

Customer Q&A.

Building better websites faster with FindLaw, a Thomson Reuters Company.

FindLaw®

Industry

Digital Marketing, Legal Services

Site

lawyermarketing.com

About

Provides law firms with web development, prospective clients.

- Part of Thomson Reuters
- 9+ million site visits per month

In today's online marketplace, executing an effective digital marketing strategy can be difficult for any type of business. Legal professionals, however, face the added challenge of determining consumers' legal preferences—how they shop for legal services and why they choose their attorneys.

FindLaw is a Thomson Reuters company that was created to tackle those specific challenges and provide legal professionals with assistance for their digital marketing needs. Founded in 1995, the company has become the premier online destination for legal consumers and is one of the leading providers of digital marketing strategies for lawyers today.

To find out how FindLaw has achieved its year-over-year success, and to hear more about the role WP Engine has played in their efforts, we sat down with FindLaw's Senior Software Architect Jesse Haraldson to dive in a little deeper.

Let's start off with a little more detail about FindLaw—what exactly do you do?

FindLaw has two primary product lines that drive lead generation for law firms. First, we develop websites that are tailored for various legal practice areas and we make sure they're optimized for SEO. We also help out with a lot of advanced analytics so our clients can see who is coming to their sites and what type of legal advice they're looking for.

The second thing we offer is a series of online legal directories—think of them as Yelp for law firms. We provide a robust consumer portal that provides general legal advice as well as lists of attorneys that can meet a specific legal need in a specific location.

So you're facilitating the connection between people looking for legal advice and the lawyers that can help them?

Absolutely. I always say, when people come to FindLaw, it's usually not because they're having an awesome day. It's someone who is maybe in the middle of a divorce or someone who's having a business dispute. We don't have the same sort of user-consumer journey that a lot of websites have where there's repeat visitors coming to look at new things, set up accounts, etc. We want people to get the help they're looking for, as fast as possible. The urgency for us and the sites we build is to identify those leads, and then funnel them to the right legal resources as quickly as possible.

What kind of Content Management System (CMS) was FindLaw using when it started?

We started out with a proprietary, legacy CMS, which was good at helping us manage our content, but over time, we found it to be very developer-heavy. We were spending more time with developers—doing HTML coding, making modifications, doing custom animations—than we were with designers. That was problematic because it's the designer who has the ability to affect change, create calls to action, and really make your site pop. We felt we weren't able to devote enough time to that.

Also, because the CMS was this internal, proprietary tool, there were no integrations. If we wanted to do mobile optimization, we had to develop our own mobile adaptor. We wanted to implement AMP and ended up having to

develop an entirely separate product to do that. We really needed mobile accessibility—more than 50 percent of our traffic is from mobile—so, we knew it was time to find a new solution.

What was the procurement process like for finding a new CMS?

We looked at multiple solutions and due to cost, features, plugins, and worker availability we narrowed it down to WordPress.

As we gravitated towards WordPress, we heard about security issues we'd need to look out for. What I ended up finding out, was those issues were only a concern if you used bad plugins or a low-level service provider that didn't look after those things. That was part of the reason we decided, if we went with WordPress, we would choose a partner to manage security issues for us. That way we didn't have to become security experts and could instead focus on the build/design aspect of our business.

Was there any additional process that went into looking for a WordPress partner to work with?

Yes. We did a request for quotes, which all had to go through our global sourcing group. We ended up getting three quotes and had each vendor come on site to meet with our different teams.

WP Engine jumped out at us for a few reasons—one of the big ones was the simplicity of service they offer. Some of the other providers offered solutions that felt convoluted. WP Engine came to us and said, “we have an enterprise cluster, this is going to be your environment, it's going to be cloud hosted, you have your selection of cloud vendors, and we're going to manage everything in there for WordPress.”

The integration piece I mentioned was also something we liked. WordPress makes it easy to do the types of integrations we need. While that's not a WP Engine-specific quality, we felt they were able to help us manage this aspect really well.

The other thing was just the service and support they offered, and that's proven to be a great thing for us. We have a great customer success manager and a dedicated technical success manager, plus, the online ticketing and chat folks are always available and very helpful.

Can you describe what it was like working with your dedicated WP Engine team a little more?

It was really this part that has made the relationship feel like a partnership and not just a one-way transaction. During the

onboarding process, we met with our WP Engine team on a weekly basis, which is something we continue to do even now, as an onboarded customer.

That sort of attention—that white glove treatment—is not something you can get everywhere. WP Engine also works with our agency of record, which is another dimension to this partnership, and as we begin to convert our 9,000+ sites to WordPress, it's really this premium level of support that makes it all possible. They've become a part of our team, equally invested in our success every step of the way.

Now that you've made the shift over to WP Engine, what are you seeing in terms of improvements to your business? What's going well?

For starters, I don't have to worry about WordPress management. We have an enterprise data center where we're highly trained in how to handle programming languages and databases related to our legal research solution—none of which are PHP or MySQL (the language and database WordPress runs on). The fact that I didn't have to build up that expertise in my data center and I can instead focus solely on my product launch and making sure that WordPress is allowing us to get the custom design hours into the site that we want to, that's what's killing it for us right now.

We're also seeing improvements in page load times and even more importantly, our ability to roll out new sites. Previously, we were taking up to 90 business days to deploy a site. Now we're seeing those sites come through in 44 calendar days, which is more than a 60 percent reduction in time. With WP Engine, it's just a simpler process, we basically go create the site and the designer gets to work immediately.

What does the future with FindLaw and WP Engine look like? What's next for you and your team?

I've been impressed with some of the recent partnerships WP Engine has been forming, and I hope we can leverage some of them. The recent launch you did with Cloudflare was good, and I was impressed with the partnership you have with Google Cloud.

I'm also looking forward to seeing what you do with the Genesis Framework and StudioPress. Based on the way we scale, we might use a StudioPress theme as one of our baseline themes. They're great themes and the SEO is built in a little more there than it is with other frameworks—with our current framework we have to go to a third party plugin for that.

WP Engine fast facts.

Founded in 2010 | 85K+ Customers in 136 Countries | Supporting 500K+ WordPress Domains
Serving 2B Page Views/Day | Largest Customer Success Team in WordPress, Available 24/7/365