

MARKETING ELEMENTS IN THE FIELD OF LEGAL SERVICES

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Abstract: *As a result of the increase in the number of lawyers, the need arouse for them to become as well-known as possible in the market, both with the aim of attracting new clients and to retain the loyalty of existing clients. The manner in which lawyers can make themselves known has raised a number of problems as a result of legislative barriers restricting their rights in this regard. By conducting a research, the authors tried to identify the ways in which lawyers can make their services known without violating the legal provisions. By bringing into discussion the specific aspects regarding the methods used in order to promote, the article makes not only a theoretical contribution, but also a practical one, as it represents a valid opinion that could be used by the academic environment or other lawyers. The research aimed to answer the following questions: What are the main elements of Marketing that can be used by lawyers?; How can lawyers use the elements of Marketing?. The results of the research revealed a series of interesting conclusions - namely the fact that there are ways in which lawyers can promote their services online, apart from the classic professional website, without prejudice to the legal provisions*

Keywords: *inbound, outbound, marketing, personal brand*

1. Introduction

The development of marketing strategy has experienced a valuable evolution with the existence of digital communication networks and social networks and the creation of content evolving with them. A few years ago, companies used traditional strategies by which they sent messages to the target audience, in order to make the services or products known. Today, inbound marketing has become a new way to attract the public to the company by creating more innovative content (Dakouan, 2019).

Lawyers, unlike the other liberal professions, do not have full freedom to promote, as they are required to comply with a series of legislative constraints aimed at not encouraging an increase in the number of lawsuits. In the beginning, law was seen as an eccentric business, and for development it does not need a branding, it develops on its own, without the need for actions to make it known in the market. Over time, as a result

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of the increase in competition on the legal market, lawyers had to identify methods of promotion in order to develop the "business", methods by which they can be noticed and recognized by potential.

This research aims at identifying and analysing the marketing strategies within the legal services, taking into account the legislative barriers regarding bringing the services provided by the lawyer to the client's attention.

2. The aims and objectives of the work

The aim of this paper is to analyse and to identify the marketing elements through which lawyers can make their legal services known without prejudice to the legal provisions.

The objectives of the paper:

- Identifying marketing elements that can be used by lawyers
- Establishing and analysing marketing elements with practical applicability within legal services – lawyer
- Establishing the marketing elements that can be used by lawyers without affecting the legal provisions.

3. Literature review

Research has shown that the personal brand can be created and maintained through several marketing strategies, one of which is the use of inbound or outbound marketing. These two marketing concepts present distinct applications, benefits and challenges, explored in this article, along with the practical applicability of each method.

A study (J. Andrés-Sánchez, 2022) analysed the effects of innovation through the use of inbound and outbound strategy, the advantages and disadvantages of these methods being determined by using a quantitative research of 251 respondents, executive directors of hotels from small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The results allow visualization of inbound and outbound open innovation interactions for management to generate a competitive advantage for products and services.

Inbound marketing is the process of indirect and direct promotion of the business or brand through content that creates added value, which can be video or audio, transmitted online and offline. It can be long-form (such as blogs, articles, e-books, and so on), short-form (such as Twitter updates, Facebook updates, images, and so on), or conversational (e.g., sharing great content via Twitter or participating in an active discussion through blog comments or through an online forum) (Gunelius, 2011).

Inbound marketing is a dynamic way to acquire customers, it is a process of sharing expertise and knowledge online to attract potential customers by establishing a relationship with them (Slater, 2014).

Venisse (2016) defined inbound marketing as a way for audiences to more easily convert into customers. Implementing the global inbound marketing strategy requires following certain essential steps (Venisse, 2016), the first step being the development of your own media channels and the creation of a qualified audience. For a company

setting up their inbound marketing strategy, it is important to provide interesting content to attract and sustain an audience on their website, blog or social media page.

