

# How Attorneys Can Use Off-Page SEO To Attract Clients



With off-page SEO, your website and social media profiles play a supporting role, at least initially. It requires a bit of upfront work, but it's a powerful way to generate traffic, leads, and revenue for your law firm.

Here's the best part about off-page SEO. It permanently eliminates your dependence on third-party lead sources and providers.

## What Is Off-Page SEO?

Off-page SEO involves strategies outside your website to improve its position in search rankings, such as earning backlinks from reputable sources and managing your firm's online reputation.

Ronell Smith, writing for [Moz](#), describes off-page SEO as:

The act of optimizing your brand's online and offline footprint through the use of content, relationships, and links to create an optimal

experience for prospects and search engine crawl bots. It typically leads to gradual increases in positive brand mentions, search rankings, traffic to your site, and conversions.”

It’s an integral part of search engine optimization.

The term *off-page* refers to third-party signals used by people and search engines to vet the quality of your business. These signals are ranking factors. Google uses more than 200 [different ranking factors](#) in their algorithm to assess the strength and trustworthiness of your law firm.

## **Why Attorneys Should Care About Off-Page SEO**

This terminology can be confusing for many attorneys, as Smith demonstrated in an exchange he had with his client, an attorney:

For the attorney seated in front of me in my kid’s elementary school lunchroom, I might as well have just told him the earth is flat.

‘That makes no sense to me,’ he said, pushing his chin forward and tilting his head as if waiting for me to admit that I was pulling his leg. ‘You mean, there’s all this stuff [SEO] does on my site? And there is the stuff that we — me, my team and [SEO] — should be doing off our site as well? That’s like telling me, ‘It’s not enough that you live and pay for a nice house in a gated community. You also need to guard the gate to the community and pick up trash along the road leading up to your driveway.’”

So Smith reframed his client’s metaphor a bit.

“Not caring about off-site SEO is like having that great house in the gated community, but none of your friends want to visit because they’ve heard from others that it smells gross on the inside, and no one they talk to can either confirm or deny it. It’s not enough to only care about your website/brand or your house/neighborhood; you must always be working to enhance its reputation to ensure others will desire to visit/learn more about it.”

This is you. Your clients don’t have the knowledge, tools, or experience they need to evaluate your law firm properly. In any city, every city, there are 60 to 100

attorneys in your practice area, *begging for your client's attention*.

It's overwhelming. Choosing an attorney is not at all like hiring a consultant or selecting an accountant. Most of the time, your clients arrive with pain, problems, and distress. On some level, many of these clients are facing the fight of their lives. They're looking for a protector who is willing to defend their interests. If they get this wrong, they lose everything.

This is why off-page SEO is so essential — prospective clients can't afford to take a chance on that great house in a gated community on the off chance that it smells gross on the inside. It's too much of a risk.

## Is Off-Page SEO Worth It for Attorneys?

With off-page SEO, clients can use third-party resources to assess, vet, and verify important details about your law firm without your knowledge. Reports that are positive, consistent, and exceptional draw clients to your law firm automatically.

Attorneys can use off-page SEO to:

- Attract your ideal group of prospective clients (those who are willing and able to spend)
- Crowd out libel and vitriol from disgruntled clients
- Reduce your cost per lead ([CPL](#))
- Increase your return on ad spend ([ROAS](#))
- Boost law firm revenue year-over-year
- Create leverage, so you're able to say no to disagreeable or costly clients
- Decrease the reliance on individual rainmakers or partners
- Reduce client poaching
- Increase client loyalty and demand for services over time

You can do all this and more, but is all the extra work worth it?

It's no secret that many attorneys hate sales and marketing. John Cunningham at the Legal Marketing Reader [lists the following reasons](#) for this hatred:

1. Clients hate being sold.
2. Sales and marketing is a violation of our professional ethics.
3. Your time is better spent on billable work.
4. You don't know what you're doing so you could do more harm than good.
5. You went to law school to practice law, not build a business.
6. Marketing doesn't apply to attorneys since you don't sell a physical product.

7. Sales and marketing is outside your comfort zone.
8. You're too busy to market your law firm.
9. All of your new clients come from referrals.
10. You already know how to market your law firm.

These are all legitimate objections, and they all have reasonable solutions. There's a simple and efficient way to circumvent these problems while achieving the results off-page SEO provides.

### **Educate prospective clients.**

The scientific literature is clear on this. Our brains are hardwired to seek out and enjoy novelty. Research shows [novelty sparks exploration and learning](#). Education attracts prospective clients because it's the mechanism that meets your client's need for newness. What does this mean for attorneys and law firms?

### **There's no need to sell.**

If you meet your client's need for novelty and you're addressing the problems that [trigger](#) your client's [negative bias](#), you have the tools you need to attract their attention.

