

**ATTORNEY AT WORK 4TH ANNUAL**  
**SOCIAL MEDIA**  
**MARKETING**  
**SURVEY REPORT**



# Attorney at Work's 4th Annual Social Media Marketing Survey

Our newest Social Media Marketing Survey marks the fourth year that we've delved into usage, ROI, and how legal professionals are collectively spending their time online to build their businesses. The bottom line: It's working.

Usage is up — 93 percent of survey respondents are on social — but the reported ROI has skyrocketed. More than two-thirds — 71 percent — of lawyer respondents say it is “very” or “somewhat” responsible for bringing in new business, up from just 38 percent four years ago. And, whereas four years ago 60 percent of lawyers considered social media part of their marketing strategy, this year 85 percent do.

Solos, in particular, have embraced social media, with 20 percent saying it is “very responsible” for bringing in business, compared with 14 percent of their peers. And they are allocating more of their marketing budget to social than their peers, despite concerns about fake news, toxicity and privacy issues on some platforms.

Interestingly, the data show that while the majority of firms are using social to build relationships and their brand, only slightly more than half are taking advantage of social media management tools.

This indicates to us that with the right support, strategies could be even more effective, and ROI could move higher.

But that's just our take. Give us yours on your favorite social platform. Let's get this conversation started.

— Joan Feldman and Susan Kostal, Report Editors

# Social Media Marketing Survey Highlights

Here are highlights from the survey, based on responses from 406 legal professionals, including 183 lawyers. See page 11 for more information about the survey and demographic information.

- **What's the profession's social media story now?** Nearly everybody is now using social media — 93 percent of all survey respondents and 88 percent of lawyers who responded.
- **More lawyers are incorporating social media into their marketing strategy.** Eighty-five percent of respondents say social is part of their strategy. When we look at lawyers' responses, the number is the same: 85 percent of lawyers say social is part of their strategy compared with 70 percent in 2017 and just 60 percent in 2015.
- **Too toxic?** Given the role social media played in 2016 elections interference, privacy concerns and multiple security breaches, we had to ask: "Is the level of toxicity and fake news on social media enough of a concern to curtail use for marketing purposes?" Most respondents say no, but almost a quarter say it is a concern.
- **Which platforms are used for marketing?** Most respondents — 81 percent — say LinkedIn is tops, with Facebook second at 72 percent. Lawyers were most enthusiastic about LinkedIn as well, with 77 percent saying it is their favored marketing platform, with Facebook second.
- **Which are used most often?** As for which sites they personally use most often, Linked remained on top, at 41 percent compared with Facebook at 33 percent. Lawyers, however, favor Facebook at 36 percent compared with LinkedIn at 33 percent.
- **But is it working?** More than two-thirds — 71 percent — of lawyers say social media is "very" to "somewhat" responsible for bringing in new clients. That's up from 49 percent in 2017 and 38 percent in 2015. The percentage of lawyers who said social media was "very" responsible doubled from the previous year: 14 percent in 2018 compared with 7 percent in 2017.

## TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU BELIEVE YOUR USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IS DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR BRINGING IN NEW CLIENTS?

### ALL RESPONDENTS

**VERY RESPONSIBLE** 11%  
**SOMEWHAT RESPONSIBLE** 57%  
**NOT AT ALL RESPONSIBLE** 16%  
**DIFFICULT TO MEASURE** 16%

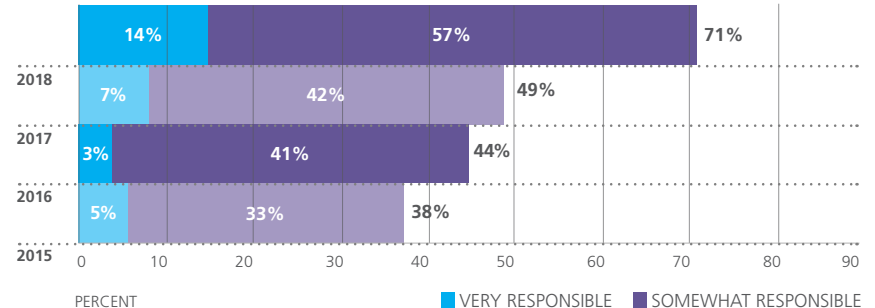
### LAWYERS

**VERY RESPONSIBLE** 14%  
**SOMEWHAT RESPONSIBLE** 57%  
**NOT AT ALL RESPONSIBLE** 19%  
**DIFFICULT TO MEASURE** 11%

More than two-thirds of lawyers say social media marketing is "very" or "somewhat" responsible for bringing in new clients. That's up from 38 percent in 2015.

71%

## PERCENTAGE OF LAWYERS WHO SAY SOCIAL MEDIA IS "VERY" OR "SOMEWHAT" RESPONSIBLE FOR BRINGING IN BUSINESS



- **Which platforms are most effective for bringing in new business?** As for which specific platforms are working, LinkedIn took first place at 40 percent among all respondents with Facebook second at 29 percent. For lawyers, the gap between the top two platforms is tighter: 34

percent say LinkedIn is most effective and 32 percent favor Facebook. “None” was third at 15 percent, and Twitter a very distant fourth at only 4 percent. Among solo practitioners, Facebook ranked No. 1 for being most effective.

