



Success Story from Chris and Mischelle Davis



This time last year Chris and I were using FindLaw to manage our firm's website. We were with FindLaw for more than three years and it was a constant uphill battle. Their website management tool was very difficult to use; it would take the account management team months to make simple changes to our site; they offered no real SEO support; our website was periodically down; there was constant turnover in our account management team; it was difficult to get a customer support representative on the phone; and it was very, very expensive.

I would email them lists of software bugs and errors, feature requests, and wish lists that always seemed to go into a black hole. For most of the time that we were FindLaw customers I was still working at Microsoft running marketing for the US Services Division. On numerous occasions I offered to connect the FindLaw development team to groups at Microsoft that could help them and they ignored the offer. I later found out that they didn't develop the software themselves but bought the tool from another software company and thus had no control over fixing the software or adding features. By the time that I decided to come help Chris manage and grow the firm I was completely fed up with FindLaw.

We met Tom Foster last June. I was instantly impressed. He was giving a presentation on Web 2.0 and he seemed to be really putting into practice the concepts that I knew about from my high-tech days—things that had flown over the heads of the FindLaw guys. And he helped to put many things into a practical usable perspective for me. I learned a great deal from Tom.

But I was still gun shy from my experience with FindLaw. I was afraid to move our site to Foster Web Marketing. I was afraid to give up control again. So I spent several months trying to manage our website on my own using Microsoft FrontPage. But I just couldn't shake the feeling that the Foster web management tool and the Foster team was somehow different. So I began talking to Tom and Ken.

We moved our site to Foster Web Marketing in mid-December. When you move your website there always an initial dip which can be scary. But within several months we saw a 68% increase in our web traffic (from Dec 07 to April 08). And our website placement in Google search results began to creep up higher and higher until we now show up in the top 4 search results for most of the search terms that we track.

But what is just as important (and probably a huge contributing factor to our success) has been the relationship that we have with the Foster team. They welcome feedback about the DSS tool. In fact, they are proactive about asking for feedback from customers. They quickly return calls or emails about support issues or my silly questions. They offer educational opportunities to help customers successfully use the DSS and understand critical Web 2.0 and SEO concepts. They truly understand that their success as a company is directly tied the success of their customers. They know that collaboration is key.

We couldn't be more pleased about our decision to work with Foster Web Marketing and we are happy to be an active member of the DSS user community.

Google Index Updates

From time to time, Google performs a major update on its search index to extract and jettison sites that it deems SPAM or which contribute nothing to the annals of human expression and knowledge. When Google claims that there are 8 billion pages in its index, they want to ensure that all 8 billion have value to someone (other than the publishers of the pages). Google uses updates to identify suspect pages and banish them from Google land.

Google doesn't tell anyone about these pending updates, of course. No announcements or press conferences are held, no broadcast messages go out to site owners across the world. No warnings or alerts are provided. One day, an update just happens, and many site owners are left with a site that isn't what it used to be.

Google's most recent update – dubbed Jagger in the search engine consulting community – took place in October. Since then, many attorneys who've enjoyed top positions for their favorite keywords in recent months may be wondering where their site went. Other attorneys, especially those with sites using the services of Foster Consulting, didn't feel a thing, and in fact, may even have a better presence in Google's all-important index.

Foster Consulting has always espoused a hands-on approach to maintaining our client sites. Through the development of a simple and effective content management system – Dynamic Self-Service – we provide our clients with the means to match Google's hunger for new content and information, on pages designed to appeal to search engine indexing standards. By educating our clients about the way Google sees the Internet, we've helped them develop profitable strategies that make the most of their investment on the web.

While other site developers may promise an easy path to the top pages on Google, MSN, Yahoo and other important search engines, those in the know realize that (short of paying thousands a month in advertising costs) consistent placement on the engines takes time and effort. Foster Consulting can show you these important marketing steps. And if you don't have time to do it, we can do it for you through CMP, our monthly content management program. For more information about how our services can work for you, contact Foster Consulting.

Helpful Tips

DSS Webinar

Join us on Wednesday, August 20th at 1:00 PM EDT!

In this session, Ace Web Blogger Larry Buckfire (buckfirelaw.com) will be showing off his blogging skills and demonstrating exactly how he gets to page one of Google for all the terms he wants using DSS.

Space is limited. Reserve your Webinar seat now at:
<https://www2.aotomeeting.com/register/139105260>

What's Coming to DSS?

