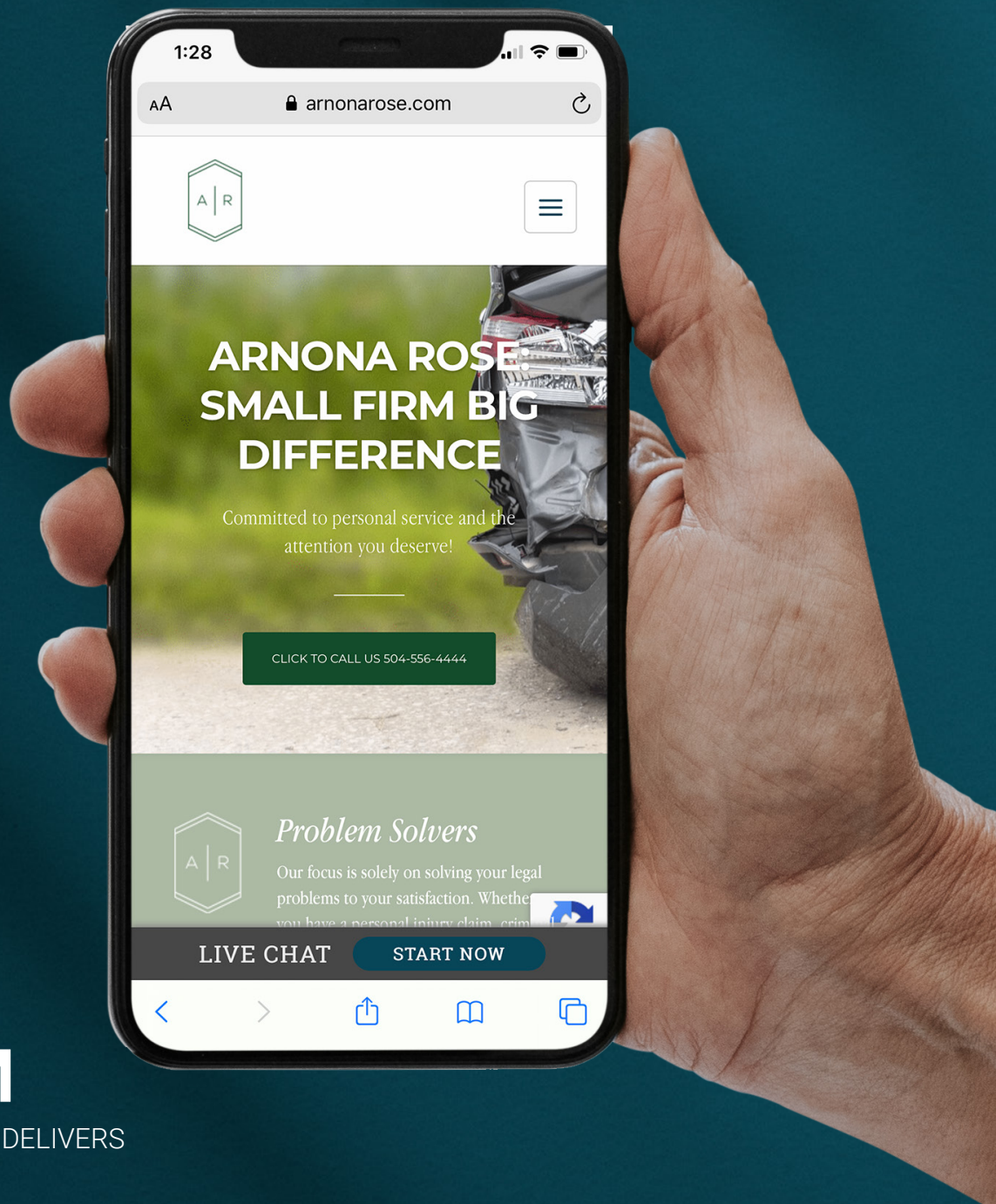


# LAW FIRM WEBSITE DESIGN

## 10 MISTAKES TO AVOID WHEN DESIGNING LAWYER WEBSITES



PRESENTED BY:

### SMB TEAM

DIGITAL MARKETING THAT DELIVERS



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# INTRODUCTION



By this point, you probably know just how important it is to have an effective lawyer website design. Your law firm can't stay competitive without a virtual storefront, even if you get most of your business through referrals.

