

The Meteoric Rise of Lawyer Videos

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We Have Become a Nation of Videophiles

We are a video-addicted society. According to a recent Pew Institute study, 2/3 of us would prefer receiving information via a video as opposed to reading. YouTube averages a jaw-dropping 4 billion views per day. It amassed 1 trillion views in 2011. A comScore study showed that 100 million Americans (roughly one-third of the population) watch online videos each day. The study also showed that viewers watch an average of 239 videos per month.

How many lawyer videos are there? There are no reliable statistics that we could find. However, a quick scan of the landscape certainly indicates that there are many thousands of lawyer videos – a marked change from several years ago when only a few pioneers were charting a path on YouTube.

You Want Proof That Videos Work?

Remember the old saying of fishing boat captains, “You have to fish where the fish are.” If you’re not using videos to market your practice, you’re not fishing where the fish are!

We can speak with more than a little authority here. We have dozens of videos on Sensei Enterprises’ YouTube channel. We’re going to point you to one video in particular, which is entitled “Can you recover deleted text messages from a mobile phone” – if you Google the title, you’ll find the video. Here are the significant points to note:

1. The video (as we write this article) has had over 180,000 views.
2. Searching those words will always bring our video up on the first page of results.
3. It generates an average of three e-mails and three phone calls per day.
4. Clearly, we asked the right question, using words which users employ to search for this information.
5. It has made us an impressive pile of money!

Take a look around at our other videos. You'll see that no other video is viewed as much as the one described above, but there are a respectable amount of views for many of the videos. By the time this gets to print there will be another 14 or so videos and you'll notice that, being newer, they will have fewer views. Bear in mind that a video has to work just once to land a good-sized case! And if it works to land case after case, you've got a runaway profit train.

Why and How Do Videos Work?

You will hear this question debated endlessly, but between our own experiences and those shared by others, it is clear that these are some of the reasons videos work:

- They put a human face on your business, someone who they can like and trust – even if you have “a face for radio” videos can work for you
- They allow you to showcase your expertise
- They offer information that people are searching for – and they like you for that
- Google (which owns YouTube) loves videos and ranks them highly
- YouTube itself is the second largest search engine after Google
- Videos will, if they are any good, contain some sort of call to action at the end with your phone number, website and e-mail address
- If you keep them short (2-3 minutes), most viewers will stay to the end to see and hear that call to action
- If you link to your YouTube videos from your website (hey, let YouTube provide the bandwidth to stream), your site seems more modern and interactive plus your video titles/descriptions will help with search engine optimization
- You can use social media, including blogs, to publicize your video

The “trick” of making a video that will work for you is to find out (through Google – which we use - or elsewhere) how people are searching for the services you offer. Or – better yet – something related to your services. What are the ten questions prospective clients most frequently ask you? You must always give away useful information. But if you give away information about a specific kind of injury or illness to someone searching for them, you've helped them. And very often, those folks need a lawyer. Remember: Do not give legal advice in your video and find yourself falling afoul of your ethical rules. Read your state's ethical rules before making your videos!

Can you DIY? Not a chance unless you're willing to make a sizeable money investment in technology (high-end camera, tripod, lights, microphone, green screen, teleprompter, software) and a sizeable time investment in learning how to use it. Even if you put that home video camera on a tripod, you won't have the lighting or sound equipment to make your video look

like something more than an amateur smartphone capture complete with grainy video and sound quality like you're talking in a cave. In our minds, this is clearly something to be left to a trusted expert.

There are a lot of absolutely terrible homemade lawyer videos – they actively turn potential clients away by being so unprofessional. Don't scrimp on quality. Do not use friends, relatives or students. The hard part, of course, is finding someone you trust as your videographer.

Who is Gerry Oginski?

We've been seeing a lot Gerry Oginski lately. Just Google "lawyer videos" and you'll see what we mean. Gerry is a practicing lawyer in New York but he is also a frequent lecturer on lawyer videos (which he produces) and he has recently written *Secrets of Lawyer Video Marketing in the Age of YouTube*. We were curious to read the book because, as we observed above, we know something about videos.

Clearly, anyone who is a video novice would benefit from reading Gerry's book, but we found things in his book that we didn't know. If you are a lawyer who has not yet embarked on lawyer videos, you are very late to the party. This is definitely a book you should read- and at \$16.95, you can afford to!

There are testimonials in this book (fair warning, a lot of testimonials) but we found even those helpful as they gave a sense of what it was like to go through the "make a lot of videos at once" process. With proper preparation, it is not unusual to shoot 50 videos a day. And that's actually a very effective use of time since you've compressed it into one marathon day. Mind you, there is substantial preparation beforehand.

When we grilled Gerry via e-mail with various questions, he was incredibly responsive and generous with his time, even allowing us to discuss costs – something we rarely see videographers do.

So how much does it cost? Let's start with Findlaw – which offers its services at what seems like an exorbitant price. According to Gerry, Findlaw creates 12 minutes of edited video from a 1 ½ day shoot. You must be a premium member of Findlaw to participate, at a cost of \$3,700 over a two year period. The cost to shoot your 12 minutes of edited video is \$26,000 – and you are restricted to putting your video on YouTube, your website and Findlaw for two years. The terms won't allow you to place your video on any other marketing distribution system.

By way of contrast, when Gerry does videos, they belong to you and you can put them anywhere.

Gerry has multiple programs where he flies to any law office in the country, with all travel costs included in the pricing. The total price will range between \$16,000-\$40,000.

Here's what you get:

50+ video program plan -100-150 minutes of edited video.

100+ video program plan -200-300 minutes of edited video.

Gerry also has a program where you can fly to N.Y., stay in a luxury hotel and have dinner with Gerry the night before the shoot, which allows you to pick his brain about marketing. This tends to be considerably cheaper since Gerry doesn't have to shut down his law office for three days. You also receive spotlight annotations in your video program along with an interactive transcript and a blog post to accompany each video.

So what's an interactive transcript? It allows search engines to index your transcript, not just the title of your video. You create a transcript in a Word document and then convert it to a .txt file. In your control panel in YouTube, click on captions. Upload the transcript, give it a name and let the search engines return results based on your words. A great tip that we didn't know – that alone was worth the price of the book.

While Gerry is justifiably famous, and well worth talking to, there are a lot of videography companies throughout the country to consider. We would suggest you find companies that specialize in lawyer videos – and carefully examine some of their videos, including how high they rank in the search engines.

Final Words

If you're hesitant to make videos, remember that paper ads line bird cages and train puppies after they are read. Print is a dying marketing medium. Videos, unless they become obsolete, are ongoing marketing for you. – with no ongoing expense. We've never seen such a high return on investment in any of our own marketing efforts.

This is a train that has left the station, but if you run a bit, you may still be able to hop aboard.

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