



# Video marketing and the law firm

*YouTube may be the direct descendant of cable TV, but here you get your own channel to tell your clients' stories*

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With the explosive growth and widespread adoption of social media networks, smartphones, tablets, and Internet-enabled television, the platform of online video is evolving into one of the most vital tools a law firm can leverage. Video represents the best media form for firms to tell their story, demonstrate their expertise, communicate testimonials, manage their brand perception and drive prospective client trust. The continued rise in popularity of mobile technologies and social networks will drive demand for video that inspires, informs, and engages the audience. If you are not onboard the video bandwagon yet, here is why you must consider the future of content consumption.

## Video's explosive share of Internet traffic

*"We think we're seeing a phenomenal change, a market transition around the pervasive adoption of video. . . video is invading all aspects of our life, we are getting to a point quite quickly where you'll have television on any device anywhere you are whenever you want it. We're seeing businesses video enable lots and lots of business processes and those things show up in the numbers." — David Hsieh, Vice-President of Marketing at Cisco, the world's largest systems networking company.*

Over 50 percent of all Internet traffic today is video, and Cisco's Hsieh believes that in the next three years, over 90 percent of all Internet traffic will be video. Notable findings from a comScore January 2012 study include:

- 181 million U.S. Internet users watched nearly 40 billion videos

- U.S. Internet users averaged 1,355 minutes (22.5 hours) viewing online video content
- 84.4 percent of U.S. Internet users viewed online video
- 6.1 minutes was the duration of the average online content video
- 40 seconds was the duration of the average online video advertisement
- 200 billion online videos viewed globally per month

## YouTube: Top platform for online video by the numbers

There are dozens of online sites that law firms can utilize to house their videos, create video channels for their content, and showcase their content to a growing audience that prefers one platform over the next. For those law firms that place a heavy emphasis on search engine optimization,



YouTube is the overwhelming choice. Simply put, YouTube is a traffic juggernaut. In 2011, YouTube surpassed Yahoo as the second largest search engine in the world.

The numbers, according to YouTube:

- Over 4 billion videos are viewed a day
- Over 800 million unique visitors visit YouTube each month
- Over 3 billion hours of video are watched on YouTube each month
- In 2011, YouTube had more than 1 trillion views or almost 140 views for every person on Earth
- 500 years of YouTube video are watched every day on Facebook, and over 700 YouTube videos are shared on Twitter each minute
- 100 million people take a social action on YouTube (likes, shares, comments, etc) every week

### Will YouTube replace TV for attorney advertising?

*“The future of the YouTube experience has channels at the center of it” — Margaret Stewart, YouTube Director of User Experience*

YouTube is preparing for current and future generations where viewers consume content on their smartphones and tablets more often than watching television. YouTube’s redesign in December, 2011 places the video platform in direct competition with pay television. It promises to:

- Build millions of channels housed in an easy-to-access, organized format
- Evolve into the descendant of cable TV
- Create 25+ hours of daily programming in partnership with leading television and Hollywood talent
- Integrate with Web-connected television platform, Google TV
- Dominate the quickly evolving, connected-Web-television market

The now-connected generation, ages 18-35, will eventually (if not already) become your firm’s target prospects. And it also means that this demographic, sooner rather than later, will be fully connected to mobile devices and consuming the vast majority of their information on platforms like YouTube.

### Why is video the most compelling content?

Since the beginning of blogging and the onset of Web 2.0, online content consumption has differed from our real world content consumption habits. Bloggers quickly learned that in order to capture a reader’s attention, they had to produce small chunks of compelling information. The elegant “long writing” style of famous magazines and stalwart newspapers like the Wall Street Journal and New York Times did not work to capture readership in an online world built on speed and ease of use.