But is your website doing its job? Is it making a good first impression? Is it driving new business and giving your customers the information they need to take that next step?

These days, you don't have to be an expert in web design to have a great site. And let's face it, most lawyers are busy working on cases and shouldn't be spending their time on building a website. Still, it's important to know what NOT to do when you're hiring and briefing your web designer.

Unfortunately, many firms are scraping by with websites that aren't optimized for their needs. At SMB Team, we've seen every attorney website design mistake in the book. If you want to ensure that your lawyer website redesign gets you the results you're looking for, then be sure to watch out for these 10 common mistakes throughout the design and editing process.

# 01

## NOT CLARIFYING YOUR WEBSITE'S GOALS

*You might think you know your site's goal already: to get more clients. But that's far too simplistic and broad to be effective. You need to clarify your goals and make them more specific if you want to bring in qualified leads.*

First, your law firm website design needs to put the needs of your ideal customer front and center. How you'll do that will depend on your niche and on how your firm usually brings in new business.

Some niches move quickly. If you are a personal injury attorney, your clients need to reach you quickly. You'll want to make it easy for them to contact you immediately and set up a consult.

If you're in business law, however, the process is slower and requires more trust-building. Maybe instead of pushing for a consult right away, you'll want to offer a whitepaper or other guide to help build trust and to capture the lead's email address for future lead nurturing.

When it comes to attorney website design, you want to stand out from your competitors in the right way. Think about your strengths and priorities. Here are some good questions you can ask yourself when you're considering your website goals:

Do you have a good phone intake system? If not, consider listing your phone number only once or twice.

Do you want people to contact you via a contact form? Live chat? Make it easy for people to reach you and for your staff to respond.

Do you want to have an SEO (Search Engine Optimization) focus, or do most of your leads come through referrals? These differences will heavily impact your attorney website design and content.

Once you've thought about who your website is for, it's time to make a list you can bring to your website designer. Be sure to include your goals, must-haves, and nice-to-haves!

# 02 NOT MAKING YOUR WEBSITE A PRIORITY



This one is huge. It's important to remember that your website is a reflection of your brand. It should project your values and make customers feel like they can trust you with their personal or business matters.

When you aren't making your website a priority, you aren't thinking about who and what it's for. You just want it to be done. You'll be likely to make snap decisions that will result in your website falling short.

Remember, your website is your home base and your storefront. Don't just treat it as a necessary evil. Add a little of your personality and show your customers why they should choose you over your competitor. Sure, law firm website designers can just make all the decisions for you. But the site will lack that personal touch that's so important.

When you don't make your website a priority, it sends a strong message—that you're not invested in welcoming your clients. Don't send that message. Make sure your lawyer website design invites prospective clients to leave the heavy legal lifting to you.

# 3 NOT OWNING YOUR WEBSITE

You might be under the impression that because you chose to go with a designer, instead of a build-your-own template-based website service, that you own your URL, the website design, and all your content. Let us save you a huge headache later on and tell you this right now: that's not necessarily the case.

Some big, expensive law firm web design companies retain the rights to the work they do for you – meaning that if you ever stop working with them, they can hold your site hostage. Don't let this happen to you!

If you're considering having a designer take over your website or attorney website redesign, then you need to ask a few questions up front to protect yourself and your firm.



## FIRST ASK:

**“IF I TERMINATE THE CONTRACT OR AGREEMENT AT SOME POINT IN THE FUTURE, WILL I OWN MY WEBSITE? ALL OF THE CONTENT, THE URL, THE DESIGN?”**

First, ask: “If I terminate the contract or agreement at some point in the future, will I own my website? All of the content, the URL, the design?”

