



KJ STRATEGY
GROUP

**HOW LAW FIRMS
CAN STAY AHEAD**

IN THE AI SEARCH GAME

**What Lawyers Need
to Know About
ChatGPT, AI Search,
and the Future of
Client Acquisition**

by **KJ Strategy Group**

THE LEGAL SEARCH LANDSCAPE HAS CHANGED FASTER THAN MOST LAW FIRMS REALIZE

The way people search for legal information has changed dramatically. AI is reshaping how potential clients ask questions, find answers, and choose who trust.

PAST: THE OLD PLAYBOOK

For years, law firms stuck to a familiar digital marketing playbook:



Law firms focused on rankings, clicks, and conversions.

PRESENT: THE NEW REALITY

More and more consumers are turning to AI-powered platforms for answers – often before they ever reach out to a lawyer.

- ChatGPT
- Google's AI Overviews
- Gemini
- Perplexity
- Microsoft Copilot
- Voice Assistants

The type of searches they're doing are changing too.

Instead of looking for:

Q "Divorce lawyer near me"

they're asking:

Q "What are the options if I've been arrested for a DUI?"

Q "How do child custody mediations work?"

Q "Do I really need a lawyer to get a restraining order?"



At the same time, AI platforms are increasingly answering legal questions directly inside search experiences – reducing the need for users to visit websites before forming opinions or making decisions.



For law firms, visibility is no longer just about rankings.

It's about becoming a **trusted source** that search engines and AI systems feel confident recommending.



The firms that adapt early will have a major **competitive advantage** in the years ahead.

CHAPTER 1

GOOGLE'S AI SHIFT IS CHANGING LEGAL MARKETING

Google's latest AI keynote confirmed that search is rapidly changing. Search is evolving from a directory of links into an AI-powered answer engine.



Google is increasingly integrating AI across Search, MapS, YouTube, Gemini, and advertising platforms to create more conversational and personalized search experiences. **For law firms, this changes how potential clients discover and evaluate legal services.**



AI OVERVIEWS ARE CHANGING SEARCH BEHAVIOR

Google's AI Overviews provide summarized answers directly within search results.

This means users may:

- ✓ receive legal explanations immediately
- ✓ compare options before visiting websites
- ✓ discover attorneys through AI-generated recommendations
- ✓ make decisions earlier in the search journey



Someone searching: "What should I do after a DUI arrest in New Jersey?"

may now receive:

- ✓ legal summaries
- ✓ procedural guidance
- ✓ related questions
- ✓ local attorney references

before clicking on a law firm website.



SEARCH IS BECOMING MORE CONVERSATIONAL

Consumers are increasingly asking full questions instead of typing short keyword phrases.

Instead of:

"family lawyer NJ"

users now ask:

"What happens if we disagree on custody arrangements during mediation?"

This shift means law firms need content that answers **real questions** in clear, conversational language.



EXPERTISE MATTER MORE THAN EVER

Google continues emphasizing:

- ✓ expert-created content
- ✓ helpful information
- ✓ trusted brands
- ✓ real-world expertise

This creates opportunities for lawyers who:

- ✓ publish educational content
- ✓ create videos
- ✓ appear on podcasts
- ✓ build recognizable personal brands
- ✓ demonstrate expertise publicly



The firms that consistently educate and build trust online are more likely to stand out in AI-driven search experiences.

TRADITIONAL SEARCH VS. AI SEARCH

TRADITIONAL SEARCH

When users search for a lawyer, Google used to just display:

- 🔗 a list of website links
- 📄 ads
- 📍 map listings

The goal was to get that **all-important click**.

VS

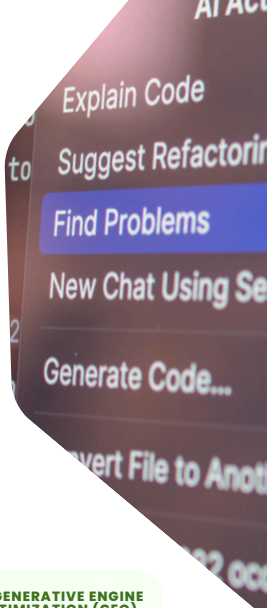
AI SEARCH

But now, when users ask a question like "What are my options if I've been arrested for a DUI in New Jersey?" AI systems might:

- ✓ summarize the law
- ✓ offer up some recommendations
- ✓ reference a few top-rated law firms
- ✓ even answer the question directly

The game has changed, and the new goal is to become a **trusted source** that AI systems feel comfortable referencing or recommending to their users.