This is all stuff we are still working on for you:

- Video Module
- Integration with Blue Orchid Marketing
- .Mobi Integration
- Photo Gallery Upgrade

Tips from Mischelle Davis...

Here are all the little tips that Mischelle Davis tries to keep in mind when she is blogging on her website. Since implementing these little gems she has seen a huge increase in their page rank in the Google search results.

- Keep this thought in the back of your mind: somewhere out there is a person, news agency, website, etc. who is getting your blog's RSS feed delivered to them or is using your content on their site. Putting links to your site in your blog posts is a very, very good thing!!!
- Search engines love dynamic websites. Blogging is a quick and easy way to add content to your site and keep it fresh and new.
- When you post a new article in your site's library. Create a blog post about it (it doesn't need to be very long) and link to the article. Also provide a link to the main library page.
- Same applies to new videos in your video library.
- Got new firm news? Jury verdict, settled case, award, etc? Wrote a new book? Add it to the "firm news" section of your site, blog about it, and provide a link to both the news article and the main news page.
- This month's newsletter hot off the press? Create a PDF version, add it to your online library, blog about it, and provide a link. In the blog posting give a general overview or abstract of what is in the newsletter.
- Are you a PI attorney? If so, blog about accidents. I check the newspaper and TV station websites every day. The blog post doesn't have to be long-just paraphrase the source material-but don't copy it word-for-word. If the source material lists the accident victim's name then mention it in your post. Every month we get visitors who found our site when searching for news about their accident online.
- About 80% of the time I put a deep link, that is a link to our site that is NOT the main website, in my blog posts.
- When I am blogging about an accident I will often add something like the following to the end of the post: "The Davis Law Group frequently represents car accident victims who are in similar circumstances. If you would like to find out more about these types of accidents, injuries, insurance claims, etc. visit our car accident practice area page. Or call our office at 206-727-4000." There are a number of variations of this basic idea. In this particular example I would have both "Davis Law Group," "car accident "and" car accident practice area" link to spots within our website.
- I look for ways to include words that reflect the type of accident, injuries, etc. and then make those words clickable to spots within our site.
- I also load my headline and tags with relevant keywords. Again, because we are a PI firm I focus on accident and injury words. Don't know what words to use? Go visit your Google Analytics report and check out what keywords visitors are using to find your site.

Newspapers are Going Local with Online Advertising Revenue

An article in *The Wall Street Journal* mentions that newspapers aren't even bothering to go after the out of town market for online ads. Most of the ad revenue for the online advertising is coming from local sales.

Just because someone from Peoria, Illinois can access the daily newspaper of Tallahassee, Florida whenever he wants doesn't mean that he WILL. This serves as an example as to why it's important to stick with the immediate geographical area of your firm. While you might get the odd case from the other side of the state, it's more practical to keep your nets closer to your own boat.

Focusing your keywords, content and news updates on your immediate geographical area will bring in much better results.

If you don't design your own life plan, chances are you'll fall into someone else's plan. And guess what they have planned for you. Not much.

Jim Rohn

Important News!

Search Engine Optimization

Q: Do keywords in domains need to be separated with hyphens in order for search engines to read them?

A: The ability of search engines to parse keywords that haven't been separated by hyphens is always a popular topic. However, our research suggests that what's really most important is that your URLs are easy for search engines to crawl. That means using a site map, minimizing dynamic URLs (the ones full of ?, =, and & symbols), avoiding session IDs (such as &id=), and keeping your directory structure fairly shallow.

Beyond that, it's always going to be a good idea to have your keywords in your domain name, since people will usually link to you with the keywords found in your domain name. Keywords in the rest of your URL are primarily important because they can make your page appear more relevant to searchers, enticing more people to click on your listing. And, of course, they can also provide a small ranking advantage

However, to answer the question - Yes, you need to use hyphens, because currently most search engines are not parsing keywords out of URLs if those keywords are run-together and not separated with hyphens.

Important Questions to Ask About Your Site:

"How recent is your content?" - Is the information on your site current and update, and can it help someone who is seeking the most current information? I.e., does the owner of the site take proper care of this site and ensure its continued relevance to the public?

"What other sites link to yours?" - Are there other sites that can vouch for the value of the information on your site? Do other sites link to your site to reference information? If so, this contributes to your PageRank score, a critical factor in Google's index.

"How old is your site?" - How long have you owned your domain name? On today's Internet, the number of spam sites greatly outnumbers legitimate sites. If you've owned your domain name for a year or more, then that gives your site credibility. The longer you own it, the better your placement.