- **What are you posting?** First among all respondents is “content I’ve written” at 70 percent, with “content written by my firm” second and “curated industry news” ranking third.
- **Most important reason to use social media?** For the first time, we asked respondents why they use social media for business. “To stay in touch with contacts and colleagues” ranked first, followed by “to build personal brand” — except for solo and small firm lawyers, who ranked personal brand building No. 1. “To read the news” ranked dead last among all groups. However, when asked how useful social media is for staying on top of news and trends in the legal industry, 19 percent say it is “extremely” useful, another 34 percent say it is “very useful” and 32 percent say it is “somewhat useful.”
- **Paid social advertising.** Respondents overall view Facebook ads as the most effective platform for paid social at 28 percent, with Google Ads placing second at 19 percent. In contrast, 12 percent say they find LinkedIn ads effective and only 1 percent like Twitter and YouTube ads. When looking at lawyers’ responses, however, solo attorneys favor Facebook by a slightly wider margin — 31 percent — and only 5 percent of solos find LinkedIn ads effective.
- **Percentage of marketing budget spent on social?** Since social media is a part of most law firms’ marketing strategies, we wondered how that is reflected in social media ad spending. The overwhelming response indicates it’s low: Only 8 percent say they devote more than 50 percent of their budget to social ads, while 75 percent say they spend less than 10 percent of their budget on social.

- **How are lawyers managing multiple social accounts and scheduling their marketing activities?** When asked, “Do you use any social media management tools such as Hootsuite, Google Analytics, TweetDeck, Buffer, etc.?” 39 percent say they take advantage of management tools, while 58 percent say they do not.
- **Content sharing.** We also inquired about content-sharing platforms — websites (outside their own blogs, websites and social media accounts) that help lawyers and law firms distribute articles. Among the one-third of respondents using such platforms, LinkedIn, Facebook and JD Supra are the top three.
- **Can I get a little help here?** Do lawyers handle all of their social media marketing activities themselves? Most do, according to the survey results: 66 percent of lawyers say they do it all, while 28 percent say they get some help, and 7 percent say it is all handled by someone else. In addition, when asked whether their firms use any outside vendors — for example, HubSpot, Clearview Social, Passle — to encourage and support social media activity, 83 percent say no. And, as noted above, a surprisingly low 39 percent of lawyers are using social media management and scheduling tools such as Hootsuite or Buffer. That increases to 52 percent when looking at all respondents.
- **When does all this happen?** We wanted to get an idea of how much time lawyers are personally spending on social media, and where they do most of it. According to the survey results, almost half—45 percent—say they spend one to five hours per week, while another 27 percent spend five to 10 hours per week. On ends of the spectrum, 21 percent say they spend one hour or less and 8 percent say they spend more than 10 hours per week on social media. As for where they do all this social media—at work, at home, on the weekend? Almost half say “all of the above.”

## Social Media Habits of Solo Practitioners

Solo practices represent 25 percent of respondents, and 40 percent of the lawyers responding are solos. So, we thought we'd take a closer look at how they use social media marketing and how it compares with their peers in other firms. Here are some highlights:

- **Solos are more enthusiastic about social media's ROI.** A surprising 20 percent of solos say social media is "very" responsible for directly bringing in business, and another 49 percent say it is "somewhat effective." In comparison, only 14 percent of lawyers overall say social is "very responsible" and only 3 percent of lawyers in firms with 100+ lawyers believe it is "very responsible."

### YOUR IMPRESSION OF SOCIAL MEDIA ROI DEPENDS ON WHERE YOU PRACTICE



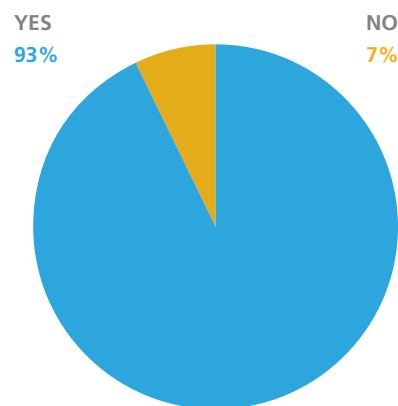
- **Which platform do solos use regularly for marketing?** LinkedIn and Facebook are neck-in-neck in the race for which social media platform solos use most regularly, at 78 and 76 percent respectively. Twitter is third at 56 percent and Instagram is pulling up fourth with 25 percent. Facebook, however, is the platform solos prefer using personally, with 42 percent saying they use it most often compared with LinkedIn at just 24 percent.

