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LawBiz® TIPS – Week of August 16, 2011

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Everyone complains about the weather, but no one does anything about it. Or, if you don't like the weather now, wait 5 minutes and it will change. I've heard these comments for years. And now we're experiencing it ,, the weather has changed from super-hot to almost cold. But, then, we changed locations.

The Upper Peninsula of Michigan is beautiful and the weather by the Great Lakes is certainly different. We're beginning to travel south and will pick up warmer weather. Our country is gorgeous and diverse, both in its people and its appearance.

Follow our travels at lawbiz.com/roadshow and facebook.com/lawbiztour. Our next presentations:

Thurs, August 18 - Chicago, IL

8:30-11am: [Collecting Your Fee- How to Be More Successful](#) (Chicago Bar Association)

Tues, August 23 - Madison, WI

8:30-10:30am: [Collecting Your Fee and Getting Paid](#) (Madison State Bar Center)

Free 2011 Law Practice Management & Technology Membership:

The California Bar's Law Practice Management & Technology Section is offering a **limited free membership** to Californian lawyers for the remainder of 2011! (Non-cal bar members are eligible to join for a small fee.) **Lawyers must sign up by August 27 to get this great deal.** To receive your FREE LPMT Section membership for 2011, just send your name and California State Bar number to LPMT at LPMT@calbar.ca.gov.

Benefits include: LPMT's flagship publication, *The Bottom Line*, a bi-monthly journal focused on practice management and the use of technology. On alternate months, members receive the *LPMT E-News*, which includes the ever-popular *Tech Tips* feature. **Free MCLE:** Each issue of *The Bottom Line* contains at least one MCLE article eligible for

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Featured Video:



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[What Clients Are Saying:](#)

one hour of credit - *FREE* to all members.

In the meantime, be well and enjoy your success. Thank you for this opportunity to connect with you.



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What is a Businesslike Law Firm?

As regular readers know, I registered the phrase "The Business of Law®" nearly two decades ago because so few lawyers and law firms cared about the concept. The Great Recession has done much to change that, but there are still lawyers who contend that getting business issues right distracts them from their real purpose in life, serving clients.

The reality is that running a law firm in a businesslike way improves the professionalism of the practice of law. The purpose is not simply to get more money for the lawyer; it also benefits the client by approaching client service more efficiently, avoiding the service lapses that often result in malpractice charges. The dos and don'ts for businesslike law firm conduct are mirror images of each other. Here are half a dozen of the most important ones.

1) Don't put the firm first. Do put the client first. Lawyers are skilled at persuasion with judges, juries, partners and peers. Try consciously persuading your clients of the value you provide and you'll have a better chance of retaining them.

2) Don't just take whatever clients are available. Do target your clients. Define the location, demographics, occupation, financials and other characteristics of clients who will give you the work you want. A business that tries to grow without a clear idea of where it wants to grow will soon find itself floundering.

3) Don't sell time. Do provide service and value. Value is ultimately determined by the client, not the attorney. But the attorney must educate the client about "value" by showing how the services delivered to the client coincide with what the client wants and needs to have.

4) Don't try to keep your options open. Do have a budget. Budgets define successful business planning. Involve the client in the budgeting process, get formal approval of the completed budget, and communicate constantly about how expenses are tracking.

5) Don't view technology as a cost threat. Do use it as a way to give clients more value. Technology is making the practice of law more efficient, with resulting downward pressure on both costs and fees. Law firms should partner with their clients and show them how they use technology efficiencies to increase the volume of work that can be done more efficiently.

6) Don't be a bank for your clients. Do emphasize collections. If the client hasn't paid the fee while your firm continues to work on and bill for their matter, you are extending a no-cost loan to the client. Keep track of when clients are behind on their payments, and be firm in requesting payment.

"On a personal level, I'm not scared any more. The recession reduced my wife and me from a comfortable two-income family to a one person income and a capital drain. When I first called Ed, I truly was counting the months until we would have to put the house on the market... The things we have put in place and will continue working on guaranteed my business picking up."

FW
Northern California

"Ed was coaching me during our firm reorganization when disaster hit! Key personnel departed and I was panic-stricken. Not only did he honor his commitment to 24/7, but his advice enabled me to refocus my priorities. Now, I'm eating, I'm sleeping, and I'm smiling thanks to his guidance."

KH
England

Exit Strategy: Selling & Other Strategies to Leave the Practice of Law

Reveals insider information that is sure to go a long way to help achieve optimal results while transitioning out of the practice of law. 3 DVD set.

[Learn more.](#)

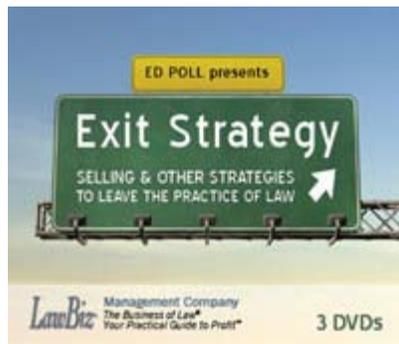
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