

**ONE
NORTH**

THE DEFINITIVE AND CANDID

GUIDE

TO SUCCESSFUL
WEBSITES

PART

NER

ING

WHEN DID YOUR FIRM LAST REDESIGN ITS WEBSITE?

Many interactive marketing specialists recommend that law firms refresh their website every three to four years. Chances are, it may be time to start thinking about updating your site—a process that can feel overwhelming, even if you’ve been through it before.

To help you navigate the journey, One North Interactive, with the help of some legal marketing experts, has assembled a candid collection of advice and best practices. Learn how to determine what changes need to be made, what design best practices might apply—and how to get started—inside.

SAYING I DO. FINDING THE RIGHT INTERACTIVE PARTNER.

Redesigning a website is a major undertaking, and few law firms employ enough marketing and design professionals to completely plan, create and launch a new site in-house.

As a result, many firms partner with interactive solution providers that can offer expertise, advice and guidance throughout the project. Partnering with an agency can help firms create a more dynamic, interactive website—but finding the service provider that's a perfect fit for your firm is key. You are going to be spending a lot of time with your interactive partner, so make sure you have good chemistry!

A few suggestions:

LOOK FOR PARTNERS THAT TRULY KNOW INTERACTIVE.

Review websites they've produced to see if the sites thoroughly engage viewers.

"Your goal is to create a better user experience," says One North Interactive Architect Michael O'Laughlin. "You want to add more interaction and excitement."

Websites are different from print or traditional design in that they require well thought out information architecture and interaction design. Make sure your partner offers resources (i.e. people) that understand interactive web design, as print designers don't always know how to build a compelling online experience.

THE TYPICAL DUE DILIGENCE RULES APPLY.

Call references and ask former clients about vendors' strengths and weaknesses. Confirm the project will work with your annual budget, and make sure you have full support from firm leadership.

Discussing any design aspects you'd like to include during initial meetings can also be helpful. Ask potential partners if they have experience working with the types of functionality you're hoping to include to make sure they have the qualifications you need.

HAVE REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS.

Even the most qualified web designer can't produce a new site overnight. Your schedule may not allow you to approve site prototypes that quickly, either.

"It is really hard to tack on a website project to your already very full day job. You need to plan and schedule appropriately," says One North Strategy Manager Sarah Levine Meyer. "It takes a lot of work, attention, time, energy and focus—even when you're working with [a vendor]. The end product, though, justifies the investment and can be very rewarding."

A detailed project plan can help keep the redesign on point. Work with your interactive partner to come up with a step-by-step plan, and be sure both parties agree on the timing and specifications outlined in the plan.

"We urge clients to spend extra time on design and functional planning," says One North Senior Account Manager Susan Bradley. "You want to make sure you are really excited and comfortable with the look and also the features of the site. During this phase, I like to remind clients that we are essentially building the blueprint of the site. It's important to get the major site features approved at this stage."

Along the way, if you do notice you're falling behind schedule in the delivery of approvals, be sure to alert your vendor early so together you can work to edit the timing on any dependent steps in the plan.

PLA

NN

ING

TAKING THE FIRST STEP.

YOU CAN DO IT!

The planning phase is one of the most important redesign stages. Solid preparation can help the project wrap up on time—and save you money.

“It’s so much easier and less expensive to build around your needs on the front end than to adjust the site to accommodate them after it launches,” says Jennifer O’Leary Cathell, eMarketing, Design and Brand Manager at Edwards Wildman Palmer LLP, which employs 625 lawyers in the U.S., U.K. and Asia. Edwards Wildman is in the final stages of its website build and hopes to launch the new site this summer.

To successfully plan for your new site:

SPEND SOME TIME SURFING.

Checking out competitors' websites can help spark ideas. Other companies may also offer inspiration.

"Go outside of the industry within professional service firms, like advertising firms," O'Laughlin says. "They're on the cutting edge. See what they're doing."

Block out a few hours and spend some time collecting ideas to help jump-start your website project. You might even want to start a Pinterest board.

PUT DATA IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT.

Examine site diagnostics to find out who visits your site and what areas are most popular. Having facts at your fingertips can help justify or inform website functionality, content and design decisions.