At the same time, Hubspot (2018) defines Inbound Marketing as a strategy that attracts customers with relevant and useful content, adding value each time with each consumer. By using Inbound Marketing it is possible to obtain potential customers who discovered the product/service through specific channels such as blogs, search engines and social networks (Hubspot, 2016). Unlike Outbound Marketing, Inbound Marketing requires no effort to attract new customers. By creating content that addresses the problems and needs of ideal customers, the brand attracts qualified prospects and builds trust and credibility. Therefore, Inbound Marketing is a systemic approach that allows each brand to become known in the media, to create an audience that can be converted into new prospects that subsequently lead to new customers (Dabi-Schwebel, 2017).

4. Types of marketing – their applicability in legal services

4.1. Types of inbound marketing – their applicability in legal services

Search engine optimization (SEO) - SEO – represents a first category of inbound marketing that requires a long period of time and relevant content in order for the company to reach the top of Google search engine results. However, once the company has reached among the first results offered by the search engine, the result in terms of the company's growth is reflected in the corresponding earnings. Digital ads allow audience targeting based on different criteria such as demographic, geographic, psychographic, behavioural characteristics, interests and habits.

In order to reach the top of the results, it is necessary to create topical and valuable content that interests as many of the audience as possible. Thus, from the point of view of legal services, the creation of an article about a news that has been intensively disseminated recently (e.g. how to get rid of electricity bills, how to get rid of a foreclosure etc.) is of interest for a wider audience of people and potential customers respectively. In addition to providing topical content, there are certain areas that will always be of interest to the general public, such as employment law information and family law information.

High-quality content ensures the long-term success of the company by keeping it up-to-date with all the news and useful content will pay off in the future with the purchase of legal services. However, the published articles must not repeat the information already known and published or information that does not correspond to reality because the interest of consumers in accessing and reading the articles decreases progressively.

Webinar - An easy way to attract the attention of more customers is to create an online webinar that provides information to customers in several areas. Thus, by creating an online course or seminar, in which important information is presented regarding the services offered in conjunction with practical solutions that crown the results, it is an effective way of keeping existing customers and possibly attracting new customers.

Social Media - Creating an online image is not complete without being social on all major social media platforms. This is a difficult process as it requires daily time to publish relevant information, but using automation tools like Buffer, social posts can be

planned months in advance. Through social media, you can transmit current information on how to solve some situations in order to attract new customers.

Influencer Marketing - Instagram and YouTube have made influencer marketing a profitable business, both for the person doing this activity and for the services/goods they make known through them. In the past, these platforms were reserved for movie stars and professional athletes, but today, most companies, small or large, have a presence on Instagram and YouTube. In addition to these two platforms, TIKTOK has recently appeared, which has begun to be more and more popular among social media consumers and thus has gain more and more ground.

Legal services can be made known through these platforms primarily through influencers who can recommend lawyers they have worked with and recommend further. On the other hand, even legal service providers can make their presence felt on these platforms by providing information that could interest a wide audience and thus attract new clients. Although these platforms are the most popular at the moment, there are very few lawyers who turn to them in order to attract new clients. The relatively low presence of legal service providers on these platforms is due both to legislative barriers (the law provides that it is forbidden to provide free consultations or to provide consultations to a group of people and to the fact that it represents a subject that does not attract a wide audience and thus does not produces views and financial satisfaction respectively.

4.2. Types of Outbound Marketing – their applicability in legal services

Television and radio commercials - Also known as over-the-top advertising (ATL), traditional advertising includes media such as television, radio, print (newspapers, magazines, etc.) and billboards. Traditional advertising methods help to convey the message to a large mass of people, but lack the necessary capabilities to target groups.

Although with the advent of video streaming services such as YouTube, fewer people are watching TV, especially among the younger audience, but TV users are still in large numbers. The legal provisions provide that it is not allowed to use as forms of advertising the provision of consultations and/or the drafting of legal documents, made on any material support, as well as through any other means of mass communication, including radio or television broadcasts, with the exception of the publications that contain a column of legal advice. Thus, advertising on radio and television is restricted by law.

Direct Mail is a way to publicize the services provided by sending promotional messages directly to potential customers, via e-mail. Although this way of promotion is cheaper than television ads, it does not ensure that the message sent reaches the recipient because most of them end up in spam.

