

Small Firm Business

IDEAS & INNOVATIONS FOR LAW FIRM MANAGEMENT • JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2006

Best Practices of the Year 2006



Small firm leaders share their
award-winning management ideas.

Face-Off Will That Be Cash or Equity?
Finance Get the Most From Your Banker
Tech Set Up A Virtual Private Network



The Williams Law Firm

snapshot

THE WILLIAMS
LAW FIRM



J. Craig Williams

LOCATION: Newport Beach, Calif.
PARTNERS: 1
ASSOCIATES: 4
ADDITIONAL STAFF: 10
DOMINANT PRACTICE AREA: 60–70% business litigation

MERGER?
“Open to anything.”

LAST TECH BUY
High-end Kodak i160 scanner, together with Copitrak and eCopy software, including monthly maintenance. The total cost to the firm: just under \$10,000, including labor, software and licenses.

An Early Adopter

THE INTERNET REMAINS A GROWTH ENGINE FOR ONE CALIFORNIA FIRM.

By Ryan Malkin

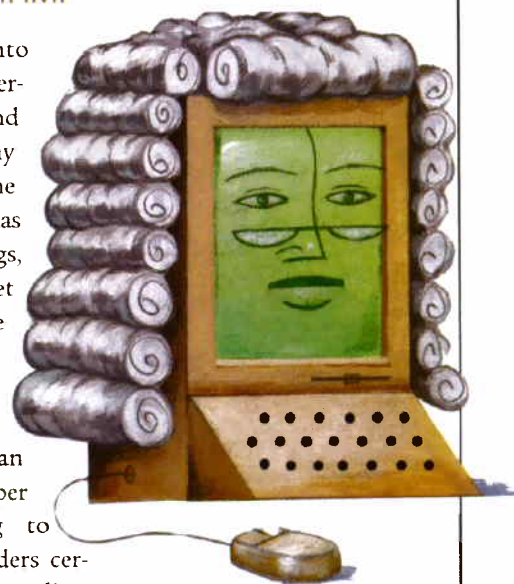
Blogging as a business model? Perhaps “vlawging”? “What’s that?” you ask. It’s a term for video blogging in the legal community. And it’s just one of the Web-based marketing tools that The Williams Law Firm of Newport Beach, Calif. has in its arsenal. Since October 2004, the firm has added audio and video podcasting to to enhance its blog, mayit pleasesthecourt.com (MIPTC).

Founding partner J. Craig Williams came to the blogosphere party early. He started blogging in August 2003, and says that the firm has brought in \$1.5 million in revenue since that time, due in large part to MIPTC. “We’ve been getting one or two calls a week,” says Williams, the firm’s primary blogger. MIPTC generally features posts on the firm’s primary practice area, business litigation, including environmental, employment and intellectual property issues. Williams occa-

sionally delves into other topics of interest, as well: “If I find it interesting, my readers will too,” he says. The firm also has two other blogs, sharksinthewater.net and acriminalwasteofspace.net.

Judging from the number of visitors to MIPTC — an average of 300,000 per month, according to Williams — his readers certainly approve of the editorial decisions. Indeed, last year a new link on law.com (owned by ALM Media, publisher of *Small Firm Business*), helped to enhance the Web site’s visibility, and also sent more money Williams’s way in exchange for the offer of advertising space.

To be sure, last year was a busy one. Not only were podcasts added, but Williams also configured the firm’s Web site and its blogs so that they can be accessed on PDAs and cell phones. Yet,



the heart of Williams’s online marketing efforts lies in the blogging roots of MIPTC. Since it was launched only months after The Williams Law Firm opened, he was adamant about creating a strong brand presence. For instance, both the firm’s Web site and logo match the color scheme of MIPTC. And the logo and color palette are consistent within the firm as well on everything from stationary, busi-

Best Practices of the Year

ness cards and binders, down to the candy in reception. Plus, every e-mail or letter sent from the firm promotes the blog with a tag line, "Please visit our weblog, www.MayItPleaseTheCourt.com, for legal news." Finally e-mail updates are regularly sent to 10,000 subscribers — readers choose daily or periodic email notices. The firm also provides RSS feeds for personalized notifications.

What is clear is that Williams's success stems in large part from his own tenacity. Take, for instance, the many hours he cites having spent registering the blog on more than 75 Internet search engines



around the world. Actively identifying foreign search engines was no simple feat: "It's an awful lot of work and involves time and the ability to read foreign languages," he says. With clients in Europe and Asia,

both for work here and abroad, generally in toxic contamination suits, that effort seems to have paid off for him. (Williams began translating the site into eight languages last year with a computerized

translator.)

Because so much weight is put on the blog, it's imperative for Williams to keep his content updated. Within a day of a relevant business litigation case coming out, Williams will discuss it on his blog.

"I slug away at it every day," Williams says. And his time isn't cheap. At \$500 per hour, Williams spends roughly \$3,500 worth of time every week working on his blog. "It takes discipline and good writing to put up a blog," he notes.

Williams expects podcasting to "take off" this year, so is confident it's just one more way for his firm to step to the forefront.

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