



FOR PENNSYLVANIA YOUNG
LAWYERS, HERE'S WHAT'S...



AT ISSUE

A PUBLICATION BY AND FOR THE YOUNG LAWYERS DIVISION
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CASTING A WIDER 'NET' WHY YOUNG LAWYERS ARE EMBRACING SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES LIKE NEVER BEFORE

By Scott P. Sigman

Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace, Plaxo. The Internet is full of online social and business networking sites. Many of Pennsylvania's young lawyers are already members. Some are thinking of joining, while others stay away. The real question, though, is whether these sites provide young lawyers with a good opportunity to network, gain business and advertise themselves.

From the beginning of modern lawyering in Pennsylvania, lawyers have used Martindale, the Yellow Pages, Pennsylvania Super Lawyers and Pennsylvania Rising Star Super Lawyers, among other means, to advertise, promote themselves and gain business. All of these sources have one thing in common: They cost money, and lots of it.

So what are young lawyers to do? The Internet age, which some say has spelled the death of Martindale's famous (high-priced) lawyer listings, has provided a totally free resource that has more readers, subscribers and daily viewers than Martindale, Pennsylvania Super Lawyers and the Yellow Pages combined. Online social and business networking sites (including Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Plaxo, Friendster, Spoke and Avvo) are now supplanting most other methods of traditional networking for young lawyers, who are vexed by stringent billable hour requirements and find it increasingly difficult to leave their offices for meet-and-greet opportunities.

Lawyers can sign up for free and design a page to market themselves to the general public. These pages can (and should) include current contact information, a biography similar to the one that would appear on a firm's Web site, news clippings, notable case mentions and even photos, as long as these photos help to promote the lawyer. Such photos may include the lawyer with notable clients, politicians, public figures, celebrities, etc. Photos should not include pictures of the lawyer drinking or engaging in unprofessional conduct.

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Here are a few reasons why you should sign up now:

1. *Cost/Target Audience* — It's free, and a site like Facebook or LinkedIn has more daily viewers in Philadelphia and in the entire world than any form of paid advertising.

2. *Google Listing* — What most lawyers do not realize is that when a potential client "Googles" a lawyer's name, a listing on a site such as Facebook or LinkedIn will appear at the top of that ever-important Google listing without any cost. Clients are always interested in reading up on a prospective attorney.



3. *Job Change* — If you change your job, location and/or contact information, people will still be able to find you. When you are listed on LinkedIn or Facebook, for example, the search is by name. If you change or update your contact information, all of your Facebook or LinkedIn contacts will be notified of the change free of charge. If someone misplaces your number or you switch jobs, there is no need to worry; you can be found easily.

With a carefully tailored Web page on some (if not all) of these online sites, you really expand your opportunities to network with other lawyers and professionals, or connect with old friends and classmates. Once old friends and classmates learn what you have been up to and know how to contact you, they will. This can lead to a significant increase in your book of business. It really is a win-win scenario for the young lawyer. It's a

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way to increase your clients, increase your business and increase your network of friends and business professionals, all at no cost. When your information changes or you have something notable to report, such as a case reported in the newspaper, a free notification can be sent out to your network of contacts. Currently, along with the many young lawyers who are on these sites, there are managing partners from Pennsylvania law firms, former Pennsylvania Supreme Court justices, authors, doctors, politicians and many of your past friends and classmates just waiting for you to sign up and connect with them.

The business is out there, but are you willing to take the step and create your own Web page on these online sites? It's free and you have nothing to lose.