If the answer is no, then you should ask if there is a buyout clause.

If the company or freelancer doesn't offer some way for you to own your website permanently, you should find another designer. The best law firm web design companies are ethical and transparent with their clients about site ownership.

# 04 HIRING AN UNQUALIFIED “DESIGNER” TO BUILD YOUR SITE



It can be very tempting to save money on your website by having a friend, family member, or your administrative assistant design your website. You'll have the task taken care of and it won't cost much at all.

The problem? It's very unlikely that the person you've chosen to build your website will have any experience in attorney website design or law firm marketing.

If you look at the best law firm websites, you'll see why they stand out. Not only is the design beautiful, but the layout makes sense for someone who is trying to find legal help. Even if your admin took a graphic design class in college, they won't have the level of knowledge that's needed to create a truly effective law firm website design.

How much does a law firm website design cost? Remember that it's an investment. A few thousand dollars might seem like a lot to create a basic site, but if it's made by someone who knows what they're doing, you'll get better results and avoid a costly lawyer website redesign down the road.

The bottom line: Hire a professional, and ask to see some samples. At SMB, we offer a free lawyer website design mockup so our clients can visualize what we can do for them with a full design.

# 05 DESIGNING YOUR SITE PRIMARILY FOR DESKTOP INSTEAD OF MOBILE

*When you're online at the office, you're probably going to be looking at your website on a desktop. But have you ever stopped to think that most people are going to be searching for your services on their phones and tablets from the couch or the train?*

We live in a mobile world. You can get a lot fancier with your desktop website because you have more space, but that's not where you should be focusing your efforts. In fact, you should be about four times as worried about your mobile site as you should about your desktop site.

Mobile not only caters to the way your customers use their devices, but it also helps to provide a slight SEO boost. Google now prioritizes mobile sites, using a "mobile-first" indexing strategy. The future is mobile—embrace it now.



# 06

## LEAVING YOUR PHOTO OFF YOUR WEBSITE



*Lots of lawyers are self-conscious about putting their picture up on their website, or they simply don't see the value in doing so.*

While it might seem like a small omission, it can actually make a big difference in the number of people who follow up their web visits with a phone call.

Incorporating a professional photo of yourself and your staff, not just populating your attorney website design with stock photos, is key for building trust.

Your clients want help from a real person, not a faceless company. They go to you for your legal skills and knowledge, yes, but they also want to see the humanity behind those skills.

Simply adding a photo can go a long way towards building that all-important trust.

Sure, you might be proud of your badges, but that's not why people choose you over other attorneys in their area.

They'll choose you if you're able to build enough trust on your website.

