

# The Importance of Reviews and Ratings in Generating Leads for your Law Firm

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Never before in the history of the legal profession have reviews and ratings had so much influence on a law firm's ability to generate leads and secure clients. This is an entirely new ballgame, where reviews live on the internet forever, easily accessed with just a click of the mouse.

I know this sounds a bit dramatic, but we live in a digital society where the impact of ratings and reviews on law firms has become dramatic. In the past, client opinions were mostly spread by word-of-mouth. Good reviews may result in a few referrals and bad reviews would eventually die down, leaving attorneys with an opportunity to rebuild their reputations. Now, whether good or bad, reviews live on the internet forever, waiting to be found by potential clients.

Consumers overwhelmingly start with an online search when deciding where to do business. They look at published ratings and reviews before deciding whether your law firm is the right fit for their legal needs. It's altogether possible that your online reviews are the first impression a prospect has of your firm. That's why it's important to know what your reviews say and how to utilize them to the advantage of your firm.

## **A Peek Inside your Firm**

Reviews give potential clients insight into the quality of the legal services your firm provides, and prospects expect big numbers. According to one study, nearly 84% of poll participants reported that a law firm would need to have review scores of 4 stars or higher to get their business.

The legal profession is extremely competitive, and prospects want the best attorney representing them. Positive reviews tell prospects about your legal expertise, your attitude towards clients, the competence of your staff, and your ability to meet client expectations. Right or wrong, potential clients depend on reviews to decide whether your firm fits their needs.

## **Quantity Matters**

Prospects also want to see numerous positive reviews when researching you firm online. They don't consider one or two 4-star ratings sufficient to truly establish your practice as top provider of legal services.

For law firms with negative reviews, the number of overall responses becomes even more important. For each negative review, prospects need to see numerous positive ones before deciding to retain your firm's services. For prospective clients – the higher the number positive reviews, the higher the quality of your law firm.

## **Using Ratings and Reviews to Generate Leads**

- **Press releases and marketing materials** – When attorneys within your firm receive high ratings or professional acclaim, use that information to celebrate the firm and bring attention to the quality of the lawyers. If two of your lawyers have been named as top attorneys in your state, why not send out a press release announcing that accomplishment? A publication could pick up the story, providing your practice with valuable (and free) press coverage. You never know. The article could ultimately end up in the hands of a prospect with a very lucrative legal matter.

Don't keep impressive accolades to yourself. Utilize them in your marketing materials to showcase your firm's talents to prospects. Organizations and associations are constantly looking for established attorneys to come in and speak on particular subjects. By highlighting your firm's accomplishments, you may put yourself and your attorneys on the radar for lead-generating speaking opportunities.

- **Search engine results**

Online reviews can improve search engine results on platforms like Google and Bing. In fact, the more reviews your firm has, the more important a

search engine considers your business when placing it within search results.

A significant number of reviews can also improve your SEO keyword results. For example, if your firm handled a divorce and the client leaves a review, the word “divorce” will likely appear within it. Search engines recognize this keyword as updated content, making them more likely to include your firm among results for prospects searching for divorce lawyers.

Higher search engine results offer an organic method of generating leads for your legal practice. You can improve your firm’s searchability by asking clients to leave online reviews.

- **Free marketing**

Positive reviews offer the type of valuable marketing that you can’t buy with the most expensive campaign. This free advertisement is organic and highly trusted by prospects looking for legal services. Think of reviews as mini campaigns that keep working long after the initial review is posted, continually creating brand awareness for your practice.

This free marketing is pushed even further because reviews breed more reviews. When clients see other clients posting about your law firm, they are more likely to jump on board and add reviews of their own. Experts call it “crowd behavior,” so make sure you’re providing stellar legal services that earn crowds of positive reviews.

- **Customer loyalty**

Review sites help promote client loyalty to your firm. Clients who make the effort to leave a review are far more likely to refer your legal services to others and return to your firm for additional legal matters.

The act of leaving a public review furthers the relationship between your practice and the client. These people feel that their comments give them a voice and method for providing feedback about your law firm in a meaningful manner.

If numerous clients choose to leave online reviews, it may even create a community of engagement around your firm. Clients often return to see if

others have commented on their reviews or to engage with other clients about their respective experiences. For the law firm that provides stellar service, this type of community building can go a long way to generating new and repeat leads.

Reviews are a standard part of the business in today's legal industry. With the right understanding and some thoughtful strategy, you can leverage them to generate valuable leads for your firm.