"If you know no one is going to your corporate page, maybe the information is something users don't find interesting or valuable," Levine Meyer says.

"Analytics may not tell the whole story—but they help to refine it."

Data can also help you improve your marketing programs and capture return on investment.

"We do pitches now, and we know a certain company actually just visited our site," says Marie Alvarez-Yapana, Marketing Manager at multi-service law firm Loeb & Loeb LLP, which has more than 300 attorneys. "That can help you connect the dots with other business development efforts, such as event sponsorships and publications."

ASSEMBLE THE ARMY YOU'LL GO INTO BATTLE WITH.

Having the right team involved in a website project is one of the most important factors in the project's success. Some firms have a fully operational marketing committee that meets on a regular basis to spearhead the redesign; others put together an ad hoc website committee to review the site.

"One of the biggest pieces of the process involves figuring out the approvals process inside of the law firm," says Alyson Fieldman, One North Account Supervisor.

"It's really critical to have the decision makers weigh in on the process in the beginning."

Having the same team approve the design concept and the final product ensures that the project's strategic goals will be executed.

"It makes the decision making much less subjective—and makes the process go much more smoothly," Fieldman says.

Keeping the group a manageable size can also help. Loeb & Loeb, for example, established a core group that Alvarez-Yapana says was "small enough to pick up the phone and talk to each other."

Edwards Wildman settled on a committee of six attorneys from different locations and practice areas.

"We wanted to make sure we chose a review committee that wasn't so big that no decisions could be made—but wasn't so small that offices and departments within the firm didn't have a chance to contribute," O'Leary Cathell says.

Regardless of group size, it's important to designate a point person who is in charge. "Having someone with the authority to push the process along internally really helps," says Bradley.

PLATFORM BUILDING

CHOOSING THE RIGHT TECHNOLOGY PLATFORM/CMS.

There's no one-size-fits-all simple formula to determine what content management system (CMS) and general technology platform will work best for your firm.

“You need to use the right tool for the job,” says One North Managing Director, Technology, Ryan Horner.

Deciding factors can include:

POPULARITY.

Products with a strong user base often feature better support than products with a small number of users. A strong user community also provides an additional resource for advice, and you’re more likely to find new employees who may have experience using the product, Horner says.

WORKFLOW.

Many content management systems have an out-of-box workflow. “You change one item on a page, and it just goes live,” Horner says. It’s important to define your internal workflow, identify how many users will be making updates and determine how often the site will be changed.

GLOBALIZATION.

If you publish content for users who speak a variety of languages, look for a system with the ability to save content in multiple

languages. Also, consider whether or not your firm would need an administrative tool that’s available in more than one language to accommodate non-English-speaking firm members who’ll make updates.

FLEXIBILITY & SIMPLICITY.

Does the CMS support the level of complexity your chosen content and design may require? For example, is there support for multimedia elements like videos? Does the system offer the SEO capabilities you want? Will you be able to host multiple domains if you have several websites?

HOSTING OPTIONS.

“Hosting can be a huge factor in deciding and cost,” Horner says.

External hosting service providers can often offer 24-7 support at a reasonable rate because the cost is averaged among all their clients.

If a firm chooses to host its own site, the additional expense and time can be significant. Firms need to fund their own constant support and purchase every

element required to host a website—including hardware, which can be expensive. Expect, on average, up to 50 percent higher overhead for deployments, migrations and maintenance.

CONVENIENCE.

Having one company develop and host your site can generally just be easier.

“When a vendor owns the entire stack of services, they can provide better service, and the cost goes down for changes,” Horner says. “When you have a hosting company and a different company building the system, you can get a lot of ineffectiveness in communication.”

A dedicated partner can also provide strong back-up and disaster recovery support—and help law firms keep current on recent technology trends and updates.

“There are a sea of things happening in the front-end development world,” Horner says. “Law firm technology and content management software has become so specialized. To compete with all the other sites out there, firms have to know about front-end development, design and strategy.”

DESIGNING

THE DESIGN OF ALL THINGS.

Once you've kicked off the redesign, it's time to start thinking about design! Kalev Peekna, One North Managing Director, Strategy, suggests first performing a brand review. Look over your current guidelines to provide the creative team with direction on items like global font use, color treatments, positioning statements and any image library your firm tends to use. Share collateral examples that represent the best view of your brand.