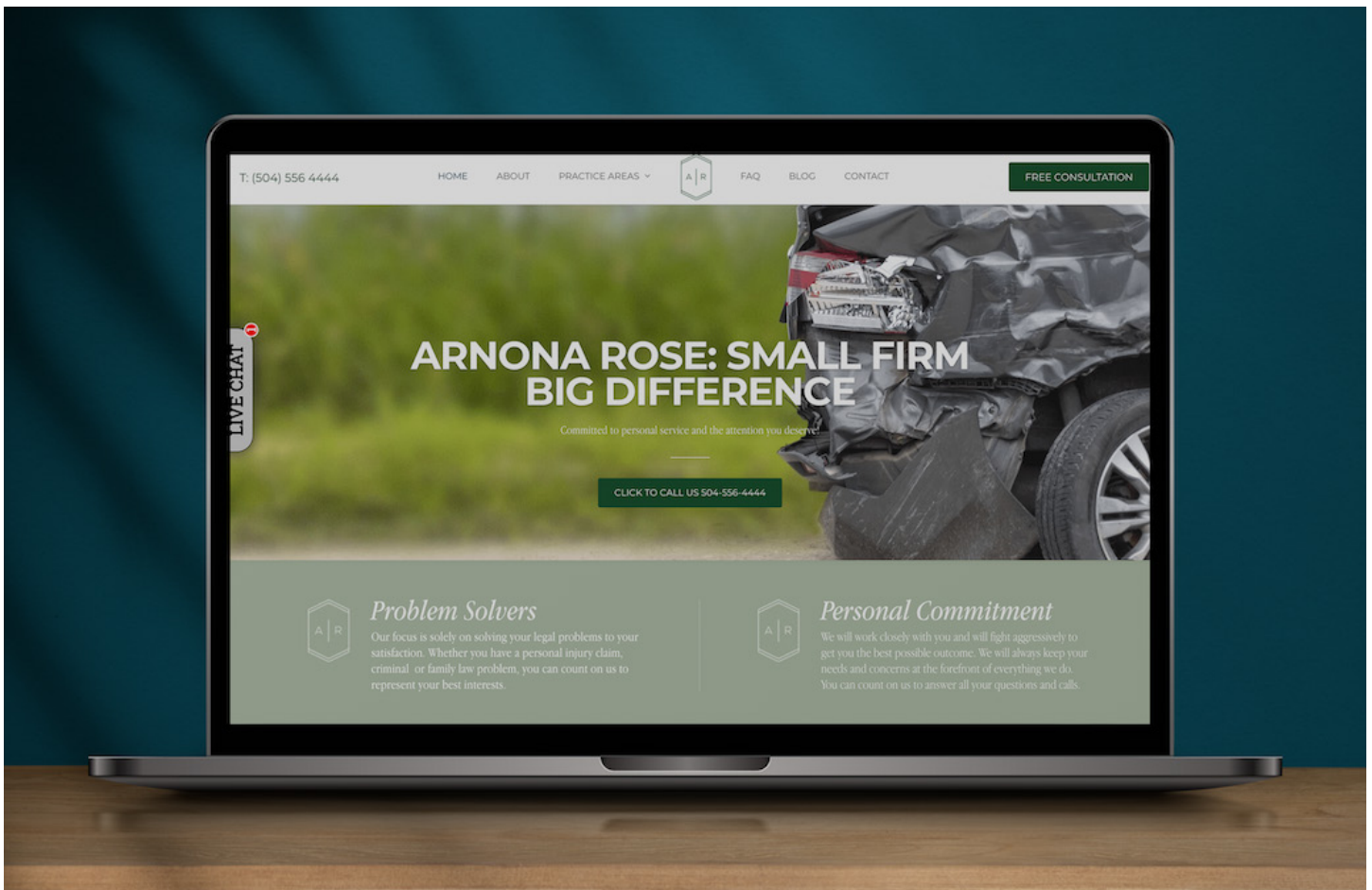
# MAKING YOUR SITE ALL ABOUT YOU

You know your own story so well you could tell it in your sleep. But let's face it, the client doesn't care what clubs you belonged to in law school or how many awards you've won (well maybe a little). **They want to know how you can help THEM.**

Making the content on your site all about yourself will quickly alienate potential clients. It sends the message that you're

not a good listener and you'll be focused more on your own accomplishments than you will on the client's needs. When creating content for the site, keep most of it client-focused.

Leave your story for the "About" page. Those who are deeply interested will find it, trust us.



# 08 NOT BUDGETING FOR VIDEO

Today, video is one of the fastest-growing content types worldwide. People love video—it allows them to have a more immersive experience and caters to both visual and auditory learners.

All the recent marketing statistics show that video is only getting more popular. In fact, 54% say they'd like to see more videos from brands. That's an invitation to engage your clients using the medium they respond to the most!

The catch? You can't just make any old video and expect to see a boost in new leads. Your videos must be as relevant and interesting as the rest of your site. They need to be customer-focused and help build trust, just like your photos.

Does the idea of using video scare you a little?

