



NO MORE GUESSING:  
WHAT MOTIVATES SPANISH-SPEAKING CONSUMERS  
TO HIRE AN ATTORNEY

# In the modern era, no U.S. population demographic has grown as explosively as have Spanish speakers.

From traditional population centers like Los Angeles and Chicago to unexpected hot spots in the American West and Heartland, Spanish-speaking consumers across all age groups are exerting a powerful influence on society, culture and the economy. In fact, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of Spanish speakers is projected to rise through 2060 to more than 100 million.

With this change in demographics, many businesses have found it worthwhile to adjust their marketing strategy accordingly. The legal industry is no different. An opportunity that was once almost exclusively open to law firms in historically multicultural markets has expanded dramatically. Today, extending your legal services to Spanish-speaking clients makes sense in almost any environment.

The challenge, though, is creating an effective marketing strategy from scratch. After all, for many attorneys, reaching the Spanish-speaking segment is unfamiliar territory. Success in this space is not as easy as simply translating your website. Like any group of legal consumers, this market segment has its own unique drivers and preferences when it comes to searching for, evaluating and selecting an attorney.

But first, you must understand the behaviors of this new demographic and what guides their legal decision making. You cannot afford to make guesses or assumptions. This report uses the Thomson Reuters U.S. Consumer Legal Needs Survey, an annual query of 2,000 U.S.-based legal consumers, to create a profile of Spanish-speaking legal consumers and how it compares with the average legal consumer.

FindLaw has taken this information and developed several recommendations for attorneys at small and solo firms to avail themselves to the Spanish-speaking market. It's also important to note that these findings and recommendations mean adopting a cross-cultural mindset. For many firms reaching out to a new demographic, it can be challenging to understand and act on cultural generalizations without losing sight of specific clients or prospects. To successfully reach this group, you must recognize its preferences as a whole but remember that distinctions occur at the individual level.

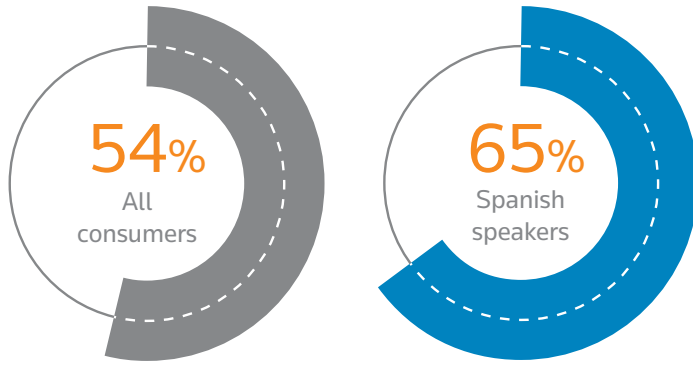
## THEY USE MODERN MEANS TO RESEARCH

When Spanish-speaking consumers have a legal need, they begin their search on mobile. This is evidenced by their increased use of social media to find an attorney compared to the typical consumer. In fact, 45 percent of those respondents said they used social media to find an attorney online, which is a nearly 20 percent increase over the average respondent and fits with Spanish-speaking households' increased use of mobile devices to conduct their searches.

### *Why appeal to Spanish-speaking legal consumers?*

- It isn't just the big cities. Smaller metros are seeing substantial growth in Spanish-speaking residents
- Spanish speakers hold the most buying power of any minority group in the U.S., with a combined purchasing capacity of \$1.7 trillion by 2020

## Web search via mobile to learn about attorney



The data highlights Spanish-speaking households' use of mobile further as you look at 65 percent of those surveyed conducted a web search via a mobile phone to learn about an attorney or law firm, 32 percent used an app on mobile and 29 percent used voice search on a home device. That's an 11 percent, nine percent and 13 percent increase, respectively, compared to the average legal consumer.

And because they're more technologically savvy, they're spending more time and effort finding the right attorney. Nearly 30 percent of Spanish-speaking legal consumers contacted or seriously considered three or more attorneys when looking at solving their legal need. Only 19 percent of all respondents did the same, with 60 percent only seriously considering one attorney. That means Spanish-speaking consumers are willing to conduct more thorough research when making a decision. They aren't seeing the search for an attorney as a one-stop decision process and appear open to learning about a lawyer from a variety of places, whether it's through web sites, personal contacts or via trusted third-party rating services.

## THEY ARE MOTIVATED TO ACT BASED ON PERSONAL BELIEFS

Spanish-speaking legal consumers are strongly motivated to take action by a sense of right and wrong. While they don't appear to be statistically different from other demographics when it comes to being inspired by material considerations or a potential loss of freedom, their responses to Thomson Reuters' survey indicated a higher-than-average desire to see justice done or correct the way "the system" works.

For example, 26 percent of Spanish-speaking legal consumers reported wanting to hire an attorney because they "wanted justice to be served." Only 18 percent of overall legal consumers reported feeling the same way. Also, 15 percent of Spanish-speaking legal consumers reported "wanting to change the way the system works" or "wanting to change society." Just eight percent of overall legal consumers reported feeling the same way.