If you don't have firm or compiled guidelines, gather your team and ask people in the room to identify website sections; conference trinket giveaways and other collateral that's best—and why.

“That exercise really helps people hone where their brand is and where it’s headed—they might be exploring slightly different directions or modernizing it,” Peekna says.

If you don’t have any relevant items, consider bringing in examples of other firm or company materials that represent a desired look and feel.

Again, it’s important to keep in mind that your brand should have some flexibility. You want your design to maintain your brand color, logo and other elements to ensure consistency, but you don’t want to default to redundancy. Being open to new ideas and opportunities can present inventive options that you hadn’t even considered.

Other things to keep in mind as the creative process unfolds:

GET A BRANDLIFT.

Redoing your website is a perfect time to refresh or rethink your brand’s look and feel. Business law and litigation firm Fasken Martineau DuMoulin LLP took the opportunity to implement updates to its visual identity during the firm’s redesign project.

Previously, the site contained a number of orange elements. The new color palette is blue, black, white and grey, with a few orange call-to-action items—which helped bring Fasken Martineau’s online presence up-to-date with its other collateral.

“We had just undergone a brand refresh,” says Fasken Martineau’s Digital Strategy Manager Desiree Turko. “And the former site was no longer aligned with it.”

It’s also important to keep in mind that there’s room to be flexible with your digital brand identity.

“Your website doesn’t have to be a literal or strict interpretation of your offline brand,” says Levine Meyer. “Oftentimes, websites extend brand guidelines in ways that make sense for the interactive medium.”

KNOW THAT DESIGN IS A PROCESS.

Brainstorming can take the project in exciting directions—but be aware that eventually, the work will need to move on to the design stage. Once you’re seeing site mock-ups, you’ll likely see multiple rounds of options. “Getting it 100 percent right the first time is a wonderful experience, but

also is incredibly rare,” Peekna says. “Don’t be discouraged if you don’t immediately see what you thought it would be.”

One thing that can help it get to the right place? Pledge to abstain from using the ‘mute’ button.

“Many times, clients sort of hit the mute button and consolidate their feedback before sharing it with us,” Peekna says. “However, it’s that first reaction to the designs that we’re looking for. It gives us a true sense of whether or not it’s going in the right direction.”

WE LIKE A PEANUT GALLERY.

“Sometimes people feel awkward giving creative teams criticism because we’re passionate about the design,” Peekna says. “But don’t be afraid to tell people what you think. All feedback—including negative feedback—is critical.”

Be specific. “Tell me what part you don’t like,” he says. “And don’t be afraid to contribute your own ideas. Even if we don’t use every one, it gives us a sense of what you like and what you’re looking for.”

BUILDING

LET THE BUILDING BEGIN!

As the website is being built, there are several factors to keep in mind to make your new site the strongest possible marketing piece.

Consider the following suggestions:

BALANCE FUNCTIONALITY WITH BUDGET.

You may need to put some ideas on the backburner for phase two or three due to cost.

“Every decision made about the [Edwards Wildman] site had something to do with how to best represent us, showcase our experience and highlight attorneys who are experienced in their field,” O’Leary Cathell says.

To focus on the key project goals, other ideas were sometimes put on hold.

“We had many ideas that were visually stimulating, but if they didn’t add functionality needed to help us reach our end goal, we decided to push those ideas off until a later date,” O’Leary Cathell added.

ASK USERS TO USE IT.

User feedback informed most of Fasken Martineau's redesign decisions. The more than 750-attorney firm, which launched a new version of its site in 2012, had employees perform about 50 hours of testing during different development stages. Users were asked to go through common functionality tasks using prototypes and other sites, evaluating the experience as they did so.

Additionally, the firm held focus groups, moderated by an objective third party, to get a better understanding of what was needed from the site.

"The testing came in handy," Turko says. "Opinions aside, if subjects were unable to find a piece of significant content or successfully complete a task, we knew to try a different approach."

Having hard data on user behavior helped the website approval committee determine the best design.

