



## **info@yourlawfirm.com | Is it working?**

By Jayne Navarre, Executive Director, Law Gravity LLC

### **How can we help you?**

*How can we help you?* That was the message preceding a “request for information” form in the Contact Us section of a noteworthy B2B company website I recently visited. Ten days ago I filled out that form and requested specific information or a return phone call regarding a web design project that I am directing for a client. I still haven’t heard from the company.

Sure, I could have picked up the phone, there was a main number listed, but I was already on the website, the form was handy, seemed sincere, and I was trying to save a little time. Additionally, (1) I wanted the information and hoped that the right person to answer my query would call me directly (I wrote a detailed message) and save some steps, and (2) I often wonder about the effectiveness of the info@ email address which many of these Contact Us forms go to so I decided to test it among four prospective design firms. In this first case I got the answer to #2: not very.

Meanwhile, I received a confirmation from this company stating that I had been added to their email newsletter distribution list, this despite the fact that I unchecked the box that would sign me up to receive “educational materials.” Obviously a glitch in their system: Or not? Worse was the impression this experience has left in my mind: (1) This company actually sells their expertise for online marketing strategy (isn’t the contact us form an important part of the lead generation process?), and (2) eNewsletter advice and modules are also in their offerings, so why didn’t their opt out work properly?

At the end of the day, they lost not only a prospect—not responding to an info@ inquiry is a bad move for anyone—but the glitch also put a dent in their overall image. For example, when I told my client that we had not heard back from this company he was shocked. He asked, “in this market how can it be that a company does not even want to entertain a new business opportunity?” I had no answer for him. But I can be pretty sure that should this company’s name come up in a discussion among his colleagues where he’d likely have some influence to make a referral, he’d relay our story.

### **Technology is a game changer.**

Technology is a game changer, and I’m not referring to shiny new stuff like social media, but rather something as simple as a basic business tool: EMAIL! Why would you relegate one of the most valuable, and essentially free, technology tools to a low interest priority?

There are more than a dozen, if not more, pay-per-lead generation directory sites that lawyers and law firms subscribe to on the web today—paying good money for each lead the

site generates. The reason these are becoming more popular is simple, more people go to the web when searching for services and products than ever before, getting leads from this traffic is valuable. But the fact is, you actually have a decent lead generator on your own site too but how many firms are giving it due respect? Frankly, in my mind it begs the question: Why would a high profile company (or law firm) pay top dollar for a fancy and informative website but not have a functional lead generation tool on it? The simple Contact Us form on your website will do, as long as you manage it properly, right?

### **Do you use an info@yourlawfirm.com mailbox for web inquiries?**

So I ask, knowing that many, many law firms use an info@ourlawfirm.com mail address on their websites: Is this a risk you're willing to take? How should you manage your Contact Us mail? Who responds to your info@ mailbox?

I wonder how many law firms have an info@ inbox full of unanswered inquiries? I wonder how many of those info@ boxes are monitored by overworked legal secretaries or marketing coordinators who do not have the time to respond or do not comprehend the value of an online lead?

### **Build good will.**

Granted, many online leads turn out to be a bad fit or a dead end, but that shouldn't stop a law firm or company from leveraging the opportunity to build good will (you never know who they might know) by simply sending a brief note in response. Even if you're not interested or you're not capable of accepting his or her case, shouldn't someone write a quick note to explain that?

### **The end of the story.**

The end of my story is that within a few hours of Internet research for a design agency to work this very important project, I filled out four online forms detailing my project and asking for more information.

- Of the four, three responded.
- Of those three, one said they'd get back to me, and didn't.
- One wrote asking me for a convenient time to talk and further discuss my needs.
- One picked up the phone and called me about 30 minutes after I hit submit.
- Of the two that made further contact, one, after vetting the project with their team, politely declined the project (via email) saying they didn't have the bandwidth to start the project until next spring, which was too late for us.
- The other one, the one that called promptly, has prepared a bid for us and frankly, based on responsiveness and their seeming grasp of the value of lead generation via their website, has a pretty good chance of getting the work if all goes well. Why? Because those two attributes mirror our own approach to business!

### **POST SCRIPT:**

*A reader of this article wrote:*

We went through this at my law firm. Much like social media, users like to converse with an individual versus an entity, and I think the same applies for email addresses. Our “Contact Us” forms go directly to our marketing department to filter out legitimate questions and pass them along to the appropriate attorney. We have procedures for how to respond to forms that have been filled out. One of them is that every filled-out form gets a response, even if that means a like to the local bar association (if we aren’t able to assist).

There is no reason NOT to have multiple ways of reaching the business, but every single one of them needs to be responded to.

*My Response:*

Despite the modern idea that clients hire law firms, I couldn’t disagree more. Clients hire lawyers to serve them and they hire law firms to make sure the lawyer is well supported and to give them a sense of security knowing a larger entity is backing them up or overseeing the work.

We don’t buy Colgate toothpaste because of Procter & Gamble; we buy Colgate because we like what it does for our teeth. We are aware that a corporation stands behind a product, and sometimes it gives us a sense of trust, but we do not, normally, make our purchases based on the corporation.

Recently, I had a conversation with “an entity” on Twitter and I was actually considering its services for a client. We even got to the point of direct messaging on specifics and the person never once identified himself until I finally asked. It was awkward, really, and I kept thinking: who is this person? A telemarketer hired to run their social media or the CEO?

I suggest to law firms that the Contact Us form is a real opportunity to develop legitimate business leads. Let people know that they are communicating with a REAL PERSON and not an info@.

One more example of a missed opportunity for law firms: eNewsletters. They should, though rarely do, include the name of a REAL PERSON and their direct email address for correspondence in every edition. Why make anyone in your hard won database of contacts wait for info@ to answer! Your newsletter readers are a great source of referrals and new or additional business. Make it easy and friendly for readers to reach out to you and watch your business opportunities grow!

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