Legal service providers cannot use this form of advertising because the legal provisions stipulate that it is not allowed to solicit clients, consisting in offering services, through self-presentation or through an intermediary, at a person's home or residence or in a public place, or in the personalized proposal of services performed by a form of exercise of the profession, without it having been previously requested in this regard.

Print ads – This way of making the services known to the public is extremely effective in vertical markets, in the context of identifying publications that serve the target audience, the media costs being low and, therefore, the return on investment is higher.

Similarly, radio and television announcements, it is not allowed to publish materials with advertising content in newspapers and magazines, other than specialized ones or those not intended for the general public. The announcements can be published in the professional yearbooks that concern the activity of the forms of practicing the profession, the names and the main fields in which the lawyers carry out their activity. Recently, several yearbooks have appeared that exclusively concern the services provided by lawyers.

Sales letters – represents another way for legal service providers to publicize their business, however, this is also not applicable to the targeted sector as it involves sending direct response sales letters to sell products and services to potential buyers.

Like direct email, the use of sales letters is also not allowed because it is forbidden to offer personalized services by a form of professional practice, without it having been previously requested in this regard.

Events and fairs enable organizations to fulfil their goals by bringing new customers in front of them to generate collaboration opportunities as well as to maintain existing customers. Corporations may organize such events or participate as a sponsor or participant in conferences or events organized by a third party for the purpose of attracting new customers. The organization of events and fairs is a way of promotion allowed by the legal provisions and which the forms of exercising the profession should take advantage of, but with certain limitations.

However, the forms of practicing the profession can distribute brochures of general presentation to all categories of the public only within the organized demonstrations and the dissemination can be carried out only by the form of practicing the profession, without the possibility of submitting them in public places or of transmitting them to third parties for dissemination, with the exception of postal services.

5. Conclusions

The legal provisions state that lawyers cannot use advertising means for the purpose of acquiring new clients. Thus, through the marketing strategies used, the lawyer can only carry out activities to make his services known without urging third parties to turn to him.

However, regardless of the means used to make the services known to the public, the following are prohibited:

- a) self-laudatory or comparative mentions;
- b) nomination of clients from the portfolio or indication of disputes in which the form of practicing the profession was or is involved;
- c) information regarding financial achievements, turnover or professional successes;
- d) providing information for inclusion in rankings based on financial criteria;
- e) the mentions regarding the value of the services provided by the lawyer, the gratuities or the method of payment and which ones represent dumping policies;
- f) any statements contrary to the dignity of persons, the profession or justice;
- g) any forms of advertising carried out by third parties, other than those mentioned in art. 244 of this statute.

Failure to comply with the obligations provided by the Law and the statute regarding the publicity of the forms of practicing the profession of lawyer through acts committed in one's own name or in the name and for the form of practicing the profession of which the lawyer is a part constitutes a serious disciplinary offense. The legal regulations mentioned above are intended to defend the prestige of the profession, without taking into account the individual need of each lawyer to make his/ her services known in order to acquire clients and professional development, respectively.

From this point of view, the choice of the level of marketing depends on the strategy that the form of exercising the profession adopts for the promotion of services, taking into account, at the same time, the legislative barriers.

Analysing the above, we can see that Inbound Marketing takes a highly targeted approach that connects to a wide audience, communication channels tend to be expensive, which is not the case with Outbound marketing. Thus, although Outbound Marketing addresses to the general public, thus there is the possibility that the promotion of the forms of exercising the profession will reach a larger number of people, they contain many limitations and are thus not effective from this point of view. The only way of promotion in this category is represented by the organization of fairs and conferences, but even this, on the one hand, provides for certain restrictions, and on the other hand, such events are usually attended by people from the same field who possess the necessary knowledge in order to represent legally, not having to call a lawyer.

Instead, promoting through inbound marketing is a more effective way of promoting as a result of using internet pages, this being a way accessible to everyone and less expensive. Thus, considering the fact that nowadays potential clients turn to the online environment for any information and the lawyer must also be online, both in order to be found by clients and to be noticed by them.

The theoretical approach of the present study is to be supported with further research that identified the methods by which lawyers try to make their services known or simply wait for clients to come to them, as well as research on the identification of other methods of loyalty customers.

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