"In a big firm, you have a lot of stakeholders, and the tendency is to want to weigh in democratically on decisions, whether it's

functionality or labeling," Turko says. "Usability testing can help committees make choices that support the user's experience, rather than personal preferences."

DEVELOP A BROWSER SUPPORT PLAN.

Determining the browsers, and which versions of each, that your website will support is an important decision that not only affects how much time and money you spend developing and maintaining your website, but also the overall experience a visitor has when they come to your site.

"The emergence of rolling browser releases, HTML5/CSS3, responsive design and mobile usage has created a vastly different landscape in which to provide browser support," Horner says. "Unfortunately, it's not possible to entirely replicate all of the advanced functionality that many of these technologies offer in older browsers."

Remember, each hour that is spent on development or support for older browsers is time not spent adding additional capabilities and innovative design for newer browsers.

TALK THE RIGHT TALK.

Stringent language laws require Fasken Martineau to offer a French site because the firm has offices in the province of Québec.

Luckily, the firm had an in-house translation department to handle the task. If yours doesn't, don't expect to just dump the copy into Google Translate and call it a day, at any stage in the process.

"If you're not familiar with the language, you might review a design concept thinking, 'OK, that looks like French to me,' without realizing the language is absurd to a native French speaker," Turko says. "You risk alienating internal approvers."

For specific and targeted geographic efforts, consider creating a smaller version of your site in a different language, which will reduce the amount of required build time.

"For some firms, it makes sense to create custom web experiences for specific markets. So for instance, to create a Chinese mini-site, the site elements or components— in many cases— can be repurposed and updated," Fieldman says.

CON NEC TING

SERVE YOUR NETWORK.
USE YOUR NETWORK.

More and more, users are reaching websites either through social networks or on their mobile devices.

Here are a few things you can do to make sharing and connecting easier:

MORE MOBILE. **MORE RESPONSIVE.**

Two years ago, Hunton & Williams LLP, a firm with more than 800 lawyers in the U.S., Europe and Asia, redesigned its website. Now the firm is working on a version that will translate to mobile devices.

Creating a mobile site should take less time than a redesign because mobile sites offer highlights of the bio, contact and other main site information—which can often be scaled down and repurposed.

“We [took] a few key pieces of information and translat[ed] them over to make them work [on the mobile site],” says Gail Hageman, formerly of Hunton & Williams (now at Steptoe). “You can always link back to the full site. The mobile site serves as a road map to find out the rest of the information.”

If your firm can redesign its site and launch a mobile site simultaneously, you’ll ensure more users can access the most important firm information.

“People used to take care of the desktop version first,” O’Laughlin says. “But you need to make the assumption that the site will be viewed on mobile devices and tablets—and have a strategy in place.”

Some firms instead opt to create an app for users. Although apps offer some functionality advantages—like personalizing the user experience and performing complex data calculations—be aware that they can be expensive to build and require regular maintenance. Users also need to invest the time to download new versions.

“Many times, really, all you need is a mobile site, not an app,” Fieldman says.

Another option is to design a single website that would respond to all devices. Using a layout with fluid grids, responsive design allows firms to present site content in a format that provides the best user experience — because it’s tailored to the device the viewer is using. The same “Mobile First” mentality applies when designing for the mobile state, but only one website is required to reach your firm’s many audiences.

SAY YES **TO SOCIAL.**

Business law firm Benesch Friedlander Coplan & Aronoff LLP already had a presence on sites like Twitter and Facebook—but wanted to incorporate more social media elements into its site.

Now, a ‘What’s Trending’ section on the bottom of the homepage can highlight six of the firm’s industry-specific social media outlets at a time; another page lists all Benesch’s blogs and social media links.

“We now have a person who spends at least an hour a day handling all updates,” says Julie Gurney, Senior Marketing Communications Manager at Benesch. “We’ve got fresh content coming out of Facebook several times a day and have gained literally hundreds of new followers on Twitter and LinkedIn since our site launched.”

Revamping your website also gives you the opportunity to redesign your social media properties. Prior to launch, ask your web design partner for ideas on how to incorporate the look and feel of the new site on your firm’s social profiles – such as Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook.

WRITING

MEET YOUR NEW WORK SPOUSE. CONTENT.

