

USING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR LEGAL PROFESSIONALS

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Social media has become a fundamental part of modern society. Social media is so ubiquitous that it has become a significant factor in people's initial professional perceptions of you, the trustworthiness of your firm, and the marketing of law firms to old and new generations.

This article will discuss the various social media platforms available, best practices to conduct oneself on each platform, privacy policies to be aware of, and how one can market their firm effectively through social media.

PLATFORMS AND PURPOSES

Social media platforms encompass many genres and have each developed their specific demographic audiences. This section will review the top six social media platforms and how they differ.

FACEBOOK

User count: 3.05 Billion (monthly active users as of October 2023)

Facebook is one of the best-known and developed social media platforms globally. It hosts many features that allow for specific interactions – selling goods on their marketplace, catching up on a friend's life through their live feed, personally messaging friends to communicate, marketing, etc.

Quick facts on Facebook's demographics and other details:

- Most Facebook users are aged 25 to 34 (49.3%).
- 69% of U.S. adults use Facebook.
- Users aged 65 and older are the currently fastest-growing Facebook demographic.
- Facebook offers <u>marketing services</u> that provide robust advertisement targeting services, allowing a person or firm to advertise to their core audiences effectively.

INSTAGRAM

User count: 2 Billion (monthly active users as of October 2023)

Instagram is best known for its youthful user base and domination within the mobile app sphere. The platform focuses on the ability to share photos and short videos with other users, alongside the ability to personally message others, perform marketing, tap into local and global ongoing trends through hashtags, and now even the ability to shop off of the platform.

Quick facts on Instagram's demographics and other details:

- Most Instagram users are aged 25 to 34 (30.1%).
- 40% of U.S. adults use Instagram.
- Instagram is American teens' most used social media platform as of 2020.
- Instagram's <u>advertising services</u> offer a wide range of ways to reach your core audience story ads that "connect with the 500M+ accounts using stories daily," photo ads, video ads, and more.

LINKEDIN

User count: 1 Billion (as of January 2024)

LinkedIn is a social media platform focused on professional networking. Its features — connections, CV sharing, blogging interface, and profile building— are centered around helping users publicly show off their best professional traits to clients and hirers.

Quick facts on LinkedIn's demographics and other details:

- 28%] of U.S. Adults use LinkedIn
- Most LinkedIn users are 25 to 34 (60%) or 35 to 54 (15%).
- Sixty-seven million companies are listed on LinkedIn.
- <u>LinkedIn Marketing Solutions</u> offers the ability to create targeted ads that can reach up to 200 million users in the U.S. (as of August 2023).

TIKTOK

User count: 1.21 Billion (as of October 2023)

TikTok is a rapidly rising social networking app focused on short-format video sharing. The app focuses on providing the content most relevant to its users' interests. Specifically, the app learns your interests by using a hashtag system that helps define the content shown on a user's "for you" page. TikTok features short-format videos; users can comment, forward videos, and directly message other users.

Quick facts on TikTok's demographics and other details:

- 41% of U.S. adults use TikTok.
- 66% of 18- to 19-year-olds in the U.S. use TikTok.
- Between July 2919 and August 2022, the percentage of <u>U.S. adults using TikTok increased by a factor of ten</u>, from 3% to 30%.
- Among adults, most TikTok users are in the 18-24 age demographic (36.2%), followed by the 25-34 age demographic (32.1%), then those 35-44 (16.5%), 45-54 (8.7%), and 55% (6.4%).
- 90% of TikTok users engage with the app every day.
- <u>TikTok advertising</u> offers the ability to create a marketing campaign objective, select a targeted demographic, designate a specific budget for the campaign, and actively connect with all users who interact with your video-based campaign.

X (FORMERLY TWITTER)

User count: 541 Million (monthly users as of July 2023)

X remains a strong competitor within the social media sphere and is well-known for the various major real-world announcements originating on the platform. The site can create and reply to posts, threads, and direct messages. Like Instagram, the platform allows one to see trending events through its hashtag system.

