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You can always read, download and sign up for our newsletter at [www.FWMnewsletter.com](http://www.FWMnewsletter.com)

## UPCOMING LAWYER MARKETING EVENT



Buster Tate, COO of Foster Web Marketing.

# The Business of Running a Business

by Buster Tate, COO of Foster Web Marketing

***“They did not teach me how to run a business in law school.”***

We often hear this from clients expressing frustration at the breadth of issues they have to deal with that are not directly involved with the practice of law. Regardless of individual motivations as to why you became an attorney, the fact remains that you are running a business. As a business owner or partner in a firm, there are a number of inalienable responsibilities that must be managed.

**Over the next few weeks, I will be writing about principles of business that are critical to your success.** We will discuss the strategic, operational, and tactical elements of planning and executing a well-reasoned business model and share lessons learned from some of our most successful attorney clients.

*To get the most out of this series of articles, I want to set two foundational points to frame our discussion about running a law business:*

**First, you must adopt an entrepreneurial mindset.** There are many ways to accomplish some of the routine tasks of running a law firm (automation, outsourcing, flexible personal policies, etc.). Some attorneys are quick to assess challenges and adapt creative solutions; others become rooted in traditional methods. You need to maintain an open mind and be willing to fail in order to get better.

**Second, you must “trust, but verify” that all**

**of the processes, procedures, and protocols for your operations are working as designed.** Adopting a “trust, but verify” philosophy for every element of your business may be the single most impactful tactic you can apply to improve your operations. We find countless examples of firms that set up quality intake processes on paper, but fail to verify that their personnel are following the prescribed processes (except when the boss is listening) or treating potential clients in the manner the attorney expects. We have seen firms spend tens of thousands of dollars on marketing to get the phone to ring, only to have potential clients turned away by a receptionist or paralegal with low energy or a bad attitude. Have someone you trust call your office posing as a client to verify the experience. If you are using a tracking phone number (provided by FWM) on your website, you can listen to the calls in DSS (your website management software). This is but one example of trusting that your people are doing as you have asked but verifying it is so.

If you can maintain an open mind and embrace a “trust, but verify” philosophy, you can get great value from the ideas to follow. 🌐

*Next time, we will begin our discussion at the strategic level to articulate the goals for your firm and create a path forward.*



Be sure to check out next month’s article from Buster, and sign up for the Foster Web Marketing Bootcamp, which will be held on October 26. Buster will be our keynote speaker!

[bit.ly/1pIN9Du](http://bit.ly/1pIN9Du)



## Meet Lindsey Daher

Lindsey is Foster Web Marketing's Assistant Manager of Content Operations. She makes sure that all of our clients receive creative, custom content from our team of "made in the USA" writers. Lindsey's drive to make each day better than the last makes her not only successful in life, but also in her work.

### A Passion for Content

Lindsey comes to us through her childhood friend, and our Manager of Content Operations, Hannah McNaughton. She just so happens to have the same passion for quality content and the same keen eye for editing as her dear friend Hannah—and for sharing that knowledge with our clients!

### Lindsey's advice for creating quality content:

- First and foremost, you should determine who your ideal clients are.
- Then focus on writing content that is appealing to those specific clients. Get inside their heads and find an angle that will appeal to them.
- Content should be well written and organized—do not cut corners!
- Be sure to make your content visually appealing by adding relevant images.
- Edit your content! Your readers are looking for reliable information, and if you can't dot your I's and cross your T's, you won't be perceived as an authority. Ensuring that your content is free of spelling mistakes and grammatical errors will help you stand out as a leader in your field.

### Giving Back and Staying Active

As a true humanitarian, Lindsey's passion for making the world a better place does not stop with content. Lindsey works with the Luz Project, a non-profit organization focused on bringing charitable work and ministries to the poverty-stricken area of Alagoas, Brazil. When she is not busy writing top-notch content or helping to save the world, she enjoys running, wakeboarding, and CrossFit. We wouldn't mind borrowing some of her dedication and ambition! 🌍

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CTA: Learn more about Lindsey in her FWM bio! [bit.ly/1jnz050](http://bit.ly/1jnz050)



## DYNAMIC SELF-SYNDICATION



Please read more about these and other new DSS features in our DSS Release Notes—right in DSS! And follow us on Facebook and Twitter for more updates.



