

From being unconvinced about SEO to utterly convinced

“We are proud partners with bangyourowndrum on the production and maintenance of our website, branding materials, and ongoing work to maintain and improve our interactions with our clients.”

– The client

The client

The client was a large barristers’ chambers in Leeds, of around 70 people. They had asked me to quote for updating the copy on their rather small website. I took the opportunity, in my own time, to also prepare an SEO audit of the site, since I saw that it was poor. As a result of the report I submitted, the client decided to scrap the old site and asked me to project-manage the development of a brand-new site, including design, development, photography, copy and SEO. I brought in a design and development agency (after inviting bids for the work), as well as a photographer.

The challenge

Barristers’ chambers follow a non-standard business model, including the way they obtain new business. On the one hand, while this chambers saw that they weren’t doing well in the Google rankings, they also challenged how much this really mattered. Would they *really* win business as a result of a web search? They also challenged whether the new site needed to be responsive, as they felt that few of their clients would access it from a tablet or smartphone. I pointed out that their new business strategy was to be much more commercially savvy, and to sell direct to the public (rather than only to instructing solicitors).

The writing

The new site was carefully written to optimise search-engine visibility, both in the body copy and the meta content. The site was developed to be responsive, and for the tone of voice, design and photography to be contemporary and to appeal even to laypeople.

The short-term result

As soon as it went live, it was clear that the new website broke the mould for UK barristers’ sites. Modern, unstuffy and clear, it also delivered significantly enhanced Google rankings. For example, the old site came in at #46 for ‘family barrister leeds’, but the new site achieved #2. The search term ‘malpractice barrister leeds’ hadn’t previously been in the top 70 results, but was now #2. Meanwhile, ‘civil fraud barrister’ now came in at both #1 and #2. The site was extremely well-received internally and externally, and the Google Analytics we set up proved that their clients did access the site from mobiles and tablets.

The longer-term result

Just one year later, this chambers was able to attract a partner with which to merge, creating the largest set on the North Eastern Circuit (over 140 staff). The new set had the choice of either creating a totally new website or adapting one of the existing websites. They decided to adapt the website I had created: it was reskinned with the new logo and colour palette; the same photographer and designers were brought in; and I doubled the number of pages. They now fully appreciate the value of SEO.