The Spanish-speaking demographic traditionally has strong family ties and considers family the most important social unit. A similar closeness can exist within communities and religious affiliations. Accordingly, Spanish-speaking consumers want to ensure the legal system protects those institutions – as shown by their desire to seek justice and right wrongs through the legal system. The combination of family and community, along with this idealism, provides ample motivation to seek help from an attorney.

## THEY LISTEN TO OTHERS

The sincere and high level of trust Spanish-speaking consumers place in their peers can be both an opportunity and a challenge for law firms. The opportunity lies in developing a positive word-of-mouth referral network. The challenge is a classic problem: How do you build word of mouth without clients to recommend you?

As mentioned earlier, Spanish-speaking consumers are quite willing to hire an attorney when a legal issue arises. What's tricky is they want that guidance from people they already know. The numbers back it up:

- 79 percent of Spanish-speaking consumers sought recommendations or advice from family, whereas 73 percent of overall legal consumers did the same.
- 24 percent of Spanish-speaking consumers sought the counsel of neighbors, while only 15 percent of overall legal consumers did.
- Likewise, 32 percent of Spanish-speaking consumers turned to coworkers for advice. Among overall legal consumers, only 20 percent sought out colleagues.

While Spanish-speaking consumers listen to their personal contacts, they also have more confidence in ratings services than the average consumer. Of those surveyed, 52 percent said they have a high or above-average level of trust in third-party attorney rating services, compared to 36 percent of all those who contacted an attorney or law firm. So, if you've received a commendation or designation through something like Super Lawyers' patented selection process, make sure you highlight your accolade prominently.

The point is clear: Developing a strong reputation and building your network of recommendations is an excellent method of reaching Spanish-speaking individuals, and their larger communities.

## THEY RELY ON LEGAL DIRECTORIES

The willingness of Spanish-speaking legal consumers to take recommendations from their peers doesn't necessarily mean they don't find other resources helpful.

One of the most compelling findings from the 2018 survey is the role that legal directories play among this audience. Nearly half of Spanish-speaking consumers used a legal directory to find an attorney. Forty-eight percent of this group reported that they searched for an attorney on a legal directory such as Abogado or FindLaw – 10 percentage points higher than legal consumers indicated as a whole.

More telling is that only 13 percent said they used other, generic directories, such as Yelp, in their search. This low number indicates a strong preference for more specialized sources of information. You can see this also in the role legal organizations such as local bar associations and legal clinics play. While only four percent of the typical legal consumers learned about an attorney through such organizations, seven percent of Spanish-speakers said they did so.

The good news for attorneys is that the Spanish-speaking consumers' reliance on personal recommendations is not impervious. Attorneys can also connect with this audience by leveraging their faith in resources and organizations specifically dedicated to the law.

# Appealing to Spanish-speaking consumers

It bears repeating that reaching out to Spanish-speaking consumers isn't just a smart business move now, it's a sustainability factor for firms looking to the future. So how do small and solo law firms strategically, effectively and successfully win these clients?

## INCREASE YOUR FOOTPRINT ON LEGAL DIRECTORIES

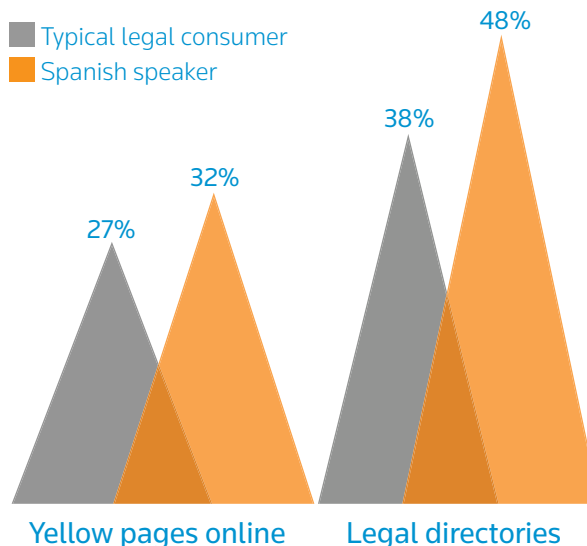
Online legal directories have become powerful marketing tools for attorneys, especially when targeting Spanish speakers. Consumers don't access them out of idle curiosity. At the very least, they want legal advice. More specifically, they're looking to hire an attorney. In contrast to general directories like phone books (whether digital or hard copy), online legal directories are tailored to legal consumers by practice area and geography.

The solution here may sound obvious: To attract Spanish-speaking consumers, your firm needs to be on Spanish-speaking legal directories. After all, 48 percent of Spanish-speaking consumers who look online when a legal need arises look at legal directories.

Still, success isn't a matter of simply listing your name and contact information. Remember that each directory teems with comparable firms fighting to get noticed, especially in dense, urban markets. To best leverage your directory presence, you'll want to optimize your listing and profile, highlighting information that gets clients to notice your firm – and even more important, hire you. Try these ways to do just that.

