffic is good, as well as a caution to what can happen if you don't. Additionally, it is a great way to take more space on the SERPs, stay top of mind on display, and create associations in potential clients' minds while they are in those "top of the funnel" stages of their search for legal representation. A well-built digital marketing strategy for lawyers will hit on a variety of channels, and they will reinforce and fill in the gaps for each other:

"A strong search marketing strategy has always involved organic, paid search, and PLA (Product Listing Ads) combined. Sites optimizing for all search channels are already well-positioned to capture search traffic regardless of ad changes to the SERPs: if SEO growth slows, then PLA and paid search growth speeds up. As real estate for one channel shrinks, real estate for others grows."

If you'd like to learn more about PPC services for your law firm, or if you want to get in touch with us and chat, [we're here](#).