- **What's working for solos?** Interestingly, while most lawyers rank LinkedIn the most effective platform at bringing in business, solos say Facebook is most effective and LinkedIn is second.
- **Keeping it all close.** Solos are more likely to do most of the social media management and content creation themselves, rather than outsource any of the work: 80 percent of solos handle all social media writing and updating themselves compared with 65 percent of other lawyers. And most solos do without social sharing or management tools: 61 percent say they do not use content-sharing platforms and 68 percent do not use management tools such as Hootsuite, TweetDeck or Buffer. As for using an outside vendor such as HubSpot for support, 88 percent say they do not.
- **Solos have zeroed in on posting original content as a strategy.** When asked what they are posting, 81 percent say they post content they have written, compared with 77 percent of all lawyers. Curated news and industry content ranked second. This makes sense considering that the majority of solos say the most important reason for using social media is to build their personal brand. Their peers say "staying in touch with clients and colleagues" is the most important reason.
- **Money on the line.** Solos are outspending their colleagues on social ads: 10 percent say they spend more than 75 percent of their overall marketing budget on social ads, compared with 5 percent of all lawyers. Another 5 percent say they spend between 50 percent to 75 percent — that means 15 percent of solos spend more than 50 percent of their marketing budget on social ads. The majority, however (66 percent), spend less than 10 percent of their budget on social ads.
- **Solos also spend more hours on social media than their colleagues.** Ten percent say they spend 10 or more hours on social media compared with 8 percent of all lawyers, with 51 percent of solos spending one to five hours and 7 percent spending five to 10 hours. Also, 12 percent say they spend less than one hour per week on social, compared with 20 percent of other lawyers.

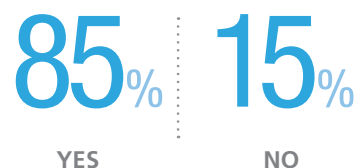
# Social Media Marketing Survey Results

Here's how 406 legal professionals, including 183 lawyers, tell us they are using social media.

## DO YOU USE SOCIAL MEDIA?

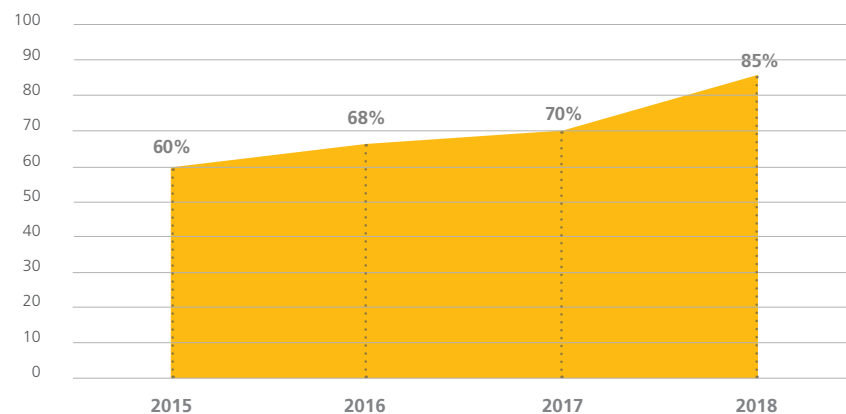


## IS YOUR USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PART OF A MARKETING STRATEGY?

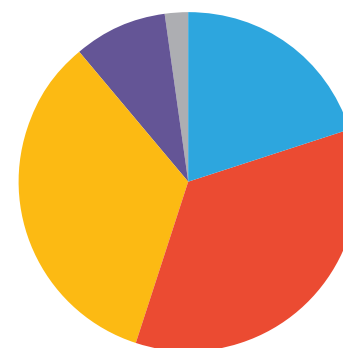


Social media as a legitimate marketing strategy has been gaining ground over past years. Among 2018 respondents, both lawyers and legal professionals, 85 percent say their use is part of a strategy. This is an increase of 25 percent over 2015 results.

## PERCENTAGE OF LAWYERS WHO USE SOCIAL MEDIA AS PART OF THEIR MARKETING STRATEGY



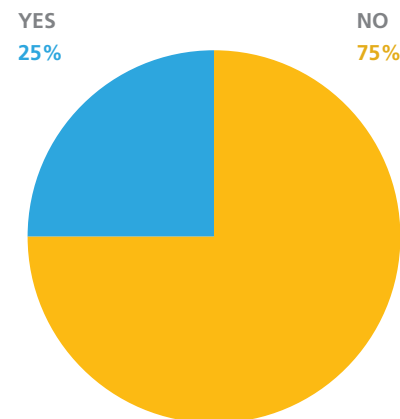
## HOW USEFUL IS SOCIAL MEDIA TO STAY ABREAST OF CURRENT EVENTS, TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN THE LAW?



A majority of respondents — 55 percent — say social media is “extremely” or “very” useful for keeping current in the legal industry.