What does this mean? If you're a commercial real estate attorney, for example, you can educate prospective clients about:

- The consequences of poor due diligence (when purchasing property)
- Environmental factors that destroy your portfolio
- The must-have clauses your contracts and tenant leases should have to maximize protection
- Property defects that destroy investor cash flows
- Protecting your investment in a construction dispute
- Why your LLC can't protect your real estate business

Can you see what's happening?

In each of these examples, the emphasis is on *education*, not selling. Attracting clients, in this context, is all about following a four-step process:

1. Identifying your ideal client (e.g., revenue, problems, practice areas, temperament, etc.)
2. Surveying your ideal client to get a list of their desires, goals, fears, frustrations, and problems

3. Creating a list of ideal client hotspots (e.g., local venues, clubs, publishers, or tangential sources)
4. Creating content that addresses these desires, goals, fears, frustrations, and problems

That's it.

I'm oversimplifying here, but this is the basic foundation of off-page SEO. Let's look at the practical steps to follow when using off-page SEO to attract a steady stream of prospective clients.

## Using Off-Page SEO To Attract a Steady Stream of Law Firm Clients

Here are some practical steps you can follow to boost website traffic to your law firm. This list is not intended to be comprehensive; these are a few strategies based on a few factors:

- You're probably very busy
- Your advertising budget may be limited
- You need leads now
- You need leads consistently

Let's take a look at a few strategies you can use to generate leads immediately.

### Step #1: Advertise using the 60-30-10 framework.

Most attorneys lose money on advertising. They create ads, enter their credit card information, and send visitors to their homepage. As you'd expect, this fails to generate leads or produce revenue.

60-30-10 changes that.

It's a concept popularized (with slight differences) by Perry Marshall, Wordtracker, and Digital Marketer.

Here's how it works.

- **You spend 10% of your ad budget on Cold traffic.** You promote your content to highly targeted groups of local prospective clients who have never heard of you. You provide them with value in the form of education — a free tool, quiz, download, or content. If you have to lose money, you lose it

here to gain valuable insights everywhere else.

- **You use 30% of your ad budget on Warm traffic.** Any prospects from your cold traffic who are now: **(a.)** Warm – they’re familiar with your law firm, they visited your website, consumed your educational content, or viewed an ad, **(b.)** Interested enough in your offer to convert, and **(c.)** Committed enough to engage with you. Your warm traffic is far more likely to convert, so spending 30% of your ad budget on this audience makes sense.
- **You direct 60% of your ad budget on Hot traffic.** These are the prospective clients who have converted in some way — they came to your seminar, read your book, or subscribed to receive more education. They’re followers on social media; they’ve signed up for your email newsletter, etc. They’ve self-identified, showing a clear interest in the education your law firm provides.

Here’s a simple strategy you can use to create outstanding content.

Reach out to a group, publisher, or educator in your local community. Offer to provide their audience with a free seminar, talk, or workshop. Record your speech in its entirety. You now have a [lead magnet](#).

Now you’re ready to advertise.

1. **Create ads** on your platform of choice, e.g., Google ads, Facebook ads, LinkedIn ads, etc.
2. **Spend 10 percent of your ad budget** to advertise cold traffic to promote your education ([tag prospects who visit](#) your website)
3. **Spend 30 percent of your ad budget** advertising to those who visited your website (step two above). Make an irresistible offer (e.g., free consultation, enticing bonus, more education, a free copy of your book, etc.). Test your offers to see what works best. Tag prospects who accept your offer as “hot.”
4. **Spend 60 percent of your ad budget** advertising to hot prospects. Advertise your amazing reviews on Avvo, Yelp, or Google Reviews. Promote television appearances, awards won — anything that increases your authority, credibility, or prestige.
5. **Make another irresistible offer** (e.g., free consultation or enticing bonus). Be frank about your availability and the number of clients you can take on at any given time. If you have a specific amount of slots available for new clients, communicate that. Continue to promote your amazing reviews, linking prospects to your review profiles on third-party sites.

This five-step process generates leads quickly.

You can expand your ad budget and the platforms where you advertise as your budget allows.

## **Step #2: Build a strong review portfolio**

[Research shows](#) your law firm can lose as many as 69.9 percent of customers with four *negative aggregate reviews* in Google. Reviews can increase your [conversion rates](#) by as much as 270 percent! The better your client reviews, the easier it is for you to attract clients, leads, and sales.

Your online reviews amplify or nullify your prospective client's trust before you even meet them.

How do you use this? By automating review management. [Reputation management tools](#) make it easy to request, receive, and promote five-star reviews from established, A-player clients. Here's a simple strategy you can use to attract more reviews.