Don't worry—it's something you can hire out (and should!). Just make sure that you're budgeting for a few high-quality videos when you tackle your attorney website redesign. Factor in some video to your law firm website design cost and remember that it's an investment that can really pay off.



# 09 NO LEAD CAPTURE ABOVE THE FOLD

Is your contact information easy to find? Or is it buried at the bottom of your home page, forcing visitors to scroll down and search for it?

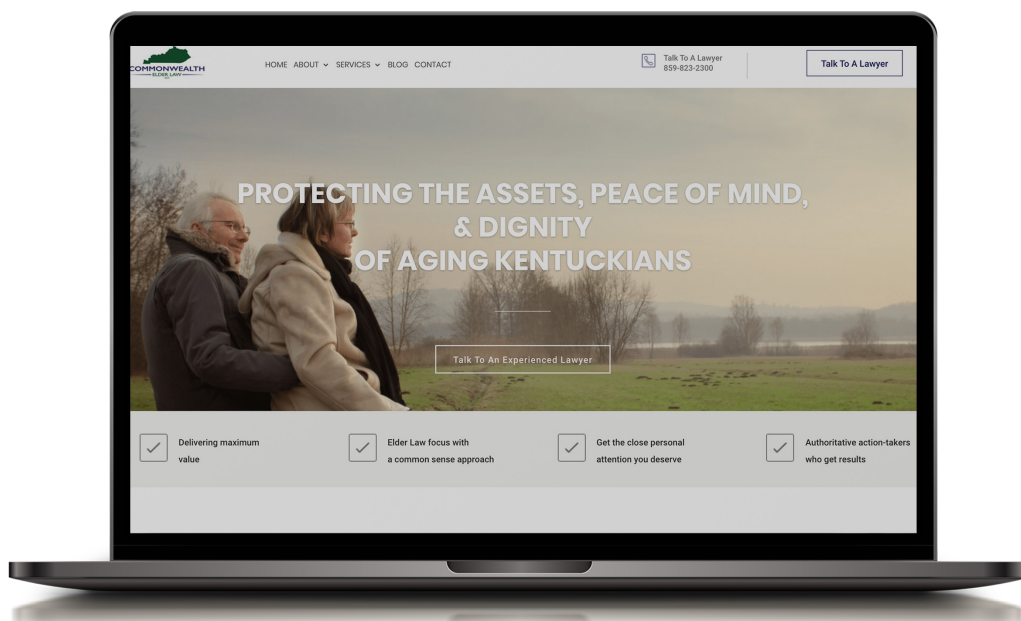
If you're not providing a phone number, contact form, or consultation request option "above the fold" (above the point in the page where someone would need to scroll down), then you're just making it more difficult for potential clients to contact you.

Think about it – if you're looking for information on a website, you don't want to spend a lot of time clicking around until you finally find the business's contact information.

By the time you find it, you're already frustrated and may have lost some trust. Or, you might give up altogether and choose a competitor that has made it easy to find their information.

Fortunately, placing your contact information above the fold is a simple fix that can really make a difference in the effectiveness of your website.

Law firm website designers can make the change very quickly and you might be surprised by how your lead volume increases as a result.



# 10 NOT MAKING YOUR SITE SEO-READY OR OPTIMIZED



*The best law firm websites rise to the top of the search results.*

How does yours measure up?

If you're not seeing your law firm's website pop up in the search results for your area, then your website probably isn't SEO optimized or even just SEO-ready.

SEO is about much more than just using the right keywords. Factors like how quickly your website loads make a huge difference in your search rankings.

## **Why?**

Because search engines are always tweaking their algorithms with the searcher in mind.

Websites that have high-quality, relevant information, and load quickly on mobile and desktop are going to be more helpful for the person performing the search.

New to SEO? Check out our [Ultimate Guide to Law Firm SEO](#) to find out how to maximize your results with minimal effort. Or, put your SEO efforts on autopilot and have our marketing experts at SMB Team do all the heavy lifting.



# ATTORNEY WEBSITE DESIGN IT MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE.

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