



NOVEMBER 2014
VOLUME 7, ISSUE 11

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Is Your Website or Marketing Company Holding You Hostage?	1
Karen's Customer Service Corner	2
Client Spotlight: Maurer Law	3
Frequently Asked Questions	4
Socktober	4

You can always read, download and sign up for our newsletter at www.FWMnewsletter.com

WELCOME TO THE FAMILY!



Andy Norfleet



Frank Lafferty

Norfleet & Lafferty, LLC, we are so excited to have you join the Foster Web Marketing family! The Social Security disability and workers' compensation attorneys located in Lemoyne, Pennsylvania, use video very effectively and understand the importance of authoritative content. We love having such knowledgeable attorneys on board! Check out their new site at www.norlaflaw.com.

Is Your Website or Marketing Company Holding You Hostage?

by Tom Foster, Founder and CEO at Foster Web Marketing

We recently found out that the credit rating of most search marketing companies is so bad that banks consider them a huge risk. What does this tell you, an attorney, about working with a website and search marketing provider? ***It tells you that handing over your online reputation to one of these companies is fraught with risk.***

Last month, we hosted a very popular webinar all about the sneaky tricks these marketers use to separate attorneys from their money. ***Our webinar covered 11 tricks to watch out for, and to get you started, here are three questions you can ask to determine if you're the victim of one of these shady tactics:***



- 1 Who owns your domain name?** If it's not you, then fix this ASAP. Shady web providers often purchase domain names for their clients, and sometimes, they simply lease them out. Why? Because they want control, and in the worst-case scenario, they want to hold your domain name hostage. ***Protect yourself:*** Even if you're not thinking about changing your provider, find out who owns your domain name. If it's your provider, ask to transfer the domain name to your own account (we recommend GoDaddy for ease of use). This can be a time-consuming process depending on how cooperative your provider is going to be, so don't wait until the last minute. However, if you've signed an agreement with your provider to merely lease the domain name, you may be out of luck and have to start over with a new domain name.
- 2 Who owns your content?** Like your domain name, some web providers either own the content written for their clients, or they lease the content. Either way, if you try to leave the provider, you may be leaving with zero content, or you'll be asked to pay an exorbitant sum to take the content with you (we've seen charges of \$60,000!) ***Protect yourself:*** Review your contract and figure out who owns your content. If you are leasing the content, ask how much it would be to own your content outright. If you have to start over because you can't take the content with you—or if you're unwilling to pay the price—start writing new content NOW so you can launch your new site with a healthy number of pages for the search engines to find.
- 3 Whose name are the accounts associated with your business listed under?** Often, marketing companies will create accounts for your law firm under their own master account. They'll do this when setting up your Google My Business page, Facebook, Twitter, and various legal profile and business listing websites. Why? This makes it easier for them and harder for you to leave. ***Protect yourself:*** Get a detailed list of every single account that has been created on behalf of your business. This means local listing and review sites (Yelp, Avvo, etc.), your Google Analytics and Webmaster Tools, social media— all of them. Ask your provider to start transferring each account into an account that YOU control. Keep a spreadsheet of this information, noting when you last changed the password on the accounts and who has access to them. Time consuming? Yes. But do it because your online reputation is critical to the health and future of your firm. 🌐



Get the list of all 11 shady tactics to watch out for and how to protect yourself by going to the November newsletter section of FWMnews.com



Karen's Customer Service Corner: Is Your Email Signature Line Costing You Potential Clients? by Karen Hoff

I receive hundreds of emails a day. Many of them are missing critical elements to improve the user experience for the person on the receiving end of your message. If it is hard to tell who is sending the email, you can really turn off a potential client. To make life easier for everyone, you should include the following in your email signature:

- 1 Your full name.** People want to verify whom the email is coming from.
- 2 Your title.** What is your position in the firm?
- 3 Your firm name.** Where do you work?
- 4 Your email address.** Sure, you can make people mine the "From" field to get your email address, but it is better to make it easy for them by listing your email address in your signature
- 5 Your phone number.** Again, make it easy for people to contact you!
- 6 Your WEBSITE.** The recipient should have an easy time

getting to your site. Don't make him or her search for it!

Following are some additional best practices for email signatures:

- All email systems and software products (including CRMs) have the ability to add an automatic signature line to the outgoing email. Use it!
- Check your email signature on ALL of your devices and software products. If you send email from webmail, a desktop mail application like Outlook, your phone, or a tablet, your signature needs to be set up on each one. Be sure to keep it consistent. Nothing is more annoying than getting an email

from somebody and not being sure who it is because the signature line simply says, "Sent from my iPhone"!