Quick facts on X's demographics and other details:

- 23% of U.S. adults use X.
- 30% of X users are 25-34 years old, 28% are 18-24, and 18% are 35-44.
- X's <u>ad services</u> allow users to select a core audience for targeted marketing and amplify their tweets and account's general visibility.

YOUTUBE

User count: 2.51 Billion (as of October 2023)

YouTube is the internet's premier video-sharing platform. YouTube is increasingly prevalent in every facet of day-to-day life as it replaces television as the source of entertainment, news, information, and advertisements for many. It can create and upload video content, run marketing campaigns, and interact with your audience through comments.

Quick facts on YouTube's demographics and other details:

- Most YouTube users are in the 15-35 age range (77%).
- 81% of U.S. adults use YouTube.
- 63% of business-to-business marketers used YouTube in 2022.
- YouTube advertising allows marketers to create advertising campaigns that target specific demographics and easily measure each campaign's results

USING SOCIAL MEDIA - PERSONALLY & PROFESSIONALLY

An essential part of being present and marketing on social media is knowing how to use it effectively and professionally. Each platform has unique considerations - advantages and pitfalls - when attempting to maximize you and your firm's professional image.

FACEBOOK

An essential part of operating a personal Facebook page as a legal professional is being mindful and careful about your posts. You don't have to avoid ever posting anything personal, but you should always be aware of what your post will say about you as a person. It is increasingly easy and common for clients to snoop on whom they do business with due to so much information now being online.

A good formula for conducting oneself on Facebook is to focus most of your posts on relaying who you are and the qualities that make an ideal person to be either a friend or a client of. Don't feel like you have to neuter yourself to an "artificial" perfect self though! Feel free to voice your opinion and tell jokes, but when doing either, you must be aware of what you're saying and how that reflects on your character and affects your audience. For example, your jokes should tend towards "dad" and not dirty. A poorly thought and risqué joke can easily damage your reputation and alienate your audience and prospective clients. For the other part of the formula, sprinkle in posts that remind your audience that you're a legal professional and what you do at your firm. This sprinkling of posts will reinforce that you're a professional and reassure them that you both enjoy and work hard at your job.

One can see a cautionary tale of the dangers of non-professional Facebook conduct through the recent story of a Nashville attorney who posted advice on "how to make deadly force look like self-defense" for a Facebook friend. He claimed the joke was "dark humor," but the Tennessee Supreme Court saw it differently and suspended his license for a year for his dangerous and unprofessional conduct. Their opinion on the case states, "Lawyers who choose to post on social media must realize they are handling live ammunition; doing so requires care and judgment."

INSTAGRAM

A critical decision in using Instagram is whether you will keep your account public or private. A public account is accessible and seeable by anyone, while only personally accepted friends can see a private account. The advantages of a public account include a greater ability for potential clients and colleagues to discover your account and the allowance of a public platform through which to promote your brand. The advantages of a private account are that you don't have to as thoughtfully curate what you post and repost since fewer people will see it, and it allows you to control who precisely can view your account.

For posting on Instagram, you should try to make sure most of your posts show off your key aspects. Possible examples include posting about your hobbies, major life events, time with friends, day-to-day work, family, etc. A caveat on opening a window into your personal world is that you must be careful not to get too comfortable on the

platform and upload posts that somebody could perceive as unfavorable or usable against you. An example of what you shouldn't post would be you overly intoxicated with friends and coworkers. A potential client or current employer looking at such a post could easily be rubbed the wrong way by it and assume you lack professionalism.

When interacting with the story feature, make sure to be aware of what you are personally posting or reposting. Individual posts on your story should show off your best self and not spout potentially alienating things – hateful comments, crude jokes, overly-political statements, etc. If you're reposting another person's content on your story, make sure the post reflects your character and that the account you're reposting isn't controversial. For example, you may find an account that posts relatable humor on being an attorney and choose to repost it so your followers can see it – seemingly a relatively harmless decision. Still, you must be positive that the joke doesn't harm a person's perception of your professionalism and that the account you're reposting doesn't include controversial posts outside the one you're reposting.