Further proof that online content consumption habits of Internet users revolved around quick, easy-to-consume chunks of information came from Jakob Nielsen. Nielsen, dubbed the “guru of Web page usability” by the New York Times, created the F Shape Theory. According to Nielsen: “Eyetracking visualizations show that users often read Web pages in an F-shaped pattern: two horizontal stripes followed by a vertical stripe.” The significance of Nielsen’s study is that online readers “skim” content in an effort to find something that jumps out at them. If they don’t find that immediate hook, the reader is gone in a matter of seconds, not minutes. Couple Nielsen’s study of online content consumption habits and human nature, it’s apparent that the explosion of video content online is a result of our attention span deficit.

### What is Edgerank?

In the past, Facebook pages could publish updates which would then be visible to a vast majority of their audience of fans. Those days are gone. Today Facebook relies upon a formula to determine newsfeed placement and visibility for a Facebook page’s content. Edgerank is Facebook’s algorithm that determines whether a Facebook page’s status updates will make it into their fans’ newsfeed. Here are two basic concepts:

- **Objects:** every piece of content including Status Updates, Pictures, Videos, Links, etc.

- **Edge:** every interaction with an object, including liking an object, tagging a photo, leaving a comment, etc.

### Edgerank formula: Affinity, Weight, Time

**Affinity:** The more often a user likes, views, comments, or clicks on a friend or brand’s object, the higher that user’s Affinity score towards the other person or brand rises.

**Weight:** Facebook applies a weight to each object to help determine the object’s overall Edgerank score. Although there is no confirmation by Facebook or scientific proof, some experts believe there is a hierarchy of objects in the Edgerank algorithm. The top of this hierarchy begins with Video-Pictures. The next most important objects include links and status updates.

**Time:** Facebook utilizes a time factor in determining the freshness of all edged objects. The window of opportunity (shelf life) is considered to be three hours from the time an object is posted.

### Why law firm videos don’t go viral

Social media has been a game changer requiring behavioral shifts that go deeper than most law firms and the individuals behind them have yet to acknowledge. Consumers are not on social media to be sold; they are there to become informed, receive value, be acknowledged by others and engage. In order to be successful with video as a marketing platform, law firms need to better align with the tone and culture of YouTube and social media in general.

The vast majority of videos we see from law firms on YouTube are basically commercials with partners or attorneys talking to the camera about the benefits of working with their firm. While this type of video succeeds in introducing a viewer to a live attorney in a way that is better than a photo and text that sits on a flat page, the content feels canned in an environment that is built upon a culture of transparency.



Sales videos don't inspire views or engagement, and they don't go viral. This is proven by the fact that statistics on most law firm video views on YouTube are only in the double digits despite many of these videos being on the platform for more than a year.

### What makes for an effective marketing video?

As you look toward producing video to market your firm, there are three main goals you should strive to achieve:

- 1. Educate the viewer.** Even if it is just a simple point that the viewer may have legal rights with regards to a specific situation, you give the viewer a reason to continue to view your video, and you leave them in a more informed position about her or his situation. By giving value to your viewers, you establish your firm as a source of information about your particular practice, and you give viewers a reason to contact you to explore further. Seek to make the video experience about the viewers' needs rather than the firm's.
- 2. Showcase your case work.** Promoting your credentials in video is best achieved by talking about your cases and not about your firm. Your goal should be to get your target audience to be able to personally relate to the cases you work on. This not only demonstrates that you specialize in a particular practice; it can open a viewer's eye to the fact that they may have cause to file a case. Because you have just provided the viewer with details about your experience with a case they can relate to, you put your firm in a position to generate a lead.
- 3. Inspire a human feeling.** The viral marketing opportunities with video come when you make a connection with a reader on a human level. People comment, like and share videos that inspire compassion, a sense of injustice, a laugh or warm the heart. As a plaintiff attorney, your practice is ripe with stories about people who have been wrongly treated. By focusing on the stories of your clients, you give your firm an opportunity to not only promote your work, but also create

an energy of awareness about a particular injustice that, if stirred strongly enough, has the potential to create some change.