- Remember, email is another way to engage your users, offer more information, and establish your authority and expertise. Don't squander this opportunity—include a tagline or favorite quote. You can also add special event announcements to your signature. Do you have a special deal going on that you want folks to know about? Add it to your email signature, but don't forget to remove it when the event is over.
- Be careful with graphics in your

email signature line. Some of your receivers will have "text only" designations for email, which means your wonderful graphics will either not display properly or will come across as attachments. When you create a new signature line, send it to other email addresses (friends, family, or your personal email address) for review. Check that it is displaying nicely in different email systems and setups. Keep it simple, and you won't run into issues.

Do not use all caps in your signature line unless it is relevant to your branding. This is akin to yelling, and no potential client wants to be yelled at. 🌐



Do you have questions about setting up your email signature line? Kyle and I are available to clients every business day from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET at tickets@fosterwebmarketing.com or 844-531-4797.



Having a professional, modern website design is essential for impressing potential clients when they compare you against your competition.



Our software, Dynamic Self-Syndication™ (DSS™), is a website content management and inbound marketing tool for professionals.



Get the clients and cases you want with creative and strategic marketing solutions that are proven to work.



High-quality professional videos help you build trust, improve your website's visibility and show off your personality to attract and convert more of your perfect clients.



Our DSS Team: Chris, Yung, and Shannon

WHAT'S NEW IN DSS?

"The trend has been mobile was winning. It has now won." (Eric Schmidt, Google—2014)

What do you need to take your website to the next level here at the end of 2014? A super-optimized mobile website! Why? Mobile is becoming more and more important to law firms. In fact, we see up to 66 percent of traffic coming to attorney websites via mobile. That's not even counting tablets—just smart phones!

It is clear that mobile is the future. We have awesome mobile websites for our clients right now, but we've been investing some major time and energy in designing a brand new mobile solution to take advantage of Google's most recent mobile recommendations.

Following are some of the new features:

- Overlay screens that allow pop-up contact forms and direction maps so users can get important info without leaving the page they're on
- Faster load times for a more seamless mobile user experience
- Easier-to-navigate, condensed mobile menus

As always, our mobile sites follow Google's guidelines and are designed to display the same content as the desktop sites—completely optimized for a sleek, speedy user experience. We know you don't want your competitors to beat you in capturing the attention of mobile site visitors!

Want to learn more or find out what it will take to upgrade your mobile site? Talk to Karen or Kyle at 844-531-4797.



[Facebook.com/DynamicSelfSyndication](https://www.facebook.com/DynamicSelfSyndication)



[Twitter.com/FWM_DSS](https://twitter.com/FWM_DSS)



Mike Maurer, Maurer Law

Client Spotlight: Maurer Law

by Jamie Kelly

We began working with Mike Maurer of Maurer Law before we launched his website. Because of this, we were able to properly optimize the brand new website before it launched, giving us an advantage.

We wanted Maurer Law, a brand new law firm in the Raleigh, North Carolina, area, to be found online in local and organic searches—and we wanted to do this using authentic, organic marketing techniques—not tricks and shortcuts.

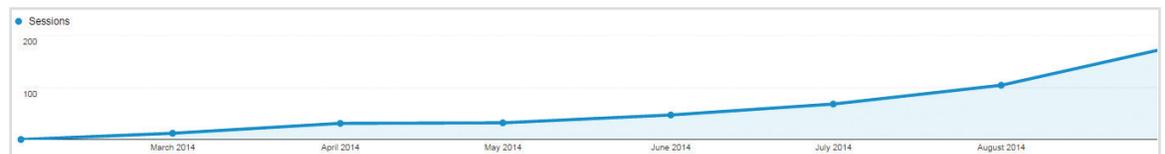
A Highly Effective Two-Step Plan: Authoritative Content and a Local Presence

The first step was to add dynamic, authoritative content to the site. Mike is an excellent writer and is able to effectively speak to the subjects that most interest his client base. My role was to ensure that every piece on his site aligned with his practice's goals and was effectively optimized. Working together in this way, we soon found that his content was performing exceptionally well, getting the attention it deserved in a relatively short amount of time.

The second step was to establish Maurer Law's presence in local listings as soon as possible. Both the firm and Mike were new to the area, so he had zero name recognition or local credibility. **We had to start from scratch, setting up, verifying, and optimizing his listing accounts.** This included the big guys like Google My Business, Bing Places, and Facebook. We also updated his existing profiles on Justia.com, Avvo.com, and other attorney-specific sites.

The Results: Consistent, Steady Growth

This two-pronged approach of supplementing outstanding on-site content with a consistent presence across the spectrum of social media and local directories has proven very successful. Since the site launched six months ago, we've seen significant and consistent organic traffic growth:



Organic Traffic Mar-Sept 2014*

We've also noticed a similar trend in overall site traffic. This is because we haven't focused solely on organic traffic. Instead, we have worked toward building a well-rounded site traffic profile that includes a solid foundation of organic traffic as well as a variety of other traffic sources and several high-quality niched paid directories.