LINKEDIN

LinkedIn is undoubtedly the social media platform you should most carefully curate, as it is a platform focused on networking within a heavily professional framework. You should view LinkedIn as a secondary CV and treat it with the same seriousness as your resume.

Another significant component of LinkedIn is its networking features. When connecting with other legal professionals, make sure to only connect to persons with whom you've interacted before sending a connection request. The best people to initially connect with are other persons at your firm, peers from law school, and other lawyers you know. Alongside building a list of professional contacts, you should engage with ongoing discussion posts on LinkedIn. This strategy will help build up your reputation as an expert and increase the number of persons outside your circle of connections who know of you. Make sure to only join in relevant discussions that you have something valuable to contribute to, and not just comment on every discussion post possible for the sake of commenting.

TIKTOK

TikTok is a rapidly rising social media app that requires careful engagement. Many popular trends on the platform lean heavily towards the non-professional, so either repurpose these trends towards more professional means or find compelling ways to engage your audience without relying on ongoing trends. A common tactic attorneys use on the platform is to offer general legal advice in a "talking head" format or react to a trending video through an analytical and legal lens.

Also, a point worth considering is the give-and-take game that creating videos on TikTok can be for legal professionals. Suppose you give in to trends to appeal to younger demographics. In that case, you may be taking away your appeal to older audiences that may perceive you as less professional due to engaging with activities not perceived as professional by their demographic – lip-syncing, dancing, memes, etc.

X (FORMERLY TWITTER)

With Elon Musk's purchase of Twitter, which he renamed X, the site has become as much a news story in itself as for the content its users publish. Under Musk, <u>imposter accounts</u>, including ones with formerly-verified "blue checkmarks," have increased. Additionally, Musk's comments have caused big-named advertisers to cut spending on

<u>X ads</u>. These controversies coincide with a drop in daily active users in the year since the ownership change, down 13% from 140 million to 121 million.

The platform remains (in)famous for the number of people who have had old posts dug up and brought to light. These old posts often contain non-professional conduct that, more often than not, results in real-world repercussions for the individual – loss of friendships, firing, etc. Make sure to regularly review your post history and delete anything from the past you now find regrettable. If comfortable, you should also apologize for any egregious old posts and reinforce you are a much different person now.

YOUTUBE

If one engages with YouTube as a creator, the platform quickly becomes one you must run as meticulously as a LinkedIn account. The video format inherent to the site opens a much wider window into your soul for the average viewer. Videos allow a user to hear your voice, see who you are physically, how you act on camera, and what excites you. For example, an Instagram post of you explaining one of your hobbies conveys many fewer personal details for a person to judge you by than a YouTube video doing the same thing. If you plan to post videos meant solely for close friends and yourself, make sure to make them private or unlisted. Look at what other attorneys are doing on the platform, home in on what is doing the best, and build upon what you observe to create your unique videos.

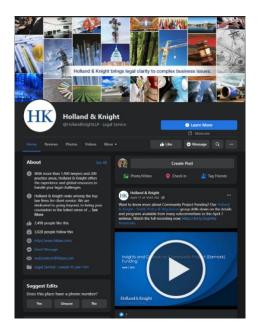
USING SOCIAL MEDIA - MARKETING YOUR FIRM AND YOURSELF

Social media platforms offer various ways for legal professionals to dive headfirst into marketing their firm and themselves. This section will cover the more technical side of social media marketing and engaging with advertising services.

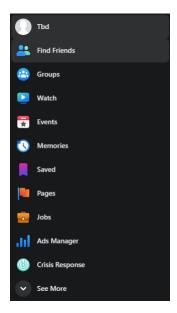
FACEBOOK

Marketing on Facebook relies on taking advantage of a Facebook page's affordances and advertising services.