THE NEW REALITY OF SEARCH



Traditional SEO still matters. But law firms now need visibility strategies that work across both traditional search engines and AI-driven search experiences.

Three concepts are becoming increasingly important:

1. SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO) - THE OLD STANDBY

SEO is the traditional strategy most law firms already know.

It's all about making your website visible in search engines through:

- ✓ keywords
- ✓ local SEO
- ✓ backlinks
- ✓ technical optimization
- ✓ website structure

But a solid SEO foundation also includes things like:

- 📱 a fast mobile-friendly website
- ⚙️ detailed attorney bios
- 📄 clear practice area pages
- 📍 optimized Google Business Profiles
- 🔄 regular website updates

Goal: Improve rankings in traditional search engines.

2. ANSWER ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (AEO) - BECOME THE DIRECT ANSWER

AEO focuses on helping search engines directly answer user questions using your content.

This includes:

- ✓ FAQ content
- ✓ featured snippets
- ✓ "People Also Ask" boxes
- ✓ voice search answers
- ✓ AI Overviews

AEO is all about creating:

- 🗨️ conversational content
- 📄 concise answers
- 📄 clear formatting
- ❓ question-based content

Goal: Become the answer users see in search results.

3. GENERATIVE ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (GEO) - BUILDING AI TRUST

GEO is the newest evolution in search marketing, focuses on helping AI systems recognize your law firm as a credible source.

PLATFORMS INCLUDE:

- ChatGPT**
- Gemini**
- Perplexity**
- Claude**

It's all about getting AI systems to:

- ✓ trust your law firm
- ✓ recognize your expertise
- ✓ reference your content
- ✓ recommend your brand

GEO is influenced by:

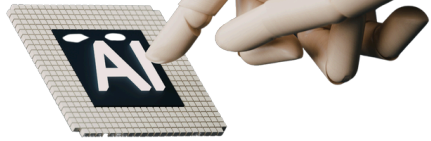
- 👍 reviews
- 📄 reputation
- 📖 educational content
- ⚖️ attorney authority
- 📍 online trust signals
- 📁 legal directories
- 🗣️ Media mentions

Goal: Become a law firm AI systems trust and reference.



The most successful law firms in the years ahead will be the ones that invest in all three strategies - not just one.





THE NEW VISIBILITY FORMULA



Search engines and AI systems increasingly reward firms that demonstrate:



Expertise

Show your depth of knowledge through high-quality, helpful content and insights.



Credibility

Establish your firm as a credible and reliable source in your practice areas



Educational Value

Provide clear, useful answers to legal questions that help potential clients make informed decisions.



Strong Online Reputation

Build and maintain a positive presence across reviews, directories, and industry mentions.



Positive Client Experiences

Deliver great experiences that lead to reviews, referrals, and long-term loyalty.

It's no longer just about ranking. It's about **earning visibility** and **staying visible** across every search experience.

WHAT AI SYSTEMS ACTUALLY TRUST

AI visibility is not simply about producing more content. AI systems are more likely to trust firms that demonstrate consistent expertise and credibility online.

1 Strong Reviews

Reviews remain one of the strongest trust signals online.

Consistent positive reviews help improve:

- ✓ local visibility
- ✓ credibility
- ✓ client trust



2 Attorney Expertise

AI systems prefer identifiable experts over anonymous brands.

Strong attorney bios should include:

- ✓ publications
- ✓ speaking engagements
- ✓ practice area focus
- ✓ credentials
- ✓ experience awards



3 Educational Content

Helpful educational content demonstrates expertise far better than generic marketing copy.

High-value content includes:

- ✓ FAQs
- ✓ legal guides
- ✓ articles
- ✓ videos
- ✓ explainers



4 Consistent Online Presence

Consistency across:

- ✓ your website
- ✓ Google Business Profile
- ✓ legal directories
- ✓ social media

helps reinforce legitimacy and authority.



