

LAW PRACTICE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Background Issues

Lawyers in private practice, particularly those in a small firm, are running a business as well as practicing law as a professional. The success of that business oftentimes depends on the success of the lawyer(s). Besides practicing law and keeping up with changes in the law comes the demand for knowledge about technology, hiring and managing office personnel and other lawyers, marketing a law firm, monitoring the financial health and goals of the firm, keeping a balance in personal and professional lives, and many other issues.

Law practice management services assist practicing lawyers with the management and improvement of operation of their law practices. Improved management skills, organization and efficiency contribute to a successful law firm. As a consequence, firm success rates are improved while the risk of legal malpractice and disciplinary complaints is decreased.

On the national scene, the American Bar Association's Law Practice Management Section, as well as other ABA committees and sections, publish a wide variety of resources pertaining to practice management. Many of the resources in The Missouri Bar Law Practice Management Lending Library are from the ABA.

The Practice Management Advisors Group of the ABA Law Practice Management Section offers a listserv of practice management professionals who share information and help develop law practice management standards.

Missouri Bar Activities

The Law Practice Management Information Center is a member service of The Missouri Bar that provides assistance with questions, information and education about managing a law practice. Some of the services include:

Online Law Practice Management Center. The online center is rich in practice management resources that include helpful articles, forms, information and tips, among others. The online center can be accessed at www.mobar.org/lpmonline/index.htm.

Personal Assistance. The practice management advisor on staff provides personal, confidential assistance by telephone concerning practice management questions as well as research services to provide needed information. The advisor is also affiliated with the ABA Practice Management Advisors Group, which provides indirect access to a network of practice management advisors from bar organizations throughout the U.S. and Canada.

Law Practice Management Lending Library. The library contains an extensive collection of books, videotapes, audio tapes and periodical articles. Any member may borrow the resources from the library by having them shipped at cost. Likewise, any member may visit The Missouri Bar Center in Jefferson City to use the library without cost. A free catalog listing the available resources is provided, or items may be ordered online through the online center.

Practice Management CLE Programs. Practice management programs are offered periodically as a joint effort with The Missouri Bar's CLE Department. A speaker is also available to design and present CLE programs at local bar association meetings and similar gatherings.

Solo and Small Firm Conference. This highly successful and award-winning conference is held annually in June specifically for solo and small firm practitioners. The conference features CLE programming tracks on practice management, technology and quality of life, along with substantive law programs and computer labs. In addition to the many educational opportunities, conferees have the chance to network and form friendships and alliances with other small firm practitioners from all over the state.

Regular columns in The Missouri Bar Bulletin and ESQ. A regular column featuring practice management topics and information is published in each issue of *The Missouri Bar Bulletin* and periodically in *ESQ.*, the bar's weekly online newsletter.

SFIG (Small Firm Internet Group). The SFIG is the most active listserv provided by The Missouri Bar. An off-shoot of the Solo & Small Firm Committee and the Solo and Small Firm Conference, the listserv currently features more than 400 participants. The members are primarily from solo and small firms, and share substantive information and personal issues, exchanging tips about technology as well as referrals.

MoBar Net (Missouri Bar Computer Network). MoBar Net is a paid subscription service that offers direct online access to state databases, selected circuit and municipal courts, and other services of interest to lawyers.



The Missouri Bar's Solo and Small Firm Conference, which has become hugely popular, features three days of educational sessions, networking opportunities, and plenty of time for recreation and fun.