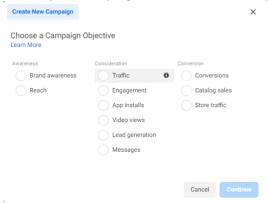
Firstly, you should set up a Facebook page for your firm if one does not already exist. The page should both be optimized and filled with relevant media. Specifically, the page should feature your firm's released content and upcoming events. The page should also have dedicated members of the firm running it who can engage with the public through answering their questions, sharing stories, building up creditability for the firm, and overall showing that the firm dedicates itself to being active on social media and engaging with present and future clients.



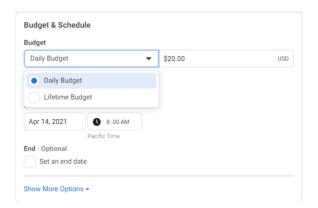
Secondly, alongside a well-maintained Facebook page, your firm should also take advantage of the advertising services offered by Facebook. To start and manage an advertising campaign, you should head to the "Ads Manager" option in Facebook's main drop-down menu.



From here, one should set the marketing objective of your advertising campaign. There is a wide range of objectives to choose from, ranging from reaching people near your firm to sending people to your firm's website. Also, Facebook will ask you for the name of your campaign and other necessary details.



Now, you will set up the budget for your ad campaign. You must choose to operate your campaign under a daily or lifetime budget.



A daily budget allows you to set a daily limit on the amount of money you spend per day on the ads you run. Your campaign withdraws from this daily budget whenever someone clicks on your ad. The amount Facebook withdraws depends on the bid amount you set for the ads – you can choose to have this automatically set by Facebook or set it manually. Once the daily budget is met, your ads will stop appearing on the site for the rest of the day.

A lifetime budget allows you to set a specific budget for the entirety of the campaign. You can either have the campaign continuously withdraw from the lifetime budget till it runs out or schedule out its usage. The scheduling option lets you set your campaign's start and end date. Facebook will automatically base its use of your budget around the dates specified to ensure it runs for the time specified.

Then, set the target demographics for your campaign, such as thirty-year-olds living in San Francisco or divorced individuals residing in the suburbs.



Finally, you will create your Facebook ad itself. You choose between creating one from scratch or promoting one of the existing posts on your firm's Facebook page. Ensure your ad is as engaging as possible to succeed in its purpose – eye-catching title, compelling image, and brand promotion. Now, with your ad created, place your Facebook ad campaign order, and track how your now ongoing social media advertising campaign is going!

INSTAGRAM

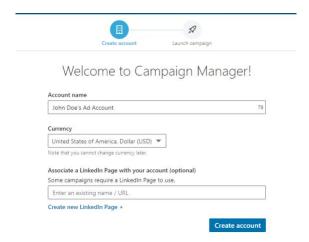
To begin an advertising campaign on Instagram, you must set up a specific business profile. The steps to switch from a personal account to a professional one, are simple, and <u>explained by Instagram</u>. Having a Facebook page linked to your business profile helps you access a broader array of features in advertising.

Once your business profile is set up, you can begin advertising on Instagram using the Facebook Ads Manager or by promoting existing posts on Instagram. If opting to perform a more comprehensive campaign, then Facebook Ads Manager is recommended (refer to the previous Facebook advertising section for instructions on operating the manager). To promote specific posts to a broader audience, navigate to "Promotions" and click "Create Promotions." You will then be prompted to choose the post you want to promote and provide basic advertising details (target audience, budget, and promotion duration).

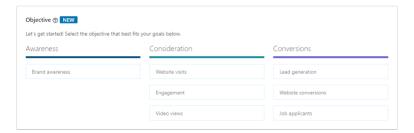
LINKEDIN

Creating an advertising campaign on LinkedIn is straightforward and quickly done in just a few steps.

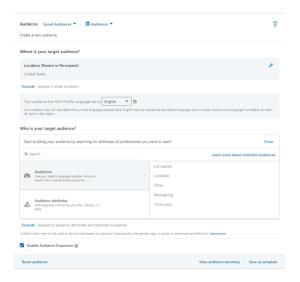
First, you must sign into the <u>LinkedIn campaign manager</u>, which requires an existing LinkedIn page to operate effectively. If you have not signed into the campaign manager before, it will prompt you to fill out some basic information before setting up your first campaign.