# 55%

## IS SOCIAL MEDIA TOO TOXIC?

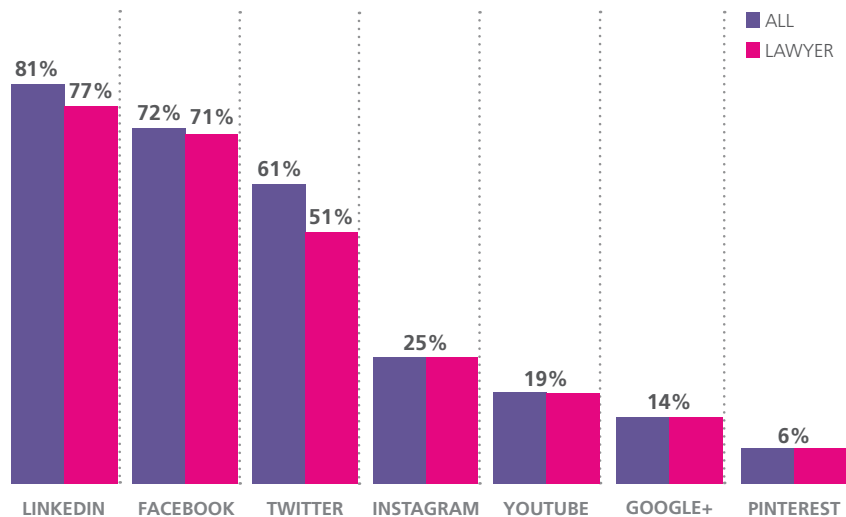


“Is the level of toxicity and fake news on social media enough of a concern to curtail use for marketing purposes?”

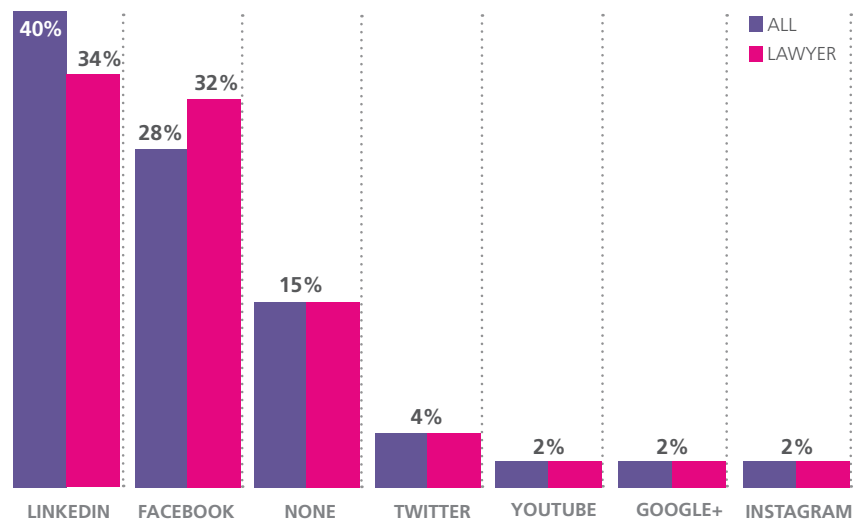
Given the role social media played in the 2016 U.S. elections and recent reports on how our social data is being used, we had to ask. One-fourth of survey respondents say they are concerned enough to pull back on social marketing. As for lawyers, 20 percent say it is a concern.

## Which Platforms Work Best?

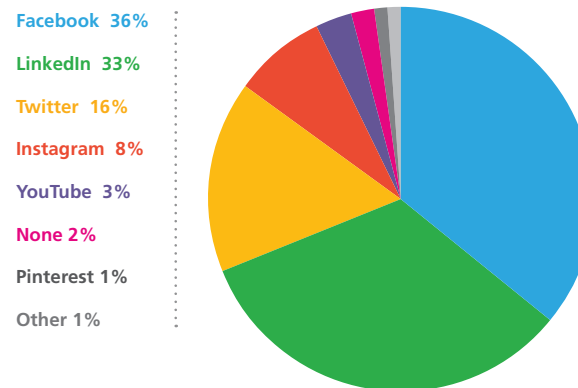
WHICH PLATFORM DO YOU REGULARLY USE FOR MARKETING?



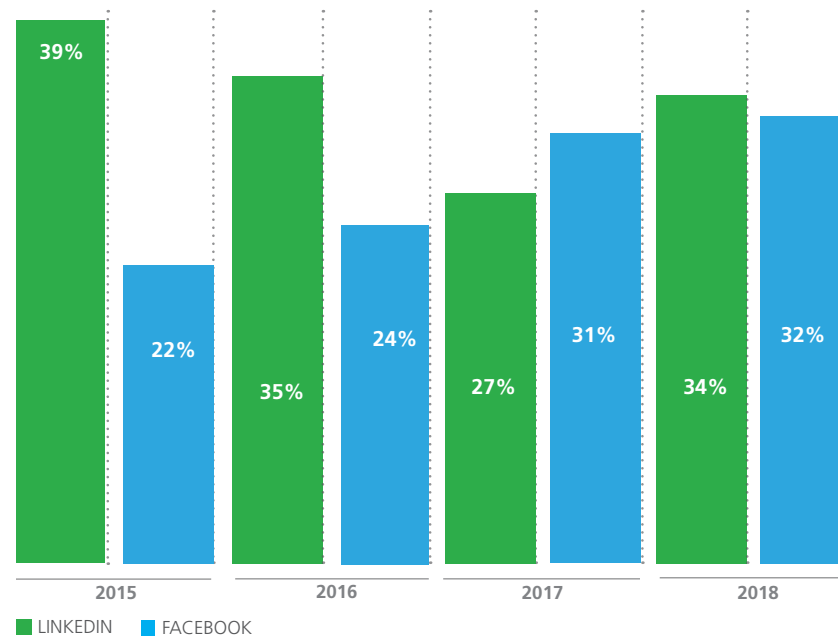
WHICH DO YOU THINK ARE THE MOST EFFECTIVE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS FOR BRINGING IN NEW BUSINESS?



