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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

How Google’s Penguin Caused Cuddigan Law to Lose it All (And How We Helped Them Get it Back) 1

Karen’s Customer Service Corner 2

Mobile Traffic Is Eclipsing Desktop: Is Your Mobile Website Good Enough? 3

Frequently Asked Questions 4

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

WELCOME TO THE FAMILY!



We are so excited to announce the launch of EasleyFirm.com.

Darwyn Easley practices criminal law out of Fairfax, VA, and he was in the office right next door to us when we were first introduced! Congratulations on your new website, Darwyn!

How Google’s Penguin Caused Cuddigan Law to Lose it All (And How We Helped Them Get it Back)

by Tom Foster, Founder and CEO at Foster Web Marketing



Sean Cuddigan Tim Cuddigan

When Cuddigan Law came on as a client, we performed a thorough website audit, including a close look at the backlink profile. And unlike many law firms, it had a pretty strong backlink profile. This means that the firm had a good assortment of high-quality, relevant websites linking to its site.

Based on this analysis, we built them an awesome new website and thought all was well...until they fired their web provider, a Big Name Legal Web Provider You Would Know If I Would Tell You. Curiously enough, a few months later we were shocked to find that their site now had thousands of harmful, toxic backlinks.

Where Do Bad Backlinks Come From?

We’ve seen this happen more than once: low quality links to a client’s site showing up only after they move their site to Foster Web Marketing. There are two potential explanations for this:

- **Links that are slow to show up from a previous provider.** If your previous provider or marketing company graciously signed you up for a bushel of low-quality but easy-to-find links, they may take time to show up—as much as a year! Why? These low quality links often come from “link farms.” Link farm sites aren’t updated often, so requests can sit for some time. This means that these links may seem to suddenly appear when they are updated.
- **Jealous ex-providers trying to win back clients.** Sometimes when we take clients over they start out with a decent backlink profile, but once the site launches we notice a trend—they start accumulating bad backlinks. It is quite curious. These clients all come from the same provider *and* they almost always get an email from this provider around the same time the bad links start to negatively affect their rankings. The email says, in so many words, “We noticed that your web visibility has tanked. It could be that your new provider doesn’t know what they’re doing! Please come back so we can fix the damage they have done!” Highly suspicious timing indeed.

Bad Backlinks, Bad Timing

Whatever the reason, the Cuddigans’ backlink profile started to get worse and with the worst timing possible: just before Google released one of their so-called “Penguin” search algorithm updates in October 2013. Google’s Penguin updates are notorious for causing sites with low-quality backlinks to suffer in search results, and the Cuddigans did not escape unscathed.

The Penguin Aftermath

Before the site was nailed by Penguin, the Cuddigans were ranking extremely well for the top keywords in their local market. Then, in an instant, their website went from page one to page three for those choice keyword phrases. The effect this had on their website traffic and business was devastating.

The Foster Web Marketing Team got to work to rescue their website. We identified the low-quality backlinks, contacted the webmasters of the sites where they originated and asked to have the links removed. If we were unsuccessful in getting them removed, we submitted the links in what is called a “disavow file” to Google. Backlink cleanup is very time consuming, and can be risky—we know of clients who tried to clean up their own backlinks, and ended up making the problem worse by getting rid of links that were actually helping their site rank well! Oops!

— continued on page 4



KAREN'S CUSTOMER SERVICE CORNER

by Karen Hoff

Building a Happy Environment

Do your employees love to come into the office? If not, prospects can feel that, and it gives a negative energy to everything you do to make them happy.

First—all this talk of “energy” and “feeling”...mumbo jumbo, right? I have news for you: having happy employees leads to more success for your business, and this is a well-researched fact. Sales improve and productivity rises because employees are more engaged.

So how do you build a happy environment for your staff—and consequently your prospects and clients?

- 1 Listen to them.** Not only does it let them know you value their opinion, but it will also give you a ton of insight into what will make them happy, what challenges they experience, and issues you might not be aware of. Carve out some time to meet with your staff individually on a regular basis.
- 2 Take action.** For example, if employees say they want a better health plan, have someone do research into new plans, costs, and impacts and present it to the staff. It might be that you already have the best, or you could be missing an opportunity. Either way, they will appreciate that you listened and took action.
- 3 Think about the physical environment in the office.** As many FWM clients know, our offices are all brightly colored, we have a

lot of windows (that open!), and our kitchen is stocked with snacks, coffee, soda, and booze for impromptu happy hours. Not only is the environment a more positive place to be, it also increases employee interaction and friendships.



Having happy employees leads to more success for your business.

- 4 Get buy-in.** Show your staff how their actions contribute to the success of your company. They want to contribute, but not knowing how they can contribute or not understanding the positive impact they already have can be stressful and draining.
- 5 Appreciate!** Show your appreciation with group recognition, small get-togethers, occasional paid lunches, or involvement in charities they find important. Try assigning one person on your staff to help you with this: he or she can make birthdays, happy hours, lunches, and gifts happen for you, or at least alert you ahead of time! 🌐



For more ways to spread happiness, call our Happiness Director at 844-531-4797 or send an email to tickets@fosterwebmarketing.com.