Total Site Traffic Mar-Sept 2014

Your Takeaway

This type of growth isn't an anomaly. **If you're willing to commit to providing the best possible content each and every time you write, and if you do what it takes to get your local and industry-specific listings on point, you can achieve similar results.**

While SEO tactics change over time, what will never change is Google's thirst for good content and its insistence on consistent information about your firm online (your NAP: firm name, firm address, and firm phone number). So get out there: Write killer content in concert with a great editor and search engine expert, be sure your local listings are claimed, optimized, and mistake free, invest in the best paid directories in your niche, and you too can build a foundation of sustainable traffic that will lead you to the cases and clients you want. 🌐



For more help on writing quality content and establishing your local presence, visit the November 2014 section of FWMnews.com.

FAQ



Laura Johnson

Q: What is a domain name and why do I care if I own it or not?

A: A domain name is your web address. Just like a physical address, it's where your website "lives". And just like your law firm's address, this address is searchable and mappable.

For example, the domain name for our website is www.fosterwebmarketing.com. This is our primary address; it's where we want to be found and where you'll be taken should you search for our business. And if someone searches for your law firm online, he or she will be taken to the domain name that you use for your website.

Should You Own Your Domain Name?

Owning your domain name as opposed to renting it is similar to owning a home versus renting. Renting a house may save money, and in some ways is easier, but you have little to no control over your home. If you decide to do any repairs or upgrades, that's on you—you'll not reap any benefits should the homeowner decide to kick you out and sell the house. The same applies to owning versus leasing your domain name.

If you don't own your domain, you don't have ultimate control over your website. Your brand, your good name, is in the hands of someone else—someone who can do as he or she wishes with what should be yours. And if you decide to leave your web provider and it owns your domain, you may be charged an astronomical fee to buy it outright—or you may not be able to take it with you at all if you signed paperwork agreeing to merely lease the name.

My advice is to find out today who owns your domain name. If it's not you, determine what it's going to take to transfer ownership, and begin this process as soon as possible. Otherwise, you could end up starting over if you leave your provider!



Socktober

by Tom Foster, Founder and CEO at Foster Web Marketing

What gets your staff excited to come to work? Is it the great perks, friendly office, and awesome career opportunities? Of course! And how about a chance to give back to the community and have a good time with their coworkers? Definitely.

Things are no different here! A few years ago, the FWM team jumped on the tradition of Socktober. It really happened organically. A few team members started wearing crazy socks to work and it soon grew into a friendly competition. We even had a sock manufacturer donate socks to one of the teams last year! But the real point of Socktober is to raise awareness and donations for the homeless (soulpancake.com/socktober).

Fast forward to this year. A few of our staff members asked if we could turn this somewhat silly, informal competition into a way to give back to our local charities. So this year was a little different. We divided into three teams, and each team selected a local charity to represent. Points were awarded based on participation and on how many clients the teams could sweet-talk into joining the fun. We even had sock pictures from as far away as Australia, thanks to an enthusiastic client "down under"!

Socktober ended with a clothing and food drive for the local charities selected, and Foster Web Marketing made a cash donation to each of them. Our team enjoyed the friendly, creative competition and we were able to do a small part to help the larger community.

The teams are:

- **Team Nerds**, supporting: The Katherine K. Hanley Family Shelter in Fairfax, Virginia
- **Team Geeks**, supporting: Artemis House in Arlington, Virginia
- **Team Video**, supporting: The Embry Rucker Community Shelter in Reston, Virginia



Now we are a marketing company, and we have a business to run. Did Socktober help us sell websites or get our clients more web traffic or contacts? Not directly. But this month-long event drew the team together and encouraged collaboration and creativity. It was also a great reminder that while we focus on the latest Google algorithm change or what's new in website coding, there are people less fortunate than us who don't know where their next meal is coming from or where they'll sleep during the cold winter nights. Kind of puts it all in perspective!

I really want to thank our clients who have inspired us with their own generosity in their communities. As your marketing company, we are privileged to be in a position where we can see what some of you do for the less fortunate—with little thanks or fanfare. I feel blessed to be able to work with such great attorneys and small business owners, and I feel blessed to have a passionate, enthusiastic team right here at Foster Web Marketing. 🌍



Learn how to get involved in national campaigns, and find an event promotion timeline at FWMNews.com!

**WEBSITES, SOFTWARE AND
MARKETING FOR ATTORNEYS**

FOSTER WEB MARKETING | 10555 MAIN STREET | SUITE 470 | FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA 22030

TOLL FREE: (844) 531-4797 | DSS: (866) 448-8999 | FAX: (703) 997-1309 | WWW.FOSTERWEBMARKETING.COM

The *Killer Website Marketing System for Attorneys* Newsletter is a monthly publication of Foster Web Marketing. To subscribe, visit www.FWMnewsletter.com

Design and publication by Zine Graphics & Print (www.zinegraphics.com). Copyright © 2014 by Foster Web Marketing.