WHEN ASKED "WHICH PLATFORM DO YOU USE MOST OFTEN," MOST LAWYERS SAY FACEBOOK



LINKEDIN VS. FACEBOOK: WHICH PLATFORM DO LAWYERS SAY IS MOST EFFECTIVE FOR BRINGING IN BUSINESS?



## Social Media Tools and Support

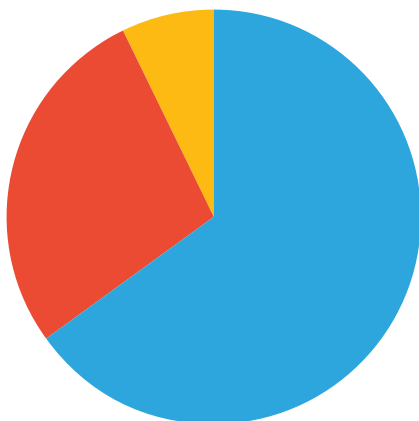
When asked, "Do you handle all the writing and updating for social media marketing yourself, or does someone else assist you?" 65 percent of lawyers said they do it all themselves. Looking at all responses, that number dips to 54 percent.

### LAWYERS: WHO HANDLES YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITIES?

I handle it all myself **65%**  
I have assistance from someone else **28%**  
It is handled by someone else **7%**

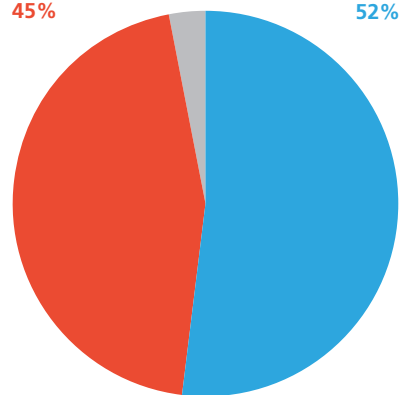
#### Solo Practitioners:

More than 80 percent of solos responding say they handle all social media activities themselves.



### DO YOU USE SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT TOOLS?

NO **45%**  
YES **52%**



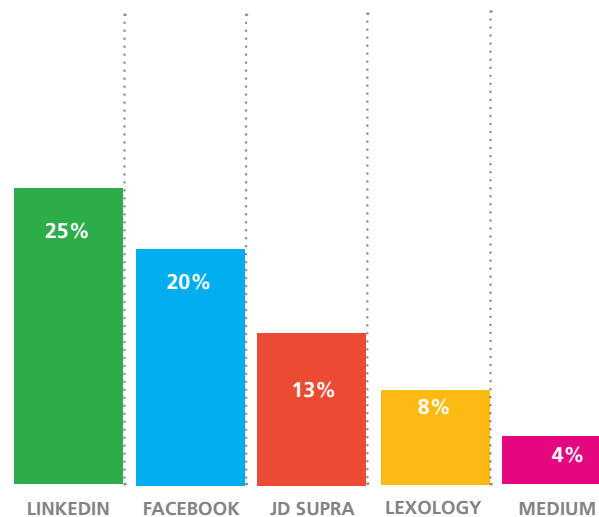
DON'T KNOW 3%

The 2018 survey results show that lawyers are less likely to use management tools: Only 39 percent say they use them compared with 52 percent of the overall responses.

Examples of social media management tools include:

- HOOOTSUITE
- GOOGLE ANALYTICS
- TWEETDECK
- PASSLE
- SPROUT SOCIAL
- CLEARVIEW SOCIAL

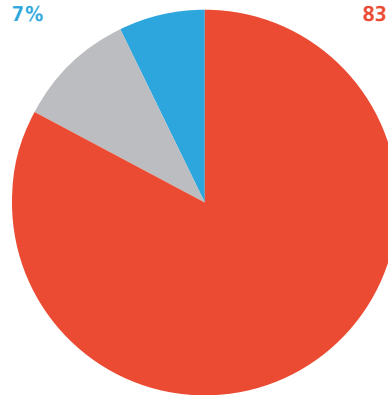
### WHAT CONTENT SHARING PLATFORMS DO YOU USE?



In addition to these content sharing platforms, survey respondents say they also use Mondaq, LexBlog, National Law Review and Justia.