1. **You've finished your work with a client.** You email, text, or post a message with a straightforward question. "On a scale of 1 to 5 stars, 5 being excellent, how likely are you to recommend us?" This question helps you to segment clients who are hostile, apathetic, and believers.
2. **Create an email or text autoresponder sequence** that enables you to reach out to clients automatically. You'll be able to consistently request reviews without being directly involved. If clients are open to it, you'll receive reviews (and new clients via Google search and review platforms like Yelp) without being involved directly.
3. **Send hostiles to an internal review form.** These clients provide you with the feedback your firm needs to grow automatically. Send friendlies to the review site of your choice (e.g., Avvo, Yelp, Google Reviews), where they'll be able to share their story with other interested prospects.
4. **Thank friendlies and hostiles** for their willingness to share their feedback. Integrate their feedback, then show both groups that you took the time to act on their feedback.

Here's the thing about online reviews. They have a significant impact on your off-page SEO. Google treats reviews as a ranking signal, the stronger your review portfolio on sites like Yelp, Avvo, or Google, the more prospective clients you'll attract to your law firm.

### Step #3: Become a serial interviewee

If you've already reached out to groups, publishers, and educators in your local community, you should have a list of interview targets. These are local sources you can partner with to share educational content. With this strategy, you're pitching yourself as a guest for local venues and publishers. Possible sources include:

- Podcasts
- Radio shows
- Meetups
- Keynote speaking
- Becoming a panelist
- Television
- Webcasts
- Local AMA's ([Reddit style](#))
- Bonus guest at relevant workshops, panels, or events

Here's the key.

You'll need to deliver incredible value as an interviewee for this strategy to work. This strategy is all about wowing your audience. Instead of selling at the end of your presentation, offer more education via your website. When these prospective clients arrive on your site, tag and add them to your 60-30-10 framework.

Record all appearances.

You can turn these appearances into the future lead magnets, products, bonuses, or incentives to attract even more clients. Recording your educational materials means the value you provide is permanent and never-ending. Add your recorded content to your 60-30-10 framework.

Post your content on YouTube.

If it's video, make sure it's edited professionally. If it's audio, create simple slides that go along with your presentation. Optimize each video around a specific, high-traffic keyword. [Here's a comprehensive guide](#) showing you how to do just that.

Advertise each new video heavily, via the 60-30-10 framework, for the first 24 hours, to get your video ranked. Continue to promote your videos over time to

build your following. Embed your videos on your site and use it as a lead magnet. Be sure to tag the visitors that arrive on your website.

Reach out to each of the partners you collected in step one and ask them if they'd like a copy of the video or audio as well. Make it easy for your partners to share and promote the video; the easier it is for them to promote, the more likely they are to do it.

#### **Step #4: Optimize your Google my business account**

[Research from Think with Google](#) shows:

- *Google is the number one review platform; **63.6 percent of searchers** search for reviews on Google before visiting a business.*
- There are **3.5 billion searches every day**. That volume grows by *10 percent every year*.
- Google accounts for **57.5 percent of all reviews** worldwide, across all review platforms.
- A **900+ percent increase** in mobile searches for “\_\_\_ near me today/tonight.”
- A **500 percent increase** in “near me” mobile searches (i.e., “attorneys near me”)
- **200+ percent growth** in mobile searches for “Open” + “now” + “near me” (i.e., “law firms near me open now,”)
- Search volume for local places, *without* the qualifier “near me,” has **grown by 150 percent**
- Google My Business [signals](#) are the most important ranking factor for local pack rankings (25.12 percent of the total).
- **25.12 to 27.94 percent** of your local search rankings (local pack + localized organic rankings) are dependent on your Google My Business profile according to a recent ranking factors [study by Moz](#).
- Online reviews make up another **6.47 to 15.44 percent** of online reviews.

Google is the de facto standard. Prospective clients will use Google to vet your law firm, assess reviews, and verify your credentials. Any off-page SEO benefits you receive will most likely come from Google. Your Google My Business account is an essential ranking factor that's used to gauge your performance.

Here's a comprehensive guide you can use to [optimize your Google My Business account](#).

# Off-Page SEO Is the Key to Success in Google

Remember the metaphor from Ronell Smith earlier in this blog? Most attorneys have the incredible house in a beautiful gated community, but prospective clients aren't interested in visiting. From their client's perspective, their house smells like vomit on the inside — but their existing clients won't confirm or deny.

## **This isn't you.**

Your clients don't have the knowledge, tools, or experience they need to evaluate your law firm properly. Instead of begging for your client's attention, you earn it. You provide prospective clients with the education and training they need to choose your law firm.

## **Education eliminates the need to sell.**

Instead of sales pressure, your clients receive clarity and the options they need to choose the right law firm. The secret, as we've seen, is novelty. Novelty sparks exploration and learning in your client's mind. It motivates them to seek a solution to the problems you've identified.

Provide clients with the education they need, and you'll find they bring their problems to you automatically.