[Facebook.com/DynamicSelfSyndication](https://www.facebook.com/DynamicSelfSyndication)



[Twitter.com/FWM\\_DSS](https://twitter.com/FWM_DSS)



Our DSS Team: Chris, Yung, and Shannon

## WHAT'S NEW IN DSS?

**Our phenomenal team of developers has been busy this month (just how we like it)! Their newest releases include some awesome new features to the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) module as well as some pretty sweet updates to Version 3 site features.**

To kick things off, our contact import within the CRM has really stepped things up. If you import a list of contacts, you can now add custom mapping. This means **YOU get to choose exactly what columns you want to import from your spreadsheet, with no limitations!**

In addition to the custom mapping, we've also given you the ability to create custom columns, which puts you in charge of the information you can track in your CRM. For example, if you want to create a column for personal injury clients, you can do it—you can even label the injury! Even better, the search feature handles your custom columns.

We've also enhanced our newsletter feature by showing you the number of emails that will be sent prior to hitting "send," so you have a better idea of how many people your newsletter will reach. In addition, when importing your contacts, you will be alerted to potential duplicates so that you can merge them.

If you're not using the CRM module already or haven't seen any of the new features, it is time you checked it out. Call our Customer Service team at (844) 531-4797 to get on the upgrade list (no charge!) or set up a demo.

# Avvo: Friend or Foe?

by Laura Johnson

**Avvo. Not many single words can divide a room of attorneys the way this word does. The attorney review and rating site has been blasted by some lawyers as an inaccurate system that forces them to play by its rules. But before I tell you what I think about Avvo, let's get to the bottom of what Avvo is, what's to love, and what's to hate.**



## Avvo Basics

The folks over at Avvo take public information from across the internet (including your website) and plug it into their ranking algorithm. The algorithm is made up of the following:

- Number of years in practice
- Disciplinary history
- Professional achievements
- Industry recognition
- Peer endorsements on the Avvo site

With this information, they come up with a ranking (from 1 to 10) for your law firm. Keep in mind that each of these factors is weighted differently, and like most rating algorithms, Avvo keeps its weighting a closely guarded secret.

## Why Some Attorneys Hate Avvo

The biggest complaint about Avvo is that, whether you like it or not, you are probably listed on Avvo. And more than just listed—your law firm is rated. The problem with this is that Avvo gets its information from independent Internet research, and some of the information it gathers is just plain wrong. More than one attorney has gone to check his listing on Avvo, only to find that most of the information is incorrect. Wrong city, wrong firm name, wrong partner—you name it, Avvo can get it wrong. Unless you claim your profile, that is. Which brings me to my next point.

## Why Some Attorneys Love Avvo

On the flip side, there are attorneys who really like Avvo. They have claimed their listing and frequently add additional

information to their profile. These Avvo fans like that they have access to the almost five million users Avvo claims visit the site each month. And unlike other review sites, if you take control of your listing, you can improve your rating. By adding professional achievements (speaking engagements, publications, etc.) and ensuring that all of the above rating factors are fleshed out, you can dramatically improve your rating—for free.



*The biggest complaint about Avvo is that, whether you like it or not, you are probably listed on Avvo. And more than just listed—your law firm is rated.*

## The One Thing You Should Never Do on Avvo (or Any Review Site)

Whether you love or loathe Avvo, the one thing you should never do is respond in anger to a negative review.

There have been several instances where attorneys lashed out at negative reviewers and got into some hot water. The attorneys were accused of revealing client confidences and, in several cases, were reprimanded by the state bar. This is something that would most defiantly show up on Avvo—and across the Web—and negatively impact your online reputation.