Content might be king, but it sometimes can take a kingdom to get it written, organized and uploaded. Once the basic design has been determined, it's time to start planning and developing your site content. But don't wait to start writing it—unless you're planning to use mostly pre-existing website text.

A few other tips to make the process go smoothly:

USE THE OPPORTUNITY TO TIGHTEN UP TEXT.

Benesch's redesigned site features an enhanced focus on attorney experience.

"We rewrote much of the content," Gurney says. "The firm is organized by practice group, and when you clicked on a page, some were much too long. We tried to rewrite the practice group descriptions, with the lawyers' agreement, and put the most relevant content into the top two paragraphs."

But before you start tossing out old text, review your current site copy. Chances are, you won't have to redo everything.

"So many firms try to rewrite all their content when they launch a new site, and it becomes overwhelming," Fieldman says. "It's important to see what the firm already has that can be repurposed for the new site."

WRITE FOR CLARITY —AND SEO.

The actual text you include on each page can also affect search engine ranking.

"We've come to realize over the past few years that SEO is really driven by content," Gurney says. "When we rewrote the content, we researched each practice area to find what keywords users would type into Google to get them to our site—and then incorporated those keywords."

You'll be compared in Google rankings to other law firm websites because the content is similar. To improve your status, focus on what differentiates your firm—and offer unique content. Updating this content regularly will also help to keep your firm at the top of search listings.

"It doesn't matter how many times the word 'corporate' is on the page; there's no reason you're going to rank higher than the other 250 firms," Levine Meyer says. "Start talking about specific types of matters, and that's when you become more relevant."

WRITE EARLY AND OFTEN.

"You'll need to review content if it's migrated over or create it, if you're starting from scratch," Levine Meyer says. "That takes a lot of work. Saving that until late in the project can become problematic."

Gurney advises starting to rewrite content immediately after the project kick-off. Also, allow time to prepare other site elements—such as headshots and stock photos.

"We didn't think about all that was involved with finding, buying and sizing images," Gurney says.

KEEP IT COMING.

Creating and refreshing content solely for the redesign shouldn't necessarily be the end goal. Adding new content to your site, even after launch, keeps your site fresh and inspires users to come back for more. Visitors will begin to associate your firm with high-quality content – and capabilities – which also helps with SEO. Developing a plan, like an editorial calendar, will help you to continually generate great content.

"Start by identifying content creators, and work to establish a schedule of some sorts," says Levine Meyer. "Even if you don't adhere to it exactly, you will likely find more success than hoping for things to be created on an ad hoc basis."

OPTI

MIZ

ING

GET THE MOST FROM YOUR CONTENT.

After you've spent considerable time and effort creating and editing content, it is important to ensure you make the most of it. Have a plan in place to enter it correctly, optimize it for search and make it easier for users to find.

CONSIDER OUTSOURCING SOME OF THE WORK.

Even if your firm doesn't completely rewrite all site content, you'll most likely need to allot time to enter text into a content management system before it appears on the new site.

Hageman says Hunton & Williams' strong resource base, which included a web editor and data entry assistance, helped the firm save time during its redesign.

"We did some work internally, like photo cropping, which helped," she says. "Make sure you have things documented, plan ahead, keep a checklist—persevere, and eventually you'll get there."

CARVE OUT TIME TO CATEGORIZE CONTENT.

Benesch, for example, labeled information by client matter number, description, dollar amount and entered "every possible piece of information you could get about a transaction or matter" into fields in its database, says Gurney.

"It's not just for the site," she says. "Let's say an attorney says, 'Do we have experience representing an auto manufacturer in an M&A transaction in Michigan?' You just need to type in that criteria, and you'll get a list."

For a law firm like Benesch, which opens hundreds of matters a day, having a method to sort through the massive volume of case information is a huge asset to staff members.

"We use it internally, and clients can search on the site using the information, too," Gurney says.

Edwards Wildman wanted to make sure it could cross-market its services using its new site.

"Our search is front and center on every single page throughout the site," O'Leary Cathell says. Users can filter searches, which also pull in info from blogs and other sources to help reinforce firm expertise.