Second, you will now select the <u>objective</u> of your campaign. Objectives center around the actions you want your audience to take after seeing your advertisement.



Third, you will refine your campaign by setting up a target audience. LinkedIn offers extensive options (job experience, interests, education, job title, etc.) in choosing your target audience.



Now, you will be required to select the ad format of your campaign. The formats available depend on the objective you chose for your campaign. The ad format options are sponsored content (single image, carousel ads, and video

ads), LinkedIn messaging ads (conversation ads), text ads (right rail and banner ads), and dynamic ads (follower, spotlight, and content ads).



Then, you will create the budget for your advertising campaign. LinkedIn recommends taking a 70/30 split approach to budgeting your first campaign. A 70/30 split means 70% of your budget drives bottom-funnel conversions¹, and 30% drives top-funnel conversions². LinkedIn offers further budgeting advice here. At this point, you will also set up your campaign's schedule.

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Finally, you can create and promote advertisements through LinkedIn's campaign manager. The advertisements you will create and promote will directly depend on the ad format options you chose previously.

TIKTOK

Creating a TikTok advertising campaign is a quick and straightforward process that allows one to jump right into launching a campaign.

You must first create a <u>TikTok For Business</u> account to access the TikTok Ads Manager. Once you can access the Ad Manager's dashboard, navigate to the "Campaign" section and select the "Create" button.

TikTok will first ask you to choose the objective of your campaign — awareness, consideration, or conversion. Then, it will prompt you to pick a title for your campaign and set up its budgeting type. TikTok offers three budgeting options — no limit, daily budget, or lifetime budget. Setting no limit will result in, as the name implies, there being no restriction on how much money your campaign utilizes. A daily budget sets a maximum daily expenditure on ads, while a lifetime budget sets a total budget for the entire campaign.

Next, TikTok will request that you fill out the specifics of your campaign. First, decide the placement of your advertisements – in-feed video, top view, hashtag challenge, or branded effect. In-feed videos are advertisements that appear as users scroll through videos. Top view ads appear when users first open the app. Hashtag challenges

¹ Bottom-funneling means turning a potential customer into an actual one, usually targeted at individuals already aware of your brand or enticed by your previous top-funnel conversions.

² Top-funneling means building awareness of your brand and shaping perceptions of your company, usually targeted at individuals new to your brand.

allow you to promote a challenge that directly encourages your audience to engage with through their own response videos. Branded effects are augmented reality filters users can use in their videos.

Second, fill out various ad details - promotion type, display name, category, etc.

Third, TikTok allows you to target your ads to specific audiences and demographics.

Finally, set up your specific budget and schedule before launching your campaign. The main decisions with your budget are your bidding strategy and the bid amount. Your bidding strategy will determine your ad's average cost per view and your bid amount, the actual amount you're willing to pay per view. With budgeting complete, you can now create your advertisements, upload them to TikTok, and start your campaign.

X (FORMERLY TWITTER)

X offers many advertising features for anyone seeking to run a campaign.

To begin advertising on X, you should first create an <u>advertising account</u> and link it to your own X account. Once set up, you will have access to X's Ads Manager, which you will use to launch your campaign.

Once you begin a new campaign on the Ads Manager, you will be requested to choose the objective of your campaign. X offers three broad categories of objectives – awareness³, consideration⁴, and conversion⁵.

After this, you will be directed to the "Campaign set up" page, where you name your campaign, set its budget, choose how you will pay for it, and when it will be scheduled to launch. The budget depends entirely on how much you are willing to pay daily and how much you are ready to pay for the campaign. After this stage, you will be offered the opportunity to set up ad groups for your campaign, but unless you are already confident in advertising, it may be best to just stick to a singular ad group for now. You will be asked to select your target audiences and demographics for your campaign. You can narrow your audience down through various means, such as by gender, age, location, interests, etc. Next, you will select where you would like your X advertisements to appear for users – users' timelines, profiles and tweet detail pages, and search results are the options. Finally, you will be allowed to launch your campaign and begin to promote yourself and your law firm.

