



Rachael Oakes

Taking the hassle out of content marketing



Name: Matt Baldwin
Company: Coast Communications
Email: matt@coastcommunications.co.uk

It has been three years since the law firm founded by the grandfather of tennis ace Tim Henman merged to create regional powerhouse Henmans Freeth. During that time the firm has not been afraid to embrace new technology to deliver a better client experience.

So when Passle, a new and clever content marketing platform, arrived on the scene a little over 12 months ago it was not surprising to see the firm as one of its early adopters.

Passle allows busy professionals to create and share content quickly via a firm's website and social media. Posts, called 'passles', allow users to demonstrate their expertise with clients, prospects and referrers, positioning themselves as the go-to experts.

Rachael Oakes, Partner and National Head of Henmans Freeth's Family team was one of the first lawyers in the firm to use the new platform.

"My team has always embraced digital marketing and social media," explains Rachael, "and when we were introduced to Passle we could immediately see its potential. The speed and simplicity behind sharing content really appealed."

Like many family law teams, Rachael and her colleagues are pretty marketing savvy. She is quick to comment on breaking news stories, engaging with the national and regional media across her firm's 11 offices. The team regularly produce articles, briefing notes and hosting events for clients.

"But even the fastest firm cannot beat the media," says Rachael.

“My team has always embraced digital marketing and social media and when we were introduced to Passle we could immediately see its potential.”

"It takes time to prepare a press release or an article, and even longer to create and issue a newsletter or host an event for our clients. Passle allows us to create content and have that post in front of our clients and prospects within minutes."

Take the recent Supreme Court decision on Sharland and Gohil in October, with law firms across the country racing to issue their press release and secure column inches.

"As soon as the Supreme Court had published its decision we were able to create a brief commentary and have that issued immediately," explains Rachael.

Now, six members of the family team regularly post 'passles', and in the first few days of December the team has created six separate pieces of content, commenting on issues as diverse as Tiger Woods discussing parenting after divorce and MPs support for no fault divorce.

"Our aim is for every member of the team using Passle to create at least two posts a week," says Rachael, "and the gamification, with the six of us competing against each other, really helped to get things going."

Henmans Freeth's website is a valuable source for new enquiries and work for Rachael and her team, as it is for many family law firms. Considerable effort and money is spent on search engine optimisation to ensure the firm is top of the relevant searches.

"We try where possible to tie in our SEO efforts into our Passle posts, using common key words and phrases," explains Rachael. "The results have been better than we could have ever anticipated. The traffic to our website and the length of time people stay is significantly higher."

Passle's own reporting, tying in with Google analytics, allows Rachael and her team to see who is reading what and for how long, enabling further refinement of content. Its newsletter function allows Rachael to take the top posts each month creating a simple newsletter that is sent to some 800 people.

It could be argued that in the race to

deliver content, quality will inevitably drop. The 'it doesn't matter what you say, just say something' school of thought.

"That is a real risk with a platform like Passle, and we have taken steps to ensure that we think about what we say," says Rachael. "We do have younger members of the team creating posts, and with its 'approve' function we can review anything before it is made live. Like all of our marketing efforts, our passles are thoughtful and well-considered."

Rachael also recognises that as Passle gains in popularity – and more and more law and accounting firms are signing up – there is also a concern that firms will increasingly look and sound alike.

Differentiation between firms is a thorny issue that marketing and business development teams have been struggling to tackle for years.

"Passle is just the platform," says Rachael. "It is how it is used that will allow firms to stand out from the crowd. We continue to work with the Passle team suggesting ways in which it can be refined and improved to help us."

Passle is unlikely to replace or make redundant any existing marketing efforts, more enhance, refine and compliment what a firm is already doing.

At Henmans Freeth it has allowed marketing and business development activity to be faster and more responsive. "It has also freed up time for the marketing and BD team," adds Rachael.

"During the initial stages of using and understanding Passle our BD team was very hands-on. Now it is very much in our hands. It is the fee-earners that are driving Passle forward in its wider roll-out."

It is rare to see something genuinely new in professional services marketing, and certainly to see something capture the imagination of fee-earners in the way Passle has. It's so good that Rachael will be first in line to buy shares in the company if it were ever to float on the stock exchange. There can be surely no higher commendation.