### Video case example — Gwilliam Ivary, Oakland

Law firm Gwilliam, Ivary, Chiosso, Cavalli & Brewer filed a lawsuit on behalf of 130 former Lawrence Livermore Lab workers who claim that illegal widespread layoffs specifically targeted the highest salaried senior staff members who were closest to retirement. The Oakland firm's Gary Gwilliam and Randy Strauss led a rally on February 27, 2012, to discuss strategy and developments with the former Lab employees, with five of the plaintiffs taking to the microphone to share their experiences.

A 45-minute tape of the rally was edited to a 3:40 video that contained a summary introduction to the case by Gwilliam and numerous clips of the five plaintiffs describing how they were fired unjustly, treated like criminals and have been unable to find jobs as they are now in their mid-50's in the worst recession of their lifetime. It's a compelling story that speaks to the hearts of many. In four weeks, the video generated 1,349 views, 23 likes, four comments and six shares from the YouTube platform alone.

### Leveraging deposition video

Deposition videos that have been shown in court can add a very compelling component to an attorney's story about a case from a legal perspective. First, attorneys are interviewed on film to describe key details about the case. Then, deposition videos and exhibit photos are used to turn what would have been a straight "talking head" video into a visually interesting and emotionally compelling piece.

Watching the victims speak for themselves and seeing pictures of them in their family life puts a real human face to the case – similar to the day-in-the-life videos used in court. The story is brought to an end with closing slides to tell the

viewer the amount that was awarded and how that money is being used to help the plaintiff and their family.

### How to get visibility for your videos

As we discussed earlier, many people don't realize that along with being a video sharing platform, YouTube is also the second most utilized search engine after Google. Most plaintiff attorneys are keenly aware of the role of SEO in getting their Web site seen by potential clients. The same principle holds true for YouTube videos.

By understanding the basics about YouTube's search algorithm and employing techniques that leverage this knowledge, you can take control of your videos' ranking destiny. Here are a couple of key tips:

**Keyword optimizing titles, description and tags.** Some of the basic concepts that you may have learned about Google's search algorithm like keyword relevant content, keywords in titles, and the newly added Google+ component of social engagement as a signal which helps to determine authority apply similarly in YouTube.

The Gwilliam-Ivary video discussed earlier ranked first for the keyword searches "lawrence livermore" and "lawrence livermore lab" and second for "lawrence livermore national laboratory" after just four weeks. These keywords were used in the title, repeated in the description and used again as tags.

**Create videos that engage.** The number of views, comments and likes plays a key role in a video's search ranking. They also play a role in the videos on the right sidebar of the YouTube screen that YouTube serves up as recommendations on the video page of a similar video.

**Tweet about it.** Along with Facebook, Twitter is a great tool for sharing videos. Twitter's hashtag feature allows you to put the # sign in front of a keyword to gain visibility to anyone searching for conversations using the hashtag. In the Gwilliam example, #agediscrimination and #unemployment are two hashtags that could be used to get in front of viewers interested in that topic.



### Costs to produce videos

There are basically three different costs associated with producing video:

1. Concept development and scripting
2. Production, which essentially is the filming process
3. Post-production, which includes editing and producing the final product for user consumption

These costs are typically charged on an hourly or daily basis and vary greatly depending on the provider's level of experience, equipment used and market. In the San Francisco area, concept development and script writing services for law firms range between \$95 and \$150 per hour, production between \$95 and \$175 per hour and post-production between \$75 and \$110 per hour. Expect pricing from the large legal-marketing firms and

high-end video production companies to be more.

### How to get started

Create a YouTube channel for your firm. This is where you will house all the videos you upload to YouTube. Owning your own YouTube channel is becoming a more and more important component to branding and marketing your firm. There are legal marketing firms with YouTube channels that house videos for hundreds of law firms. While this is convenient and takes the responsibility for video marketing out of your hands, these channels are often branding the marketing firms and not the law firms. Consider too that, like the familiar Yellow Pages of old, they enable your target clients to be easily introduced to your competition.



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