

Law Firm SEO Strategy: The 2026 Playbook

A partner-level guide to modern legal SEO: strategy, architecture, E-E-A-T, AI Overviews, and a 12-month sequencing plan.

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What changed between 2024 and 2026

Google's helpful-content updates, AI Overviews, and entity-based ranking have re-priced almost every legal SERP. Thin location pages and cheap directory links now decay quarter over quarter.

Firms still winning invest in attorney authorship, jurisdiction-specific facts, structured data, and conservative link velocity. Assume Google evaluates people, jurisdictions, and outcomes — not keywords in isolation.

The four-layer SEO stack

(1) Technical foundation. (2) On-page + schema. (3) Authority, links, and PR. (4) Local pack, GBP, reviews.

Most firms over-invest in layer 2 and under-invest in 3 and 4 — the exact reason rankings plateau at month six. Audit each layer's maturity before writing a single new page.

Keyword research that targets revenue

Tier every keyword by case-type margin, not volume. One \$40,000 PI consultation per quarter beats a keyword with 10x volume and only informational intent.

Use a 50/30/20 output ratio: transactional / commercial modifiers ('best', 'near me', 'cost') / informational content that earns links and feeds AI Overviews.

Page architecture

Canonical structure: /practice-areas/{practice} → /practice-areas/{practice}/{sub-practice} → /{practice}-lawyer/{city}.

Every leaf earns its own E-E-A-T signals: attorney author, citations to statute and case law, LegalService + Attorney schema, and FAQs sourced from real intake calls.

Do not build a city page where you have no office, attorney, or documented case history.

Content authority in the AI Overview era

AI Overviews cite subject-matter authority, not brochure copy. Include: attorney byline with bar admissions, last-reviewed date, links to primary sources, and answer-first opening in the first 80 words.

Rewrite any page that opens with 'Welcome to our firm — we are proud to serve...'

12-month sequencing

Months 1–3: technical fixes, schema, GBP, cornerstone rewrites.

Months 4–6: sub-practice + city pages weekly, editorial link acquisition, review-velocity workflows.

Months 7–9: ranking lift on Tier 2 keywords, first attributable case flow.

Months 10–12: compounding traffic on Tier 1, dropping cost-per-signed-case, reallocation into what converts.

Next step: Get your free SEO audit at pageonelawyers.com/law-firm-seo-audit

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