### DOES YOUR FIRM USE AN OUTSIDE VENDOR TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY?

YES **7%**  
NO **83%**



DON'T KNOW 10%

Companies mentioned by those who report using outside vendor support include:

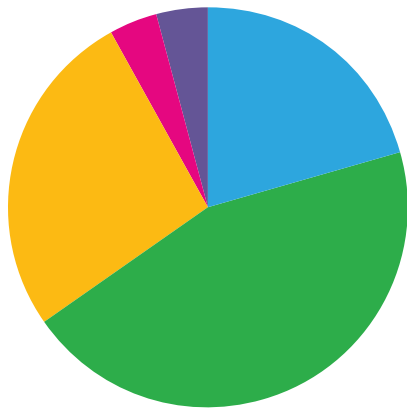
- HUBSPOT
- CLEARVIEW SOCIAL
- FINDLAW



## Lawyers' Social Media Marketing Habits

We asked survey respondents when they use social media for business, and for what purpose.

### HOW MANY HOURS PER WEEK DO YOU SPEND ON SOCIAL MEDIA?



1 hour or less **21%**  
1 to 5 hours **45%**  
5 to 10 hours **27%**  
10 to 15 hours **4%**  
15+ hours **4%**

### WHEN DO YOU MOSTLY ENGAGE IN SOCIAL MEDIA?

**48%**

ANY TIME, ANYWHERE

Thirty-one percent of lawyers say they do social media work at home, 26 percent say they do it at work and only 11 percent say they do it on the weekend. Most, however (48 percent), say "all of the above."

### WHAT DO YOU POST ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

**77%**  
CONTENT I HAVE WRITTEN

**56%**  
CURATED NEWS AND INDUSTRY CONTENT

**43%**  
CONTENT MY FIRM OR ORGANIZATION HAS WRITTEN

ANOTHER 16 PERCENT OF LAWYERS SAY THEY POST "OTHER" ITEMS SUCH AS FIRM EVENTS, FIRM ANNOUNCEMENTS, CONGRATULATIONS TO COLLEAGUES AND CLIENTS, AND VIDEOS AND HUMOR.

### WHY DO YOU USE SOCIAL MEDIA FOR BUSINESS?

We asked respondents to rank six reasons for using social media in order of importance (1 being the most important). The majority of lawyers in firms of one to five lawyers say "to build personal brand" is most important, while others say "to stay in touch with contacts" is most important.

#### ALL RESPONDENTS

1. TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH CONTACTS/PROSPECTS
2. TO BUILD PERSONAL BRAND
3. TO PUBLISH CONTENT
4. TO DRIVE TRAFFIC TO FIRM'S WEBSITE
5. TO DISCOVER THOUGHT LEADERS AND KEEP UP WITH TRENDS
6. TO READ NEWS

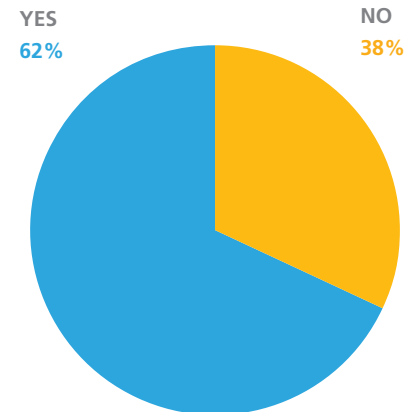
#### NON-SOLO LAWYERS

1. TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH CONTACTS/PROSPECTS
2. TO PUBLISH CONTENT
3. TO BUILD PERSONAL BRAND
4. TO DRIVE TRAFFIC TO FIRM'S WEBSITE
5. TO DISCOVER THOUGHT LEADERS AND KEEP UP WITH TRENDS
6. TO READ NEWS

#### SOLOS

1. TO BUILD PERSONAL BRAND
2. TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH CONTACTS/PROSPECTS
3. TO PUBLISH CONTENT
4. TO DRIVE TRAFFIC TO FIRM'S WEBSITE
5. TO READ NEWS
6. TO DISCOVER THOUGHT LEADERS AND KEEP UP WITH TRENDS

### DOES YOUR FIRM ENCOURAGE THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA, EITHER FORMALLY OR INFORMALLY?



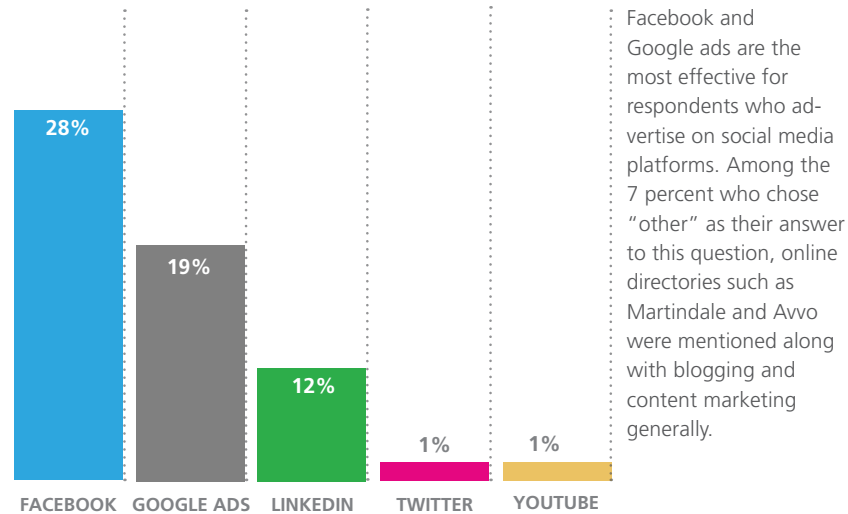
Law firms increasingly view social as an avenue for client development, content distribution and brand awareness. A whopping 62 percent of lawyer respondents told us their firms encourage their use of social media.