"For example, we want to make sure searching for insurance on the main site will find information posted on our insurance blog," O'Leary Cathell says. "It's one of the ways we are really looking to market our experience."

HAVE AN SEO STRATEGY.

Websites are law firms' calling cards, so making them easy to find is as important as making them look good.

"Start thinking about SEO from the get-go," Alvarez-Yapana says. "Don't build the site and then develop an SEO plan."

To enhance its site's search ranking status, Loeb & Loeb hired SEO professionals to offer best practice advice. Alvarez-Yapana also attended webinars and conducted research through legal technology associations.

The result: the firm decided not to include certain elements on the new site that it felt wouldn't help increase SEO (the site's flash images, for instance, were scrapped).

Benesch also included some search engine optimization improvements in its redesign. Pages were named with vanity URLs, like beneschlaw.com/corporate. Vanity URLs are easier for web crawlers to identify; longer addresses comprised of colons, exclamation points and other characters can prevent sites from turning up in searches.

PRE PAR ING

COUNTDOWN TO LAUNCH.

The work isn't *quite* finished once your site design and content are set. Getting ready for and launching your website is the most exciting, but also nerve-racking, part of the entire web journey!

Some advice to help you prepare:

STAFF UP.

Fieldman suggests increasing staff at the end of the project—during testing and prior to launch.

“When we go live, we need as many hands on deck as possible,” she says. “Hire temps, recent college grads or interns to help the data entry go smoothly.”

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED.

When getting ready for launch, always be prepared for the unexpected to pop up. There’s always a chance an unforeseen circumstance will alter your redesign plans.

Although Edwards Wildman had been planning its site redesign for several years, its merger with another firm in October 2012 affected its in-process site redesign.

“When you throw a merger into the mix, everything has to get shuffled,” O’Leary Cathell says.

The firm made some cosmetic updates when the merger occurred, but had to

temporarily put the redesign on the back burner—which may also be a good option for firms experiencing major staffing or management changes.

“We had to establish who we were before we moved forward with the site,” O’Leary Cathell says.

BE PROACTIVE ABOUT IMPENDING LEGISLATION.

“One of the biggest challenges we had when building the site was to make sure we considered all accessibility requirements, analytics, SEO, cookie laws and budget,” O’Leary Cathell says.

The firm’s approval committee included Internet-savvy attorneys who work on privacy, intellectual property, business law and regulation matters. But even with the most experienced approval group, new rules can throw a wrench into project plans.

Partway through Fasken Martineau’s redesign, the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) released a new cookies directive, requiring website owners to seek users’ consent before they could tag the visitor.

Although the compliance deadline hadn’t arrived yet, the firm decided to turn off any parts of the site that used cookies before its launch.

“We had to circle back,” Turko says. “It was a conservative reaction, but we opted to remove some of the planned functionality to ensure we weren’t violating the directive.”

LAUNCHING

A SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH.

Once your site has been created, tested and approved, it's ready to go live.

To wrap up the launch, your project team only needs to complete a few more tasks:

SELL YOUR NEW SITE TO EMPLOYEES.

Once the site has launched, be aware that all firm members may not know.

“Take time to educate them and get them enthused,” Turko suggests. “People can resist change because it’s unfamiliar. Show them how the site will benefit them day-to-day and how they can take advantage of new features to be more productive.”

ENSURE YOU ARE INTEGRATED.

If you’ve significantly changed the look and feel of your website, you may want to think about updating your social media properties and also email templates. A more integrated, consistent look and feel will create a more powerful launch. Also, be sure to let clients know that you have a new website, particularly if you are offering enhanced content and functionality.

ANTICIPATE FUTURE NEEDS.

O’Leary Cathell recommends attending website design and marketing webinars and conferences and reading articles on web trends to stay informed and predict what clients will want to see.

“Don’t just build for what works today,” O’Leary Cathell says. “It’s critical to understand trends and forecasts for business and law firm websites—that’s the only way to stay ahead of the curve.”

MAIN TAIN ING

LIFE AFTER THE HONEYMOON.

Your site is now live—congratulations!
But don't shut your computer down
just yet.

There are a few additional considerations to keep in mind after your fantastic new site debuts—such as:

BUDGET FOR ONGOING MAINTENANCE.

