

# Practical Success

---

Cordell M. Parvin

## Practical Tips To Make Your Blog More Valuable

Are you a lawyer blogger? Is your blog valuable for your clients and is it attracting potential clients? If not, then I want to share with you my six practical tips to make your blog more valuable.

### 1. Find A Valuable Topic

Your first step is to find an appropriate topic on which to blog. Your clients and potential clients will be interested in reading your blog only if it addresses a potential problem, opportunity, or change they will likely encounter. Some topics will be time-sensitive. Those include:

- A new case;
- New legislation;
- A new regulation;
- Industry business news;
- Something that you see that will potentially impact your clients.

Other topics will not be time-sensitive. Those might include discussing industry-based legal issues, or offering practical tips on how to deal with those issues. What are the topics that are not time-sensitive that your readers and potential clients would find most valuable?



### 2. Make Your Blog Headline Valuable

If you write a brilliant blog post on an important legal topic and your potential clients do not find it, you have likely wasted your time blogging.

As a lawyer, you want potential clients to find your blog if they do a Google search on the legal topic. Law blog post titles should be short, keyword optimized, direct, and cover exactly the content of the post.

LexBlog's Kevin O'Keefe suggests:

“Keep the title tags relatively short and to the point. The point being how you'd expect people to search for your content. Google is only going to display

about 64 characters and making them long so as to include words people wouldn't search for only dilutes the keywords or key phrases people would use in a search.”

If you want more thoughts on blog headlines, Copyblogger has several posts you will find helpful. Brian Clark advises:

“Your headline is the first, and perhaps only, impression you make on a prospective reader. Without a compelling promise that turns a browser into a

---

**Cordell M. Parvin** built a national construction practice during his 35 years of practicing law. In 2005, Mr. Parvin left the firm and started Cordell Parvin LLC. He now works with lawyers and law firms on career development, planning, and client development. You can subscribe to his Blog at <http://www.cordellblog.com/>, connect with him on LinkedIn at <http://www.linkedin.com/in/cordell-parvin>, join his Facebook Fan Page at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Cordell-Parvin-Lawyer-Coaching/222291473905?ref=ts>, and follow him on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/cordellparvin>.

reader, the rest of your words may as well not even exist. So, from a copywriting and content marketing standpoint, writing great headlines is a critical skill.

### 3. Don't Bury The Lead

Chip and Dan Heath tell a story in their book, *Made to Stick*. The story is about a journalism professor who gives his students an assignment to write a story about a local high school that has announced the entire faculty will travel to a nearby city for a colloquium on new teaching methods next Thursday, and he provides details about who will be speaking, where it will be held, etc.

Can you guess what the professor thought should be the lead? If you are not sure, you can read about the story in a blog posted by Socialmedia Today titled *Keys to Copywriting: Don't Bury the Lead*.

When you are writing your blog, ask yourself why a reader should care about your post. Why would your post be important to your readers? I frequently review blog posts by lawyers and find that their last sentence answers those questions. The problem with that approach is that most of your readers will never get that far in your blog post.

### 4. Make Your Blog Post Interesting And Worth Reading

When I read blogs by lawyers, I am frequently surprised by how many do nothing more than simply report about a new case, new law or new regulation. While your clients and potential clients may value you informing them about a recent development, they are far more likely to consider you as a lawyer, if you provide valuable insights on the matter in your blog.

I urge lawyers I coach to add a sub-heading: Takeaways. Mike Schmidt, a Cozen O'Connor partner I coached, writes the Social Media Employment Law Blog. In each post, he concludes with "Employer Takeaways." I like Mike's approach.

Cleve Clinton and Jamie Ribman, two Looper, Reed & McGraw partners I coached, write a humorous blog, *Tilting the Scales*. I enjoy reading it because they tell real legal stories with made up humorous names for the characters. Even though their blog is humorous, at the end of each post they include a subheading: "Tilting the Scales in Your Favor."

Another valuable writing technique is to use analogies. Jay O'Keeffe, a Gentry, Locke, Rakes & Moore lawyer I coached, writes, *DeNovo: A Virginia Appellate Law Blog*. Jay frequently uses analogies. (If you forgot from grade school English class what these terms mean, read the blog posted by Copyblogger titled *Metaphor, Simile and Analogy: What's the Difference?*)

In a recent post titled *Behind the Scenes at the Fourth Circuit: How the Court Decides Whether to Award Oral Argument*, Jay compared the chances of getting an oral argument before the Fourth Circuit to the chances of being admitted to an Ivy League university.

### 5. Make Sure Your Blog Is "Reader Friendly"

Make your blog easy to read on a computer, tablet and telephone. How can you make your blog reader friendly? In a nutshell:

- Font size and style — it should not be too small;
- White space between lines and paragraphs — add just a little more than normal;
- Length of paragraphs — I usually do not have paragraphs longer than two sentences;
- Length of the blog post — it is hard to read long blog posts on a tablet or telephone.

### 6. Post Regularly And Consistently

It is better to not blog than to blog irregularly and inconsistently. Whenever I look at a blog and find the last post before the one I am reviewing was done months earlier, I question whether the law firm and/or its blogger are serious about blogging. If they are not serious about blogging, I wonder how serious they are about their clients' work.