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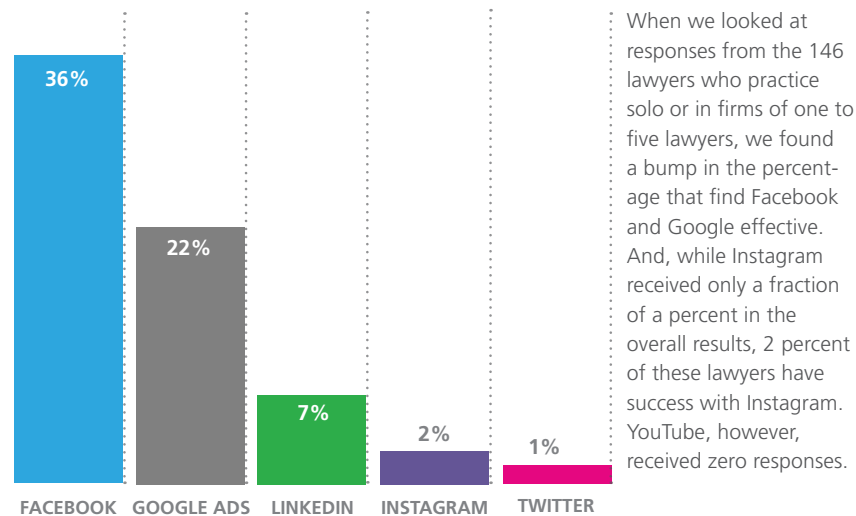
## Advertising: How Invested Are Firms in Social Media?

For the first time, we asked about budget for social media advertising.

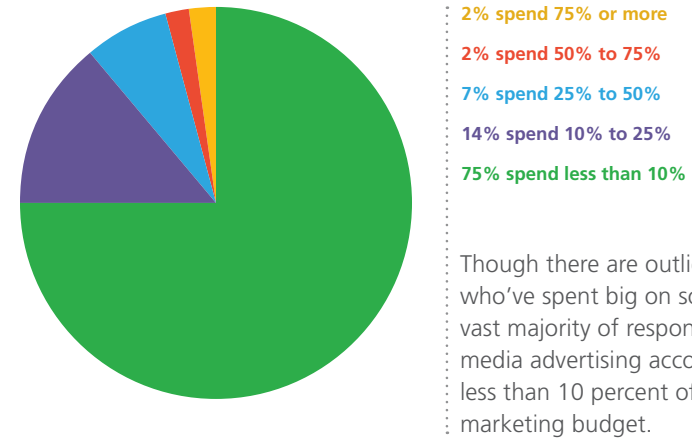
### WHICH PAID ADVERTISING PLATFORMS DO YOU FIND MOST EFFECTIVE?



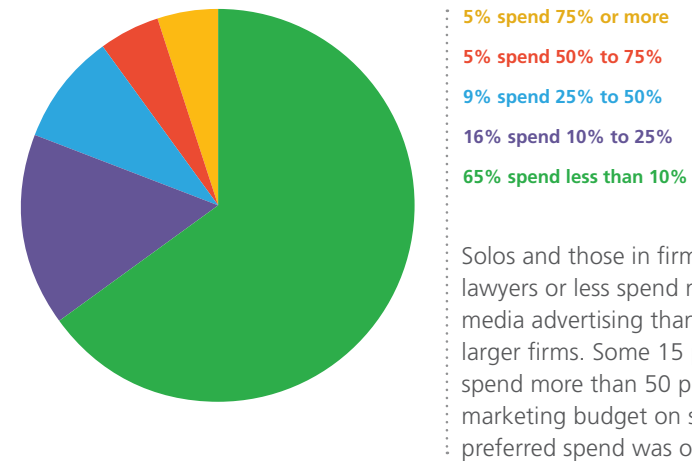
### WHICH PAID ADVERTISING PLATFORMS DO SOLO AND SMALL FIRM LAWYERS FIND MOST EFFECTIVE?



### WHAT PERCENTAGE OF YOUR OVERALL MARKETING BUDGET IS SPENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING?



### SOLOS AND FIRMS WITH 2-5 LAWYERS: WHAT PERCENTAGE OF OVERALL MARKETING BUDGET IS SPENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING?