Our DSS Team: Chris, Yung, and Shannon

WHAT'S NEW IN DSS?

2015 is here, and we've set big goals for DSS! Our overall goals are to make DSS easier to use and ensure it gives you the information you need to make smart marketing decisions. **Here are three ways we plan to meet these goals:**

- 1 Customer Relationship Management (CRM) improvements:** Many clients have embraced DSS's CRM system for sending newsletters, setting up follow-up campaigns on offers, and keeping track of web leads. In 2015 we'll be adding enhanced reporting, so you can see how well your newsletters and campaigns are performing, as well as more user-friendly email templates and functionality for tracking your clients throughout their lifecycle with your firm.
- 2 The DSS dashboard, which currently pulls information from Google Analytics about how each piece of content is performing, is getting an overhaul!** We are combining information from Google Analytics with the CRM and social media to show you how your pages are performing, which pages are converting visitors into contacts, and which pieces are popular in your social outlets. We will also be giving you comparison data against other attorneys in our system, so you can see how you rank as far as contacts, traffic, and conversion rates! Nothing like a little friendly competition to get your marketing juices flowing.
- 3 You can also expect to see social media integration this year.** Ultimately you'll be able to share your content on social media from DSS, and then view the engagement rate and insights right in DSS!

Our goal is to make DSS your one-stop-shop for all of your marketing efforts. We're listening to your suggestions, so give us a call at 844-531-4797 or email us at tickets@fosterwebmarketing.com with your great ideas.



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.

MOBILE TRAFFIC IS ECLIPSING DESKTOP:

Is Your Mobile Website Good Enough?

by Tom Foster, Founder and CEO at Foster Web Marketing

Mobile is a big deal. Each year, mobile steals more and more traffic from desktops.

And this isn't just me regurgitating what I've read; our SEO team has been steadily collecting data on the hundreds of sites we maintain, and what we found might surprise you:

When comparing traffic from 2013 to 2014, the drop in desktop traffic is directly correlated to the increase in smartphone traffic. So when a website loses 10 percent in desktop traffic, it gains 10 percent in mobile traffic.

In 2013 and earlier, desktop traffic always trumped mobile. Not so anymore! Increasingly, we find clients whose mobile traffic eclipses desktop.

Fact is that mobile will continue this trend. Our phones are now part of our lives. We don't leave the house, go to work, or even have a conversation without our phones nearby. And not only do the vast majority of your clients own phones, they own powerful phones—phones that will only get more powerful. Soon mobile devices will be completely ubiquitous.

So it's clear that having a mobile website is crucial to any marketing plan...but of course not all mobile sites are created equal.

The Results From our Mobile Website Tests: How Does Your Site Stack Up?

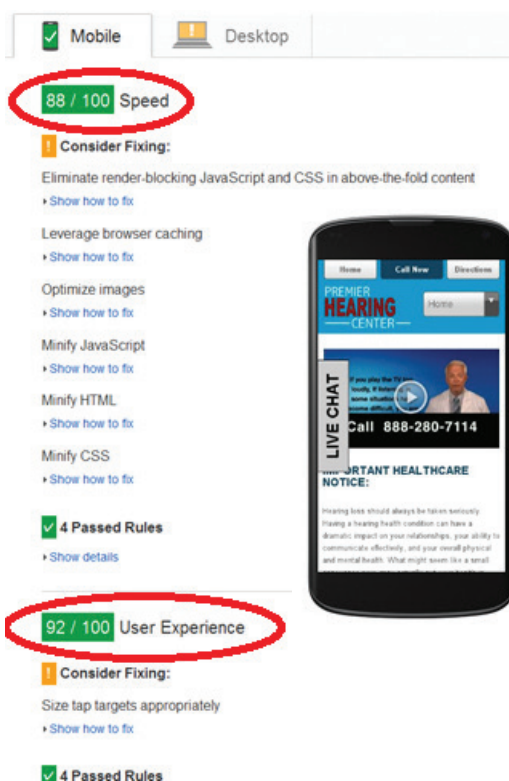
The website testing tool we like best is Google's Page Speed Insights. As part the recent audit of our mobile websites, we ran the majority of our mobile sites through the tool. We were pleased to find that none of our mobile website designs fell below the 50 percent mark, the cutoff of what is considered an "excellent" score. In fact, they were all well above this!

However, we weren't content with the scores; we knew we could do better! Here is an example of one website, the results typical for the vast majority of our sites. As you can see, the scores are very good—just not good enough for our team!

Site speed is crucial to the success of a mobile website, and at 88/100 we knew we had room for improvement because we want our sites to be lightning fast with an awesome user experience. With the help of our DSS Jedi Chris Abbott and our expert design team, we set out to improve our scores.

As you can see on the next page, their efforts were rewarded handsomely:

— continued on page 4



FAQ



Zach Stone

Q: How Do I Track Mobile Traffic in Analytics?