Goals are dreams with deadlines.

Diana Scharf Hunt

Google is still king of the search engines

An internet tracking group called comScore released its June 2008 reports, and in case anyone would dare to think otherwise, Google is still on top of the search engine business. According to the report, 61.5% of June searches happened through Google. Its nearest competitor is Yahoo, which only captured just over 20% of internet searches. While doing well with Yahoo, MSN, Ask and all the rest is nothing to sneeze at; having a solid ranking on Google will do much more to improve the visibility of your site.

Q: What are the best video search engines to focus on?

A: These are great video search engines to start with. Create accounts at each one of these video sites and start adding your videos!

- Youtube.com
- Video.google.com
- Video.yahoo.com
- Revver.com
- Video.aol.com
- Video.msn.com



What will happen to your web site if you go temporarily insane and end your Content Management Program (CMP)

Our partners need to know that there are some very important aspects to the Basic and Pro levels of the Content Management Programs that are **fundamental to organic search engine success**.

Please see the chart below for specifics for each level.

PLEASE NOTE: If you are not involved in a CMP plan with FWM, all of these features and action items disappear. You are on your own. The DSS is a great tool that allows you to do most things you need to do. However, just be aware that unless you are at least in the CMP Basic Level, you cannot blog on your site through DSS and there are no RSS Feeds. You will not be dynamically linked to all other partners, so all of those high-ranking pages from other partners that would normally be pointing to your site endorsing you are gone. You will receive no newsletter and no invitations to webinars to learn how to make your site even more productive. The Pro Plan of CMP will not be there to help you with the innovative keyword rich content and you have the added pressure of knowing that you have to do it all on your own or you may drop in the rankings. The value is there, and you need to stay the course to make the most of the services that Foster Web Marketing is offering.

We are here to help you; however, if you are not involved in the CMP then you will be missing many of the tools that others are using to help their web sites realize much success. CMP is a true asset to your website - and ultimately your firm's - success.

Basic \$500/month	Pro \$1,500/month	Platinum \$2,500/month
<i>At the very least you need...</i>	<i>If you don't have time to do it all yourself!</i>	<i>This is the full service package, we do it all for you...</i>
FWM Network: Instantly connects you via contextual links to all other FWM clients in non-competing states giving you a huge boost right at new site launch.	A CMP Manager: A real live person that will make sure content is focusing on the kind of cases or prospects you want.	Two additional articles (5 Articles!)
BLOG: Blogs provide commentary or legal news. Your blog will easily let you add text and contextual links to internal pages of your website, links to other blogs, other web pages, and other media related to its topic.	Three Fresh, Targeted and Unique Articles: Professional, fresh, unique and custom written articles added each month. FWM only works with professional writers that have passed our high standards. These writers will be more like "reporters for your website". Relevant, contextual, local and current articles will be added using organic SEO methodology. The content is yours once we add it to your website. We do not duplicate content across other client's sites or advocate this tactic.	Three additional news items (8 News Postings!) Three additional BLOG postings (5 BLOG Posts!)
RSS Feed: RSS is a web feed used to publish frequently updated content such as blog entries. An RSS document, which is called a "feed", "web feed", or "channel", contains a summary of content from your web site with a link back to your site for the full text. RSS makes it possible for people to keep up with the content on your web site in an automated manner that's easier than checking them manually. People and other sites subscribing to your feed will help your website considerably with SEO.	Five News Items: News Alerts and Feeds we subscribe to allow our writers to add current news items to your website. We stay informed on local news related to your content. This content is unique to your website and will match your practice focus.	FREE Admission to Great Legal Marketing Seminars (2 per year valued at over \$6,000)
DSS Webinar: Monthly webinar where Tom Foster will go over tips and tricks and best practices for DSS. Also will go over other marketing and web technologies.	Two BLOG Posts: Your CMP team will Blog to other sites about content available on your website and link back to it. We include contextual content in the blog post with an active link back to an internal page of your site.	Great Legal Marketing Coaching Program (valued at \$4,800)
FWM Newsletter: FWM Publication with success stories from other FWM clients, resources, tips, software recommendations, vendor recommendations, etc...	Web Marketing Coaching: 30 minute quarterly site review and web marketing coaching call 1 on 1 with Tom Foster.	Ben Glass' Great Legal Marketing Ultimate Practice Building Toolkit (\$3,995 value)
Web Traffic Report: We setup Google Analytics for you and send a report to your email each week.		Great Legal Marketing Newsletter (\$199/per mo value)