5 Client Experience

The client experience increasingly impacts growth and reputation.

Fast response times, online scheduling, and strong intake systems help firms:

- ✓ convert more leads
- ✓ improve reviews
- ✓ strengthen reputation

The firms that respond fastest often win the client.



The Power of Legal Directories

Legal directories are one of the most trusted signals in legal marketing - and for good reason.

Important platforms to get listed on include:



These platforms help in a big way:

- ✓ validate attorney identities
- ✓ reinforce practice area relevance
- ✓ strengthen local SEO signals
- ✓ improve brand consistency
- ✓ increase trust with prospective clients

Having accurate and complete profiles in these directories helps signal that:

- ✓ established
- ✓ legitimate
- ✓ active
- ✓ authoritative within your practice area

Keeping things consistent across your website, legal directories, and Google Business Profile is key to both traditional SEO and AI-driven visibility.



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CONTENT THAT PERFORMS IN AI SEARCH

Content remains one of the strongest drivers of visibility in both traditional and AI-driven search environments.

But the type of content that performs well is changing.



<p>1</p> <p>FAQ Content</p> <p>FAQ pages align closely with how consumers now search.</p> <p>Good FAQ content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • answers real legal questions • uses conversational language • improves discoverability in AI search 	<p>2</p> <p>Legal Explainers</p> <p>Consumers increasingly want educational guidance before contacting a lawyer.</p> <p>Content explaining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • legal processes • timelines • common mistakes • next steps <p>can build trust early in the client journey.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Educational Video</p> <p>Short educational videos help lawyers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • build trust • improve engagement • strengthen visibility • humanize attorneys <p>Video content is increasingly important across:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YouTube • LinkedIn • Instagram • Facebook • TikTok 	<p>4</p> <p>Thought Leadership</p> <p>Lawyers who publicly share insights often strengthen authority faster than firms relying only on traditional marketing.</p> <p>This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • articles • interviews • podcasts • webinars • conference speaking
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High-quality, helpful content that educates and builds trust will continue to win - both in search engines and in the answers AI systems generate.

ERROR

THE BIGGEST MISTAKES LAW FIRMS ARE MAKING

Avoiding these common mistakes can be the difference between blending in - or becoming the firm that stands out and gets chosen.

1

Publishing Generic AI Content



AI tools make content creation easier, but generic content rarely builds authority.

Consumers increasingly prefer:

- original insights
- authentic expertise
- practical educational value

2

Ignoring Personal Branding



People hire lawyers they trust. Firms that avoid:

- video
- public education
- attorney visibility
- thought leadership

often struggle to stand out online.

3

Slow Lead Response Times



Even strong marketing underperforms when intake systems are weak.

Modern firms should prioritize:

- fast response times
- online scheduling
- CRM systems
- automated follow-up

4

Treating SEO and AI Visibility Separately



Visibility is increasingly interconnected across:

- Google Search
- Maps
- AI tools
- reviews
- YouTube
- legal directories

Strong marketing strategies now require a unified approach.



Avoiding these mistakes isn't just about better marketing - it's about becoming **the trusted choice** in every search experience.

WHAT WINNING LAW FIRMS WILL DO NEXT

Search visibility is becoming increasingly interconnected across:



SEO, Google Ads, reviews, educational content, video, and AI visibility no longer operate as separate marketing channels – they now influence each other across the entire search ecosystem.

At the same time, emerging AI ad formats like:



Business Agent for Leads



Conversational Discovery Ads

may create new opportunities for law firms to appear directly inside AI-driven search experiences through recommendations, conversational prompts, and AI-assisted discovery.

As AI search evolves, law firms will need a more unified search strategy where:



Paid Search drives visibility and insights



Organic Search builds long-term authority



AI Search strengthens discoverability and trust

The firms that integrate all three effectively will likely have the strongest competitive advantage in the future of legal marketing.



AI is not replacing lawyers, it's just changing how people find and evaluate them

The law firms that **succeed** in the future will be the ones that:



Keep on educating and producing valuable content



Build authority and credibility online



Build trust with potential clients



Improve the client experience



Adapt to changing search behaviour



And get on board with AI-driven visibility strategies