

## Sugar Creek Legal Services

### Overview

**Location:** Chaska, Minn.

**Industry:** Legal services

#### Customer Profile:

Sugar Creek Legal Services is a small Chaska, Minn., law firm headed by Richard Haefele practicing in the areas of family law, bankruptcy, real estate, construction and estate planning.

#### Business Situation:

Haefele is in his fourth decade as an attorney in the Chaska area, but after some health problems in 2008, he was forced to take some time away from his practice. When he returned to work, he needed to jump-start his pipeline of new clients and decided to invest in various online marketing services. Unfortunately, few of them produced any significant results.

#### Solution:

In January 2009, Haefele launched a Martindale-Hubbell® Pay-Per-Click (PPC) online marketing program to try to secure more client leads from the Internet. From the first day, the program was successful for him as the phone calls and e-mail inquiries started to materialize.

#### Benefits:

- In the first 90 days, more than 40 prospective clients discovered Haefele's practice from the PPC program and called his office to discuss his services.
- His firm now receives an average of approximately five new client leads weekly from the PPC program.
- The client leads from Martindale-Hubbell services are more qualified than other referral programs and Haefele is able to convert roughly 80% of them into paying clients.
- The LexisNexis® Customer Support team has been extremely responsive to the majority of Rick's questions and concerns with the new world of online advertising.

### Product Summary

#### Client Development

- Martindale-Hubbell Pay Per Click

## Minnesota Law Firm Uses Martindale-Hubbell® Pay-Per-Click Program to Land New Clients Weekly

At Sugar Creek Legal Services, in Chaska, Minnesota, Richard Haefele has been serving the local community for more than 35 years. He is dedicated to building and maintaining strong relationships within the local community and with each of his clients, offering practical, efficient and cost-effective legal counsel on a wide range of legal matters, including family law, bankruptcy, real estate, construction and estate planning.

Haefele is licensed to appear before the State District Courts of Minnesota and the U.S. District Court for the District of Minnesota, and he is a certified mediator and a member of the Minnesota State Bar Association. In addition to Haefele's general legal practice, he is involved in the local community as a supporter of local schools and children's organizations, including serving as a school board member and a leader in the scouting program in his home community.

### Situation

Haefele is in his fourth decade as an attorney in the Chaska area, but after some health problems in 2008, he was forced to take some time away from his practice.

"I've been practicing law for nearly 40 years, but the medical problems I had to confront last year really affected my business—especially my trial practice—since I just couldn't handle the workload I had at the time," he explained. "On top of that, the recession deepened last year and our town of Chaska has been hit particularly hard by the economic crisis. Between these two major challenges, I found that my law practice was the slowest as it had been in years."

When he returned to work, Haefele knew that he needed to jump-start his pipeline of new clients and decided to invest in various online marketing services. He had read about how other small law firms had leveraged the power of the Internet in order to allow them to compete on more equal footing with larger firms, so he contacted a number of vendors both inside and outside the legal market to explore his options.

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their own success.*

"I signed up with one of the competing national legal vendors that operates a Web marketing service for lawyers and also tried out a local online marketing company," said Haefele. "Unfortunately, these services had very little effect and I wasn't able to generate any meaningful client inquiries."

In spite of this lack of success, Haefele was wise enough to realize that the medium of online advertising held out hope for marketing his legal services; he just needed to find the right match.

### **Solution**

"Last winter, I was contacted by a Martindale-Hubbell representative who introduced me to their Lawyers.com<sup>SM</sup> Web site for individuals seeking a lawyer and explained to me a variety of online marketing services they have developed specifically for small law firms like mine," explained Haefele. "I was impressed with the rep's knowledge of the law firm marketplace and how the Martindale-Hubbell services had been tailored for firms with modest marketing budgets who were seeking new clients in a hurry."

The Martindale-Hubbell team did some research into Haefele's areas of practice and his Minnesota region, then proposed to Haefele that he invest in a Pay-Per-Click (PPC) program. PPC is an innovative online marketing strategy that allows law firms to obtain top placement on "paid" search engine results (e.g., Google<sup>TM</sup>, Yahoo!<sup>®</sup> and MSN<sup>®</sup>), generating qualified client leads. The Martindale-Hubbell PPC offering takes the complicated world of online searching and reduces it to a simple platform for law firms to measure their own success.

The Martindale-Hubbell PPC program is especially useful for law firms practicing in very unique niche areas or smaller hometown markets because it allows them to gain exceptional visibility with higher rankings on the major search engines. Rather than producing dozens of e-mail inquiries from individuals with all sorts of personal legal problems in all parts of the country, the Martindale-Hubbell PPC offering allows law firms to generate inquiries from targeted prospects in their narrow area of practice and within their immediate geographical sphere of practice.

*“Unlike the other programs I had tried, I knew immediately that the Martindale-Hubbell PPC program was going to work for me,” said Haefele. “As soon as I launched their program, my phones started ringing on day one and they haven’t stopped since.”*

## Results

“Unlike the other programs I had tried, I knew immediately that the Martindale-Hubbell PPC program was going to work for me,” said Haefele. “As soon as I launched their program, my phones started ringing on day one and they haven’t stopped since.”

According to Haefele, in just the first 90 days of being live with the PPC program, more than 40 prospective clients discovered Haefele’s practice and called his office to discuss his services. His firm now receives an average of approximately 5 new client leads weekly from the PPC program.

“Just as important as this consistent volume of inquiries, though, is that the client leads I get from Martindale-Hubbell are more qualified than the handful I would occasionally receive from other referral programs,” he explained. “As a result, I’m actually able to convert roughly 80% of these leads into paying clients.”

Haefele also lauds the LexisNexis Customer Support team for their accessibility and professionalism.

“Everyone at the company, from my rep to the customer support folks, has been extremely responsive and responds right away,” he adds. “That tells me they’re committed to my success as I dive into this new world of online marketing for law firms.”

## About LexisNexis

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