- **Perfect Information:** Sweat the details. A missed accent mark in the copy, an incorrect phone number – these small things will make you seem less authoritative and result in lost opportunities. Don't give potential clients any reason to question your ability to serve them. Communicate clearly from the start. That means accurately translating your communications into Spanish, preferably by a human rather than a program.
- **Compelling Taglines:** Listings may look quite similar from one to the next, so writing a unique and compelling tagline can make a critical difference. Speak directly to the Spanish-speaking consumer based on the findings earlier in this report. It seems that every lawyer today provides "aggressive representation," but what makes you different?
- **Attorney Biographies:** Your directory biography is an excellent marketing tool, but only if it speaks to your audience's needs – as opposed to your own ego. What clients want is a biography that demonstrates you understand them. Your ability to help Spanish-speaking consumers goes beyond offering services in their language. It should speak to their values and desires.

### Where consumers go to find an attorney





Listing your firm in a legal directory is quick and easy to set up, and directories help position your firm in ways that will compel potential clients to call you. Your presence on a Spanish-speaking directory will greatly help you target your marketing to an audience that is both specifically seeking legal help and those who are simply not a good fit for other firms based on language barriers.

## COMPLEMENT YOUR WEBSITE WITH CLIENT SUCCESSES

When the Spanish-speaking consumer is ready to move beyond your biography, some of the most compelling pieces of information you can provide are client stories and testimonials.

That's because today's consumers are well aware of how businesses target them. They know when they're being sold and, as a result, place immense value on content that isn't written by you. Third-party perspectives can validate your abilities and character far more powerfully and authentically. A solid body of reviews from former customers will help Spanish-speaking legal consumers understand who you are and how you work.

At the conclusion of a successful case, ask your client if they would be willing to discuss their experience working with you or your firm. With their permission, you can leverage the positive experiences of past clients to bolster your reputation in the eyes of future clients. There's nothing like positive word of mouth to convince curious site visitors to contact your firm.

Build your collection of reviews on neutral ground, such as Google. A base of honest reviews on third-party websites will ensure that your online marketing isn't a one-way message, but a conversation – one that Spanish-speaking consumers want to join.

Those same clients who were willing to provide a testimonial on your website may also write a review for a third-party site if you ask. From there, periodically monitor your firm's online reviews and mentions. Sifting through unvarnished opinions can reveal opportunities for presenting yourself to Spanish-speaking consumers in ways you may not have considered.

For more insight on third-party reviews and their effect on your firm, download our white paper *You Can't Control Your Firm's Reputation. (But You Can Manage It.)*



## DON'T FORGET ABOUT SOCIAL

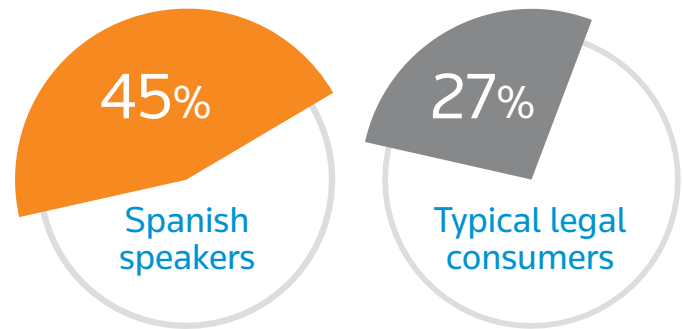
As previously mentioned, Spanish-speaking legal consumers often turn to trusted friends or their own family for recommendations. And while the degree and type of trust they may forge with you will vary, establishing personal connections can be incredibly important to Spanish speakers. Thankfully, you're practicing law in the age of social media – an entire industry centered around building personal connections online.

According to a study conducted by [Pew Research Center](#), the number-one social media platform used by Spanish speakers is Facebook. In fact, they estimate that 73 percent of Spanish-speaking internet users participate on the social media giant. If your target audience is Spanish-speakers, make social media--Facebook specifically--part of your marketing strategy.

The means by which you build rapport or empathize with your various clients are easily adapted to social media. Just be yourself. The most well-received social media posts are those that humanize a law firm, and that's exactly what Spanish-speaking consumers want--to know you and your associates as people. Start by:

- Sharing stories of something your law firm recently did for your community.
- Prudently sharing your opinions on relevant news stories that might interest your audience.
- Connecting emotionally and empathizing with potential clients by focusing on legal problems and how they can be (or were) solved.

*Who used social media in their search for an attorney?*



**Click here**  
to learn how your law firm  
can engage with social media.

Crafting a good social media post doesn't take much time, so engage your audience frequently. A little bit of regular activity can accomplish more than sweating out the perfect post once a month. The point is to get a natural conversation started where you know your Spanish-speaking audience engages online.

## STRIKE THE RIGHT NOTES

Reaching the Spanish-speaking consumer may mean taking some new approaches in your legal marketing, but it doesn't mean making assumptions about individuals. However you go about reaching this audience, always aim to address the individuals behind the demographics. Different search behaviors and referral preferences aside, every client is a unique person. Regardless of the language spoken at home, speak to your prospect's personal goals and you'll find success marketing your firm.

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