YOUTUBE

YouTube is a platform hosted by Google, and thus, one must use Google Ads service to run a campaign on it.

The first step in advertising on YouTube is creating a <u>Google Ads</u> account. The process is straightforward; Google walks you through it step-by-step. Once you set up your account, navigate to your "Tools" and "Linked Accounts." Here, you will link your YouTube account to your Google Ads account.

The next step is navigating to the dashboard of your Google Ads account, then to the "Campaigns" tab on the left, and then selecting "New Campaign." From here, Google prompts you to choose the objective of your ad campaign – the list of which is here. Google then asks you to select the format of your campaign, which will be video.

YouTube offers three video-specific ad formats: TrueView ads, non-skippable in-stream ads, and bumper ads. TrueView ads are likely the ones you personally experience most often when using YouTube. They are the ads that appear before, during, and after videos and feature a skip button for users. These advertisements will also appear in user search results and on the YouTube homepage. Non-skippable in-stream ads also show before, during, and

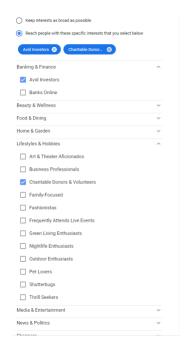
³ Awareness means building general brand awareness and reaching as many potential customers as possible with a specific message.

⁴ Consideration encourages users to discover more about your business and build their trust in you as a company.

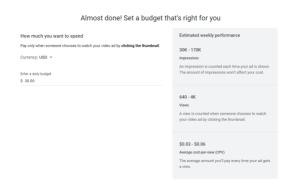
⁵ Conversion encourages users to visit your website or app and do something (purchase a service, contact you, read an article, etc.)

after videos but are not skippable by users. This ad format restricts videos to a maximum run length of 15 seconds. Bumper ads are concise six-second videos that appear at the beginning of videos and aren't skippable by users.

At this stage, you will decide where your advertisements will appear on the platform and your target audience. First, you will determine the general areas in which your video will appear – YouTube search results, YouTube videos, or video partners on the display network (sites outside of YouTube). Then, select the language your customers speak and the locations you would like your ad to appear. Second, decide the inventory type you want your video to appear alongside – expanded, standard, or limited inventory. The narrower your inventory, the more your advertisements are shielded from appearing on top of videos that cover sensitive topics and contain crude content (profanity, sex, violence, etc.) Third, YouTube can exclude certain content, such as recent tragedies and conflicts, that you don't want your videos to appear on top of. The platform also allows you to avoid having your ads appear on specific types of videos – gaming, embedded, and live streams. Finally, you can use Google's in-depth targeted advertisement system to target your ideal audience demographics.



Now, with the ad format and the target audience of your campaign chosen, you will set up the budget and schedule for your campaign. Your campaign's expenses will depend upon your bidding strategy, which is how much you're willing to pay each time someone views your ad. Many possible strategies exist, so I recommend <u>researching which best aligns</u> with your campaign goals.



The final steps are setting up keywords and the video you want to use for the campaign. Assigning relevant keywords to your ad campaign will help YouTube place your ads alongside the ideal content on the platform. With all the other details of your campaign sorted, the last step is to simply select the videos you would like to use in your campaign.

TAKEAWAYS

Here are a few key takeaways for your professional social media use:

- If you want to worry as little as possible about curating a professional social media account, then make sure to privatize as many accounts as possible and be careful about whom you let view your account.
- You must be conscious of the aspects of yourself that you show off on social media.
- Each social media platform offers unique challenges and benefits in staying professional and reaching out to target audiences.
- Setting up social media ad campaigns isn't as complex as it may seem, and you can do it in fewer than ten steps.