



# WEBSITE RULES FOR NEW YORK LAW FIRMS



## KEY POINTS

### Website Copy Every 90 Days

A copy of your NY Law Firm's website should be preserved every 90 days. This applies to all NY Law Firms. More frequent copies should be made if major web changes are put in place.

### Email Marketing Subject Line Requirement

Must contain "ATTORNEY ADVERTISING" in the subject line for any email marketing campaigns.

### Using Stock Image Actors Without Disclaimers

If your website uses stock images to depict clients, judges or members of your firm – you need to disclose this.

## TIP #1

# NY Rules of Professional Conduct



New York Law Firms should be mindful of the New York Rules of Professional Conduct when working with any marketing company or designing a new website. Many of the rules might seem obvious, but some are very easy to overlook. If your NY law firm is working with a marketing agency or has an in-house marketing staff, it's a good idea to confirm that they are familiar with these rules.

One of the most overlooked rules is retaining copies of your website every 90 days (or more frequently if large changes are made). **The easiest way to do this is to have your web design or hosting company create a website archive on physical media such as a DVD or USB stick.**

Another rule that is easy to overlook is the use of stock images on your firm's website. If images of people or actors are used as clients, judges, partners etc. this must be disclosed to stay in compliance with the Rules of Professional Conduct.

## RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- ▶ [New York State Unified Court System – Part 1200 Rules of Professional Conduct](#)
- ▶ [New York City Bar – FAQ Attorney Advertising, Solicitation, and Professional Notices](#)



## KEY POINTS

### Google Will Penalize Slow Websites

Page speed is a new ranking factor with Google's mobile first index. Slow websites & pages will suffer in search rankings.

### Image Size & Optimization

Images should be optimized for file size and quality to minimize load time. Huge images take a long time to load – especially on mobile.

### Accurately Check Your Website Speed for Free

Check out our link for a free objective speed test or reach out for a more thorough review. Just because your site is fast at work or home doesn't mean it's fast for new visitors.

## TIP #2

# Slow Load Time & Page Speed



Page speed is a Google ranking factor and it will only get more important. This means that the Google search algorithm takes it into account when deciding how your website ranks in search results. Don't let a slow website be the reason your website ranks lower than your competitor. As Google moves towards its new mobile-first index, this is sure to become a more important factor.

Today's web users expect every site to load quickly. Every second your webpage takes to load increases the chance that users will press the back button and return to the search results page. With most users now searching on mobile devices or cellular networks, speed is especially important.

Many things impact page speed and some things may be easier to fix than others. If your web host or marketing agency doesn't have the resources for a complete page speed audit, some things can still be fixed in the short term. Browser caching, image optimization and file compression are a few things your company or web agency should put in place with minimal effort.

## RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- ▶ [Google Webmaster Central Blog - Using page speed in mobile search ranking](#)
- ▶ [Free Page Speed Tool - A free, objective way to quickly check site speed](#)



## KEY POINTS

### Don't Use the Same Content as Everyone Else

Ever notice when legal websites use similar language like 'unparalleled' or 'passionate'. Use unique content to stand out and separate your firm.

### What Does Your Homepage Say About Your Business?

Clean, effective design can create trust and add credibility to any company – especially Law Firms.

### Mobile & Tablet Friendly Design is Mandatory

Every modern website should be designed to look great on any device and adjust accordingly.

## TIP #3

# Credibility with Content & Design



Web visitors start forming impressions about credibility before a web page even finishes loading. The way a site looks, and words used throughout the site are an opportunity to separate a business from competitors and build trust. Dated designs combined with unoriginal copy can cause visitors to form negative impressions.

Make sure that your website design, look and feel lives up to the reputation of your company. Avoid using stale stock images or stale design principles. For most every company, the home page is the most visited page of the website and should be designed with that in mind.

Creating unique copy and content is easy to overlook on business websites. Too many companies get stuck using the same general words and they all end up sounding the same. Spend the time to choose unique and compelling language to distinguish your firms service from competitors.

## RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- ▶ [Web Design Trends - Forbes](#)
- ▶ [Content Performance & Measurement - Search Engine Land](#)



## KEY POINTS

### Measure Your Leads & Calls

If you don't know how many leads are coming from your website, address that first. You can't improve what you don't know how to measure.

### Calls to Action

Users should be able to engage easily from a variety of pages. Adding forms, phone numbers or buttons in strategic places helps increase leads.

### Google Analytics

This is a free and widely used tool provided by Google to track your website traffic and activity. Regular reports can be scheduled and emailed automatically to stakeholders or sales teams.

## TIP #4

# Tracking Website Leads & Calls



The days of “build it and they will come” are over when it comes to website traffic. Smart Law Firms know that a well performing website gives them a competitive business advantage. Every website should have Analytics that tracks user activity and measures leads or other goals. Companies can set their own goals, and common goals include contact forms, phone number clicks or downloads.

Once the proper tracking and goals are in place, it gives you the ability to measure performance over time. Popular pages, times of year or paid campaign activity can all be reviewed or studied to see what is working and what needs improvement.

Google Analytics is a free and widely used toll that can handle all of this behind the scenes of your website. Typically, this is installed and configured one time with some backend website code. Goals can be adjusted at any time and reports and other data are always available.

## RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- ▶ [Google Analytics Goals - General info on Goal types in Google Analytics](#)
- ▶ [Built With - Easily check if your site is using Analytics and other technical details](#)



## KEY POINTS

### Security is Peace of Mind

Having regular backups allows for a website to be restored or moved quickly when problems occur, or issues arise. It ensures nothing gets lost and your data is safe.

### Secure Socket Layer / HTTPS

Sites with SSL certificates provide security when information is sent over a computer network. Look for the HTTPS in your sites address to see if it is secure.

### Don't Ignore Updates

Staying on top of updates to your server or CMS is easy to overlook but critical. Backups should be in place before any updates are made.

## TIP #5

# Scheduled Backups & Security



All websites experience loading or security issues at some point. Sites can crash unexpectedly or go down from internal mistakes or outside interference. Having a regularly scheduled backup plan in place ensures your data is safe, allows your team to resolve issues quickly and gives peace of mind to all stakeholders.

Websites go down at inconvenient times that demand immediate action. Nobody wants to come in over the weekend to deal with a web emergency or explain to a client why the website is broken during an event or sales pitch. Having backups in place makes it quick to get a website back up and running from a trusted copy, allowing more time to fully diagnose any larger issues.

SSL Certificates are becoming more and more standard for all websites, not just sites that process transactions or sell products. These certificates can be bought from a variety of places and are installed behind the scenes on the web server to help protect all data in transit. Google's chrome browser has even started showing warnings for most sites that do not have them.

## RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- ▶ [Google Chrome requiring HTTPS for secure data](#)
- ▶ [Horror Stories about not backing up data](#)

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## About Van West Media



Van West Media is a full-service consulting, design and development agency driven entirely by results. Our comprehensive inbound marketing campaigns for small to mid-size businesses combined with our extensive marketing knowledge is sure to increase traffic and revenue for our clients. We have a proven track record when it comes to working with Law Firms and other business clients. Learn more at <https://vwm.com>

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