

Connect with customers with blogs, Twitter

They're easy to use and effective



Take note, small- and medium-business owners: blogs, Twitter and other “social media” aren’t for kids – they’re tools for taking on the big guys.

Learn how to use them, and you can leverage your lack of bureaucracy to communicate directly with potential clients, the media and your community.

Our 25-lawyer firm uses blogs and Twitter.

I started my blog on land-use and property law (www.inversecondemnation.com) more than three years ago. Mark Murakami followed, focusing on maritime law (www.hawaiiocanlaw.com). Soon Tred Eyerly joined, writing about insurance issues (www.insurancelawhawaii.com).

We analyze court decisions and track new developments. **Blogs are more timely than static Web sites, and also allow us to interact directly with our readers.** Blogging has helped garner local and national media attention for cases, and improves the quality of the reporting by giving journalists an insider’s view on the story.

Twitter limits you to 140-character messages and broadcasts instantly, allowing you to enter an ongoing conversation with the “thought leaders” in your areas. Many CEOs blog, and it seems that **half of the journalists and politicians in town have joined Twitter.**

Some tips:

First, every culture has rules; social media is no different. **Listen in and ask questions**, then seek out others of like interests – locally, nationally or worldwide.

Second, don’t just write about business. Transparency is expected; **people want to know about you, not just what you do.** It is “social” media, after all.

Third – and most importantly – share your passion.

Come, join us.

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Robert H. Thomas, land-use attorney and director with Damon Key Leong Kupchak Hastert

How to **START?**

Twitter describes itself as a way for people to “stay connected through *the exchange of quick, frequent answers to one simple question: What are you doing?*” It’s free and easy to sign up at twitter.com.

There are *lots of free programs for creating blogs*. One of the best and most popular is **WordPress** (go to wordpress.org). Many large and small organizations use it for their blogs, including the *N.Y. Times*, CNN and Fox News.