



actionstep

10 Social Media Dos and Don'ts for Law Firms



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Social media such as LinkedIn and Twitter provide a great platform for law firms, individual lawyers and other professionals to build their profile & position their expertise in a specific industry, topic or area of law.

Keep these four goals top of mind as you develop your social media approach & skills.

Purpose: Why are you using this platform? Have a clear purpose

Audience: Who are you talking to? Say something of value to people that matter to you

Engage: Extend your relationships online and spark new ones by being active, not passive

Care: Keep your professional goals in mind at all times

As a simple guide, these 10 dos and don'ts will help you get the most from your time on social media.

DO

Remember your audience

Who do you want to follow you?

Keep the tone and topics aligned to your target audience and business development goals.

Write with a business not a legal audience in mind.

What do your clients and contacts talk about? What do your potential clients want to hear about?

Focus on issues related to your business, sectors of value to you and the topics covered in recent company articles/posts to demonstrate consistent expertise.



DON'T

Follow just anyone

Carefully curate the list of the accounts you follow. Create a “watch list” of news, industry/trade associations, clients, companies of interest, people you find informative, peers (to see what they are up to!) and international firms and maybe just add a few wildcards for fun!

Ideally your feed gives you information on the business of law and trends in legal tech, commercial insights and news from business you would not get elsewhere.

Don't automatically follow back those who follow you. There are lots of accounts who will follow you temporarily for commercial reasons (but drop you later).

DO

Set expectations

What do you expect to achieve from your time on LinkedIn/twitter? Are you using it for news? Learning about an industry? Engagement with clients/targets? Profiling an area of expertise/new practice?

Be clear about your purpose and develop your activity with that in mind.

Followers also should know what to expect from you – we recommend:

3-5 reposts per week. 1-5 original posts. Topics aligned to your business goals.



DON'T

Expect immediate results

Building anything of value takes effort and time.
Building your social media profile takes time.

Do not be discouraged if there is little initial interaction.

Seek internal or external marketing support if you are struggling.

Keep on posting relevant content, in a consistent pattern and your followers list will grow.

Ideally within a year, you will follow half the amount of people who follow you.

DO

Follow the rules

For example, stick to short posts on Twitter to stay within their 280 character limit.

Word abbreviations are expected on social media accounts - orgs, prof., b/c, w/o, etc.



DON'T

Try to be perfect

The beauty of social is its immediacy and authenticity.

Grammar and sentence structure may suffer to allow you to get your point across in short sentences.

DO

Shorten links

Save character space and track link activity using link shorteners like Bitly (paste your link into bitly and it provides a short url to use).



DON'T

Ignore @mentions

Don't forget to check your notifications for @mentions on your social handles and replies to comments you made on other posts.

DO

Join and start conversations

Balance owned content (content you produce – articles and commentary) and shared content (reposts, comments on others' feeds).

Seasoned social media users will feel comfortable opening up questions to their followers, groups and inviting debate.



DON'T

Forget your insights

Serial reposters are viewed as hiding or piggybacking other people's content and effort unless you add your own views or individual comment, even if it's very simple. eg:

“We see xxxx as increasingly important to xxx clients – valuable research on this from @company”

DO

Name drop

Always use @mention when reposting or to reference or credit other authors, companies, individuals. This calls their attention to your post and encourages engagement from them.



DON'T

Inadvertently plagiarize

If you do not @ people when quoting or referencing their content, you are essentially claiming credit.

DO

Post live

Post about event attendance in advance “Looking forward to...”

Repost 1-2 organizer posts.

At and after event: take photos of screens/slides/stage/anything of interest, quote speakers, name inspirational concepts, summarise discussions, @ other attendees.

Your firm account should repost any interesting team-member posts about events.



DON'T

Overdo event posts

The goal at events is to show connection to your business community, be informative and summarize your key takeaways.

It can be tempting to snap and post more than your audience will be interested in. If you are unsure, wait until after event and choose 2-3 takeaways to post about.

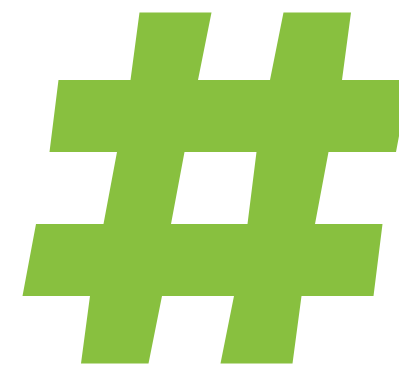
1-4 posts per event are plenty. Longer conferences merit more.

DO

Use hashtags to highlight key themes

Use # to be part of trending themes, identify campaigns or stories or to categorise your post topic. This helps social media users search for relevant topics.

Hashtags can be within your post sentence to save space or placed at the end.



DON'T

Disrupt readability

When you use #hashtags in your posts it shows up as linked text. Too many links make messages hard to read and can disrupt the power of the message.

Hard to read posts will be scrolled over. Pick one or two #hashtags that are relevant to your post, and place them wisely.

DO

Engage your community

Comment, share, favourite, repost posts of those in your community.

Be positive – everyone enjoys support and encouragement. Say thank you for positive comments.

Reposts can be used to show support for a colleague, client, or a company you admire.



DON'T

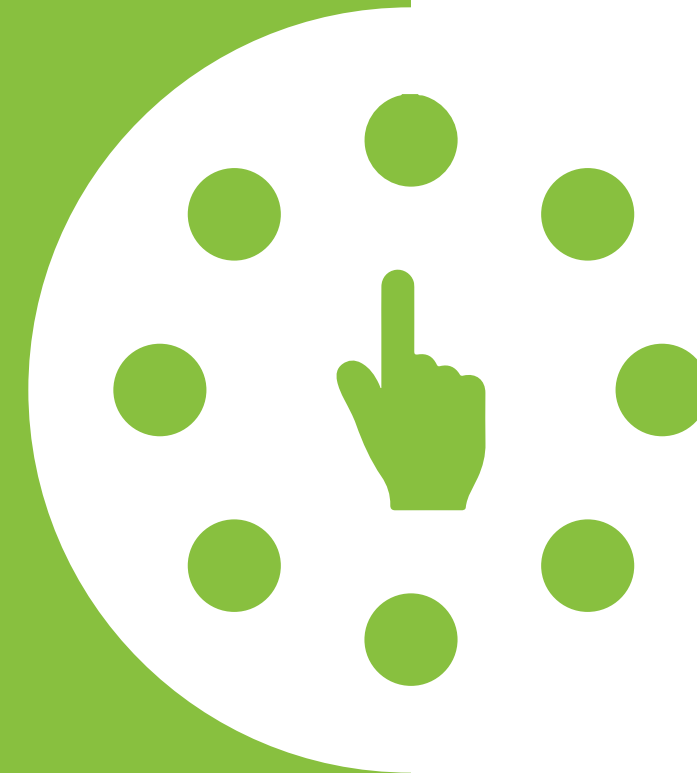
Engage the haters

Occasionally companies get negative commentary on specific posts or general service comments. It is best to either ignore or stay positive eg: “we welcome healthy debate where opinions differ to ours, but in our experience...” or take it offline: “we would be happy to discuss this with you in person”

DO

Vary content type

Use a mix of text, summaries, quotes, key points, excerpts, pics, video, whitepapers and graphics to give your feed variety and interest.



DON'T

Be too needy

You are hoping to earn people's continued interest and following. Don't explicitly ask for follows or clicks or other "salesy" calls to actions other than providing links. Avoid phrases like "click here".