“It’s important for clients to mark money at the end of a project to make changes that were unexpected or because things at the firm have changed,” Fieldman says. “Invariably, those things happen.”

She also suggests budgeting for enhancements after the site goes live.

“You don’t launch a site and walk away from it,” she says. “It should be a continuously improved, living, breathing thing.”

Fieldman recommends dedicating 10 to 20 percent of your overall website budget to annual website assistance going forward.

MANAGE DATA STORAGE AND PRIVACY CONCERNS.

“A lot of times, when the law changes, U.S. firms that have offices elsewhere in the world don’t know how to follow the law,” O’Laughlin says. “We tell them about the

changes, and they’re often surprised and caught off guard.”

Web vendors can also help clients stay compliant with local laws.

“We just had a client open an office in Florida,” O’Laughlin says. “We had to check with the Florida state bar to see what advertising language had to be in the site’s footer. Firm marketing departments often don’t know about or wouldn’t think about those kinds of issues.”

AND PREPARE FOR POST-LAUNCH UPDATES.

If Twitter, for example, releases a new interface code that affects the way its feeds appear on external sites, service providers like One North can help firms stay informed about the update.

“Everyone understands that there are going to be changes after the launch,” O’Laughlin says. “Often, it involves partners seeing it for the first time—or items that were put off during an earlier phase of the redesign.”

SO, GO FORTH AND CREATE!

We know it’s going to be a wild ride. Whether this guide becomes your bible or your coaster, we hope you found some useful advice within it. Please feel free to reach out to any member of the One North team if you need a pep talk along the way. We’ve got your back!

ABOUT US

12

ABOUT ONE NORTH.

One North Interactive is an agency dedicated to serving the creative, strategic and technological needs of complex, relationship-based organizations. We create extraordinary interactive experiences that deepen the relationship between professional service companies and their most important audiences. For more than 15 years, our team has launched hundreds of websites and other interactive solutions for our clients, including 40 percent of the top 250 law firms, and our work is consistently recognized with outstanding website awards. Headquartered in Chicago, One North employs more than 70 innovative minds. For more information, go to www.onenorth.com.

KUDOS TO OUR EXPERTS.

Thank you to the experts who provided best practices and insights. We appreciate your input, and without it, this guide would not have been possible.

MARIE ALVAREZ-YAPANA

Marketing Manager at Loeb & Loeb LLP

SUSAN BRADLEY

Senior Account Manager at
One North Interactive

ALYSON FIELDMAN

Account Supervisor at One North Interactive

JULIE GURNEY

Senior Marketing Communications Manager
at Benesch Friedlander Coplan & Aronoff LLP

GAIL HAGEMAN

Director, Marketing Operations &
Communications at Steptoe & Johnson LLP

RYAN HORNER

Managing Director, Technology at
One North Interactive

SARAH LEVINE MEYER

Manager, Strategy at One North Interactive

MICHAEL O'LAUGHLIN

Architect at One North Interactive

JENNIFER O'LEARY CATHELL

eMarketing, Design & Brand Manager
at Edwards Wildman Palmer LLP

KALEV PEEKNA

Managing Director, Strategy at
One North Interactive

DESIREE TURKO

Manager, Digital Strategy at
Fasken Martineau DuMoulin LLP

QUICK SEO TIPS.

1

Consider your overall social media strategy—connecting to Twitter, Facebook and other site updates can help increase SEO.

2

Publish columns as a guest blogger for other sites that link back to the firm's site.

3

Pepper your text with industry-appropriate keywords—but don't just upload meaningless content that's stuffed with search-friendly words.

4

Update content frequently. "Keep it fresh," O'Laughlin says. "Don't just write service descriptions and leave them up for 5 years."

The image features a dark gray background with several white geometric elements. In the top left, there is a white parallelogram and a series of thin, parallel white lines extending from it. In the top right, a series of thin, parallel white lines form a jagged, sawtooth-like pattern. In the middle left, a solid white circle is partially visible. In the bottom left, a series of thin, parallel white lines extend diagonally upwards. In the bottom right, the text "ONE NORTH" is displayed in a bold, white, sans-serif font, with a horizontal line separating the two words.

ONE
NORTH