Four Common Problems and Solutions for Personal Injury Law Firms

The legal industry has experienced monumental changes over the last couple of years as a result of COVID, and personal injury attorneys have not avoided these new challenges. As a result, personal injury firms are having to pivot and evolve in an effort to successfully meet current challenges. This post will explore some of the common problems facing personal injury practices, along with some potential solutions.

Fewer Personal Injury Cases

Lockdowns and social distance guidelines cut down on many of the daily activities that can lead to personal injuries and the resulting legal matters. More people working from home means fewer miles driven to and from work and fewer automobile accidents. With more people ordering in and fewer people out socializing, there are fewer opportunities for injuries to occur.

While these are positive circumstances on the surface, they can negatively impact the caseload of a personal injury law firm – which can prove extremely challenging. Fewer cases coming through the door impacts revenue and leave personal injury firms without the cash flow they need to meet necessary overhead costs.

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To address this problem, firms may have to pivot their specific practice areas to other types of injury cases. For instance, nursing home negligence cases have increased substantially as a result of pandemic-related deaths and injuries. Cruise ship liability is another ripe practice area, as well as a host of workplace injury cases. Plenty of work remains available for personal injury firms but taking advantage of it may require a shift in priorities.

The Cost of Legal Support

The practice of personal injury law can be extremely labor-intensive in terms of research, document preparation, third-party communications, and legwork. Solo and small practice attorneys may not have the time to complete all of these necessary tasks without assistance, yet they grapple with the costs of bringing in additional support.

Hiring a new paralegal may be necessary, but it can also be expensive when considering salary, benefits, and the overhead expenses associated with hiring. For all of these reasons, personal injury firms may feel inadequately equipped to serve their clients.

One potential solution for this challenge is to outsource paralegal services. Contract paralegals work on an as-needed basis as independent contractors. They are brought on to handle specific tasks and matters for which they are compensated, but they handle their own taxes, health insurance, and the other ancillary costs that can accompany new hires. By outsourcing their paralegal needs, personal injury firms get the additional assistance they need in a cost-effective manner.

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Keeping Clients and Firm Members Safe

This is a challenge facing many law firms, as they continue measures to promote safety for their members as well as their clients. Even in areas

where social distance restrictions have been eliminated, firm leaders should still keep an eye on local COVID statistics in an effort to minimize risks. When new variants appear or numbers begin to rise, personal injury firms need tools in place to keep business open while also keeping everyone safe.

Technology has proven key to meeting this challenge. Here are just a few of the tech advances that help personal injury firms through this challenge:

- Videoconferencing systems that allow for virtual meetings with clients, third parties, and other firm members.
- Cloud-based document management allows firm members to create, store, organize, and share matter documents and files in the cloud.
- Electronic legal billing enables firms to consistently track time and bill clients for work completed on their cases, no matter where firm members are located.
- Online payment capabilities allow firms to collect compensation from clients remotely. Clients appreciate the convenience of these systems and firms benefit from faster bill payments.

Many legal jurisdictions have also adopted policies for remote filing and adjudication of smaller matters. Various aspects of litigation, including court hearings, mediations, and depositions have been modified in the age of COVID, so personal injury firms also need the technology in place to take full advantage of these offerings.

Staying Competitive

Standing out in a crowd of law firms has always been a feat for personal injury firms, and it continues to pose a challenge today. There are so many options within the market, which is evident by the numerous personal injury ads that crowd the airwaves and billboards.

Meeting this challenge requires a deep dive into the firm's strengths and uniqueness. Firm leaders need to evaluate how and where they can stand apart. For example, a small boutique firm may choose a marketing campaign that centers on personalized services.

A firm that recently experienced a large client win may choose to highlight that win in their advertisements. It may take some time to find, but to stay

competitive in today's market, personal injury firms need to distinguish themselves from other firms.

Another tool for staying competitive is a viable marketing plan. It's not enough to craft a website and hope for visitors. There are a variety of marketing tools available to attract new leads to a firm, and many of them are relatively inexpensive to use. From social media to community events, personal injury attorneys should get creating in their marketing efforts to reach more leads and clients.

Personal Injury Law Firms have Solutions to Meet Firm Challenges

While they may look a bit different in the age of COVID, many of the challenges faced by personal injury attorneys have been around for years. Fortunately, there are viable and proven solutions available to meet these challenges.

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