

Lawyers Get YouTube-Style Site

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When it comes to searching for lawyers, Alabama trial attorney Lew Garrison believes people need more information than what they get from directories that simply list names of lawyers.

Potential clients need to learn more about the personal side of the lawyer, as they would when having a conversation, Garrison said. To help make those introductions, Garrison launched a Web site called LegalTube that serves as a video directory and lawyer-search resource.

The Web site went live on Sept. 1 after about four months of development.

"Like anyone, we're just trying to figure out how to get more business and how to get more cases through the door by marketing more effectively," said Garrison, who is partner of the 13-lawyer Birmingham, Ala.-based firm of Heninger Garrison Davis. Garrison's firm handles various civil litigation including asbestos claims, medical malpractice and trucking accidents. The firm has done television advertisements but wanted the ability to provide more information about themselves to potential clients.

That's when Garrison decided to create the site with the help of a Web development and videography team, which handles all of the maintenance and production on the site.

"We wanted to create one site where lawyers could market their services," Garrison said. "It's the next best thing to being in the lawyer's office. It's giving the client a sense of what that person is really like."

INTERVIEW STYLE

The Web site features a graphically rich design with multiple features for users looking for attorneys.

The heart of the site allows people to search for lawyers by practice area and by state. The results of the searches are video snippets of attorneys talking about their practice, their experience in the law and answering general questions about specific areas of the law.

For example, as of last week, the only Connecticut lawyer with a presence on LegalTube was Carter Mario, a Milford-based personal injury lawyer. In Mario's vignette, he discusses auto accident cases with a woman who's conducting the interview in the style of a news-talk television show via satellite feed. The woman appears to be in one city while Mario is talking with the Hartford skyline as a backdrop.

Other attorneys' video segments include tours of law offices and presentations about how and why they got into the practice of law. Most of the videos are about two to three minutes long.

But there's more to the site than lawyers talking about law. There's also an "arresting entertainment" section with lawyers telling lawyer jokes on video and also relating some strange moments they've had while representing clients. The site also posts updates to its reality series, "Law After Dark," which currently features videos from night court proceedings in small towns north of Birmingham.

Garrison said about 50 law firms have signed up to add videos to the site and salespeople are contacting lawyers in every state: "We're loading videos as fast as we can right now."

The cost for adding a video profile depends on the size of the market. Connecticut is considered to be among the largest markets because of its proximity to Boston and New York, so the cost to post a video is \$900 per month.

Contracts run for six months or one year, Garrison said. The LegalTube team will shoot and produce the video snippet for an extra cost, or law firms can shoot their own videos and provide them to LegalTube, Garrison added.

Part of the deal includes exclusivity, Garrison noted. There are 18 practice areas highlighted by the site, and only four lawyers' profiles can be posted in each practice area for a particular state. So with the Connecticut personal injury lawyer search, Mario is now featured along with three out-of-state law firms. No other personal injury lawyer can post a video in that section until one of the current profiles is removed.

"You're not going to be in a directory where it's just page after page of text listings," Garrison said.

It's all an effort to present a more three-dimensional image to the public searching for legal representation, Garrison said. "This is a new way to market legal services," he said. "Everything is headed to the Internet whether we like it or not."