## The Bottom Line: Do I Like Avvo?

Yes, yes I do! And I think you should too. Any of the drawbacks of Avvo can be easily mitigated by claiming your profile, a process which is simple and, perhaps best of all, free. So to me, claiming your listing is a no-brainer. It gives you a quality, highly relevant backlink and helps improve your reputation. It doesn't get much better than that! 🌐



For a more detailed look at Avvo, including a discussion on its proposed online legal services bidding system, type the following link into your browser bar: [bit.ly/1kRrsvs](http://bit.ly/1kRrsvs).

## FAQ



Tom Foster

**Q: Can I copy great reviews from Google+, Yelp, Avvo, or other review sites onto my law firm website?**

**A:** No! I absolutely do not recommend copying and pasting reviews from review sites onto your law firm's website, social media accounts, or emails. Why not?

**1 It looks suspect.** If potential clients find identical reviews on multiple sites, it will lead them to believe that the reviews aren't authentic.

**2 It may violate the poster's rights.** Without express permission from the writer of the review, you are opening yourself up to copyright issues.

**3 It could get the original review removed.** Even if you get the permission of the reviewer and repost the review, doing so could get the original review deleted from the review site. These sites have ever-evolving terms and stringent policies, so it's better not to risk being punished for duplicate reviews.



*Use the time it would take to copy and paste the positive reviews to ask satisfied clients for a testimonial.*

**4 It could affect your site ranking.** When you copy and paste a review, you are creating duplicate content—a big no-no in the SEO world. Reusing reviews could get either the original review or your website removed from search results.

### Alternatives to Duplicating Reviews

Use the time it would take to copy and paste the positive reviews to ask satisfied clients for a testimonial. Testimonials—especially the video variety—add credibility to your website and boost conversion. Also, don't forget to ask for reviews in the first place. I know it's hard to do, but it's worth it, trust me!



For practical advice on creating a highly effective review-gathering strategy, go to [bit.ly/1npqS6t](http://bit.ly/1npqS6t).

# October 26, 2014: Join the FWM Team for Our Marketing BOOTCAMP!



*The entire Foster Web Marketing team is getting geared up for our next Marketing Bootcamp, which will take place the day after the GLM Summit on Sunday, October 26, 2014, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.*

*The Bootcamp agenda is designed to hit on all the topics you need.*

We'll cover the fundamentals of marketing your firm online, including what's new for Google, Bing, and the other search engines this year. The agenda is designed to hit on all the main topics you need: content, video, search engine optimization, local search, Google+ for businesses, social media, website design/usability, and so much more.

Survey response from one of last year's attendees: "We were told this would be a 'boot camp,' and that was no joke. I enjoyed the wealth of information, and the free flowing format that allowed free flowing ideas and questions between speakers and participants."

### Q&A About the 2014 Bootcamp:

**Q: Do I have to attend GLM to attend the bootcamp?**

**A:** Nope! We certainly encourage you to attend the annual GLM conference, but that is not a requirement.

**Q: Do I have to be a FWM client to attend the bootcamp?**

**A:** Nope! This year's bootcamp is designed to teach marketing to members of any law firm, regardless of where they have their website. We will explain the principles of marketing in the context of how to do it in DSS, our proprietary marketing software, but these principles apply regardless of what system you use to manage your website and your marketing.

**Q: Ok, how much will it cost?**

**A:** We're offering a special, low rate through July 31. You'll get access to our intense, one-day marketing training with the entire Foster Web Marketing team—and all the conference materials—for **only \$399**. That is a pretty amazing deal! 🌟



How do you get started? If you want to talk to us or get more information, please call (844) 531-4797. You can also check out the bootcamp page on our website at [bit.ly/1plN9Du](http://bit.ly/1plN9Du).

## WEBSITE MARKETING SYSTEM FOR ATTORNEYS

FOSTER WEB MARKETING | 10555 MAIN STREET | SUITE 470 | FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA 22030

TOLL FREE: (844) 531-4797 | DSS: (866) 448-8999 | FAX: (703) 997-1309 | [WWW.FOSTERWEBMARKETING.COM](http://WWW.FOSTERWEBMARKETING.COM)

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