A: Mobile users are not the same

as desktop users. If someone is doing a mobile search, he is looking for quick information that is easy to understand. It is critical to have an optimized mobile site if you're going to keep up with your competition, and it's important to know that your mobile site is working for you, and not against you!

Tracking your mobile traffic is a very simple and important way to monitor how useful your mobile site is. We've gathered data over a four-year period to see how much mobile traffic our attorney client websites receive. On average, mobile search for our clients has increased 5 percent each year!

To see the data for your own mobile site, log into your Google Analytics account, and in the left sidebar you will see an "Audience" category. Under here, look for **Mobile > Overview**. This will tell you how many people are coming to your site via desktop, tablet, or mobile device. If you see that your mobile site has a high bounce rate, it could indicate something is wrong.

You should be checking out your mobile site on a regular basis (if you don't already) to see how it feels to navigate from a users' perspective. If it seems awkward, slow, or not intuitive, you're probably not going to get much use out of it. It's time to get that site optimized!



To get an optimized mobile site, call us at 844-531-4797, or email us at tickets@fosterwebmarketing.com.

FAQ



Molly McCormick

Q: How Can I Use LinkedIn to Get Referrals?

A: LinkedIn is a great platform to communicate with other professionals in your field, and you can even get referrals

here! Use what you already have—your expertise, authoritative content, and winning personality—to educate, engage, and establish yourself as a thought leader.

LinkedIn users are looking for information. Share your knowledge and expertise in groups and on your profile.

Use your business page to post content regularly, and use your personal profile to act as your firm's brand ambassador. **Educate your audience by sharing what you know!**



Engage with your connections by asking questions, commenting on their posts, and leaving feedback. Seek out people in your field, and people who are interested in what you have to say. If you share information with your connections, other people will see this and it will lend credibility to your brand.

Becoming a thought leader is critical to your success online, but it's also critical to your career! If you are constantly learning and sharing information, you will not only become a better attorney, but you will also be a great source for other attorneys who have questions. If you see a really great blog post from another attorney's website, share it! **Establish your authority by showing your audience that you're paying attention.** Becoming a thought leader will be the tipping point for getting referrals. This is the best way to become "the attorney who comes to mind."



Visit FWMNews.com to learn more about LinkedIn for lawyers.

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How Google's Penguin Caused Cuddigan Law to Lose it All (And How We Helped Them Get it Back)

Once the Cuddigans' backlink profile was cleaned up, we had to wait until Google ran another Penguin search algorithm update. We expected that the changes we made to the Cuddigans' website would be found by this Google update, and the website would recover lost ground.

The Light at the End of the Tunnel

In October 2014, Google *finally* ran a Penguin update. The moment they did, Cuddigan shot back up to page one, so all of the work and the wait paid off.

What are the lessons here? How can you, a business owner, protect your website from toxic backlink profiles and position yourself for long-term success and a healthy web presence?

- *Keep an eye on your backlink profile, so you can spot if any unexpected links show up that may hurt your site. We use Google Webmaster Tools to monitor backlinks.*
- *Earn more high-quality links to your site—this is a never-ending task in marketing! Check out FWMNews.com for an excellent article on how to do this!*
- *Write awesome content that is worth linking to. Give other high-quality websites a reason to link to you!* 🌐



If you've been hit by Penguin or suspect that your former (or current) web provider is participating in shady link strategies please call us at 844-531-4797. We can perform a free site analysis which includes a thorough look at your backlink profile.

— continued from page 3

Mobile Traffic Is Eclipsing Desktop: Is Your Mobile Website Good Enough?

Building a Killer Mobile Website

The reason our websites score so well is that we design each of our mobile websites with the following goals in mind:

- Make all mobile sites user-friendly*
- Integrate mobile designs with the associated desktop site*
- Optimize load times*
- Ensure that minimal clicks are required for users to get the information they need to make decisions*

Does your website check all of these boxes? If the user experience is poor, you could be losing up to 50 percent of your new leads. I know that I can't afford to lose that many clients; can you? 🌐

The screenshot shows a performance audit interface with two tabs: 'Mobile' (selected) and 'Desktop'. Under the 'Mobile' tab, there are two main sections:

- Speed:** Scored 91 / 100. A red circle highlights this score. Below it, a 'Consider Fixing:' section lists several items: 'Leverage browser caching', 'Optimize images', 'Minify JavaScript', 'Minify CSS', and 'Minify HTML'. Each item has a 'Show how to fix' link. Below this list, it says '5 Passed Rules' with a 'Show details' link.
- User Experience:** Scored 99 / 100. A red circle highlights this score. Below it, a 'Consider Fixing:' section lists one item: 'Size tap targets appropriately' with a 'Show how to fix' link. Below this, it says '4 Passed Rules'.

On the right side of the interface, there is a mobile phone mockup displaying a website for 'HEARING CENTER'. The website has a 'CONTACT US +' button, a 'LIVE CHAT' button, and a phone number '888-280-7114'. At the bottom, it says 'IMPORTANT HEALTHCARE NOTICE'.



For more tips, along with detailed insights into what makes a killer mobile website design and specific, actionable mobile marketing advice visit the January webinar section of FWMNews.com!