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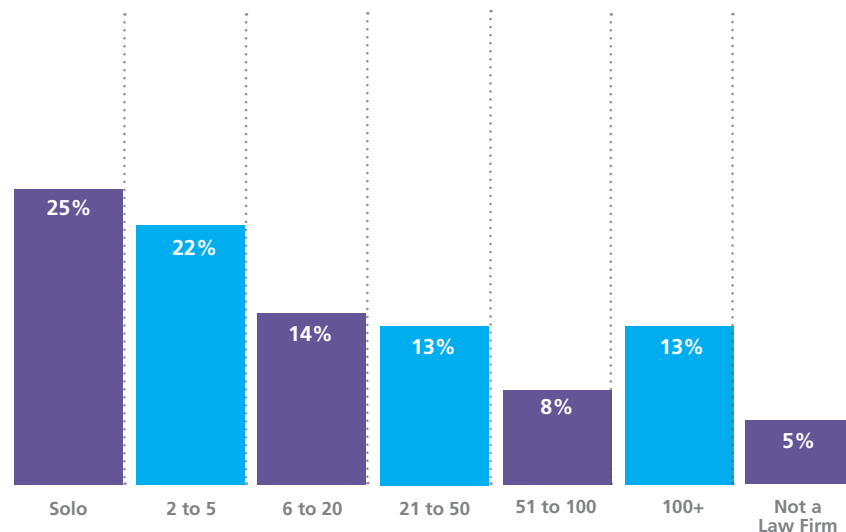
## About the Survey

Attorney at Work's Fourth Annual Social Media Marketing Survey was conducted in the fall of 2018 and received 406 responses, with 183 lawyers participating.

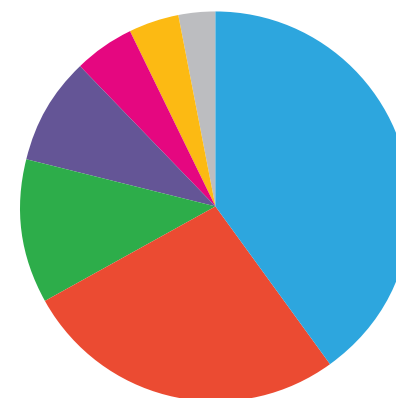
**Demographics.** Even without a survey, it's clear that social media has grown up as a legitimate marketing tool used by law firms. And, as the social media marketing industry has grown, responsibility for guiding social media strategy has naturally shifted to law firm marketing professionals and consultants.

This shift plays out in our survey demographics. Over the past couple of years, we have found that individual lawyers are making up a smaller percentage of responses. This year, for example, we received more responses from midsize and large firms, 21 percent of all responses, but only 9 percent of those responses came from lawyers. In contrast, 47 percent of survey responses are from firms with one to five lawyers and 67 percent of those responses are from lawyers. So, instead of focusing exclusively on lawyers' responses, this year we have reported results from everyone who responded, breaking out lawyer responses when it seemed relevant.

PERCENTAGE OF ALL RESPONDENTS BY FIRM SIZE



PERCENTAGE OF LAWYERS BY FIRM SIZE



Solo 40%

2-5 27%

6-20 12%

21-50 9%

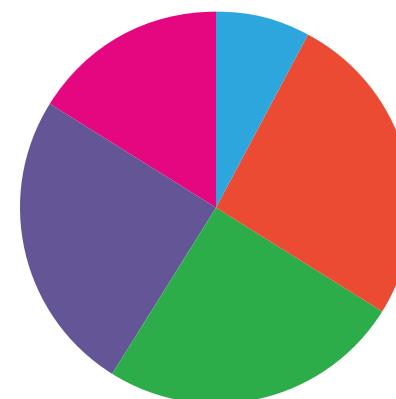
51-100 5%

100+ 4%

Not a law firm 3%

Generally, the demographics of survey respondents mirrored our readership. Among lawyer respondents, 67% practice as solos or in firms of five attorneys or less.

RESPONDENTS' AGES



Under 30 8%

30-40 26%

41-50 25%

51-60 25%

60+ 16%

When looking at age, respondents were evenly distributed. No particular age range showed outlier responses, indicating to us that social media use transcends generations.

“ONE REALLY GOOD IDEA EVERY DAY”

# About Attorney at Work

At Attorney at Work, our goal is to give you “one really good idea every day” to help you create a law practice—and a life—you love.

## LAW PRACTICE TIPS DAILY

Daily posts, features and book-length downloads are written for you by a crowd of expert authors — well over 300 — who come from the vanguard of practice management and legal marketing. Columnists deliver tips on marketing and business development, law practice management, technology, productivity, ethics, communication skills, content marketing, well-being, professional development and much more. These experts have an uncanny way of zeroing in on what you need to move your practice forward, no matter where you sit: small firm partner, Biglaw associate, in-house lawyer or solo entrepreneur.

## A FEW LINKS TO OUR ESSENTIAL MARKETING RESOURCES

- [Social Media Marketing Guide for Lawyers](#) ezine (free)
- [Play to Win](#) by Sally Schmidt
- [Content Under Pressure](#) by Susan Kostal
- [Build It: Associate's Guide to Business Development](#) ezine (free)
- [Getting Clients: For Lawyers Starting Out or Starting Over](#) by Merrilyn Astin Tarlton
- [One of a Kind: A Proven Path to a Profitable Law Practice](#) by Jay Harrington
- Plus, check out our [special downloads and checklists](#)



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— ABA Journal Blawg 100 Hall of Fame

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## QUESTIONS?

Email [editor@attorneyatwork.com](mailto:editor@attorneyatwork.com)