

*Does this describe your firm's web site?*

***Marketing on the Internet:  
Web Sites That "Don't Cut It" Anymore***  
*by Kevin W. Brown, M.B.A.*

At one time, just having a "presence" on the Internet was enough. In other words, get your "electronic brochure" on the World Wide Web and you've covered yourself. However, for those firms that want to grow and prosper, that approach just doesn't cut it anymore for many targeted markets.

Marketing-driven firms make their web sites a highly useful tool for the firm and clients alike. These firms don't just "get it done" by having a low-quality site — they commit to maintaining a useful site that is integrated with their other marketing programs.

**A Test: 25 Key Questions**

Want to have a productive, useful web site? If yes, ask yourself these questions (be honest) and take steps to resolve your site's inadequacies. If no, why do you have a web site?

1. Is it professional looking? Does it look like a home-spun site? Is it an embarrassment to the professionalism of your firm?
2. Web sites are only as good as their content — is yours weak?
3. Are your firm's services explained in a compelling manner?
4. Will a prospect be able to discern your firm's key selling points?
5. Does it offer lots of useful information or is it strictly an on-line brochure?
6. Does it incorporate your firm's "brand" concept?
7. Is the text written by one of your professionals for their colleagues, or is it written for your market?
8. Is your firm's logo different on the web site vs. other marketing materials?
9. Does it embody your firm's culture, service focus, and personality?
10. Are you ashamed to tell referral sources and prospects to look at your site, so that they can gain a better understanding of your firm?
11. Is the flow from one page to the next logical and clearly demonstrated?
12. Do clients visit it regularly or just once?
13. Are the graphics a distraction or complementary?
14. Does your web site help you to implement regular client communication?
15. Does it reflect the notoriety of your firm's personnel, in terms of publicity, articles,

speeches, etc.?

16. Do clients have an opportunity to provide specific feedback on your service delivery?
17. Does your site regularly provide current information, if not a daily basis than at least weekly?
18. Does your site succinctly demonstrate the strengths of each practice area within your firm?
19. Do you address commonly asked questions?
20. Is your site registered with targeted search engines?
21. Do you have regular visits from non-clients?
22. Does your site generate inquiries into your firm's service capabilities?
23. Can clients receive billing information on-line?
24. Does maintenance of the site take an inordinate amount of your personnel's time or is it outsourced to professionals?
25. Is your site valued by your clients as one of your firm's selling points?

All too often, professional services firms (lawyers, CPAs, insurance brokers, etc.) go about the process of answering these questions on a piece-meal basis; there is not any strategy involved. A far more productive use of your time and money is to work with an expert who understands professional services marketing (internal personnel or external consultant) and develop a clear, logical strategy that will incorporate your internet program with other firm marketing activities.

### **A Commitment to Quality**

For years I have always told professional services firms that *their firm's marketing materials should be of the same quality level as their services*. So if your firm provides excellent, high quality services, why does your web site look so poor? You may be convinced how good your firm is but those who don't know you won't get the same impression from a third-rate web site.

Instead, take that drab, first-generation web site and turn it into a dynamic tool for improved client relations and new business development!

**Kevin W. Brown, M.B.A.** is president of Kevin Brown Marketing & Consulting, known as "The Specialists in Law Firm Marketing<sup>TM</sup>", founded in 1991. He has over 20 years of experience in professional services marketing, including law firms, accounting firms, banks and financial services firms. Mr. Brown is author of dozens of articles published nationwide and locally and is a frequent speaker to Bar Associations and other groups in the legal industry. Mr. Brown is two-time Past President of the Legal Marketing Association's Southern California Chapter. He specializes in strategic planning and

*implementation of marketing programs for small to mid-size firms. He can be contacted at (877) 4-KB-MKTG or [kb@kevinbrownmarketing.com](mailto:kb@kevinbrownmarketing.com).*

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