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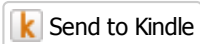


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Virtual Paralegals: "It's a Good Thing"

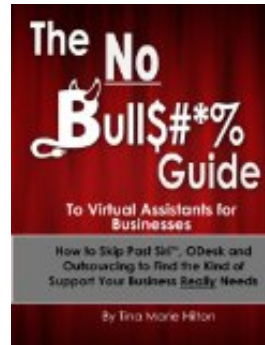
Posted by T. Marie Hilton • 4 Comments



Lynne DeVenny, aka [@ExpertParalegal](#) and I have had a nifty little mutual admiration society on Twitter for a while now. She's introduced me to wonderful things like her blog [Practical Paralegalism](#), Green Tea Slushies and [@Richard](#)

[Prickman](#). Ok, so that last one may not be considered by all to be wonderful, but he is entertaining. When she asked me to guest post on her blog I was extremely honored and literally jumped at the chance. And being the savvy business woman I am, I immediately asked if she might be interested

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in doing the same here. So without further ado I'd like to introduce my readers to one of my social media/paralegal heroes... Lynne DeVenny. Psst...she also co-authored the book ["Workers' Compensation Practice for Paralegals"](#) ([Carolina Academic Press 2008](#)), pretty impressive right?

Virtual Paralegals: "It's a Good Thing"

By Lynne J. DeVenny, NCCP

"I invented 'It's a good thing' before you were even born." ~ Martha Stewart

When Tina and I suggested topics for each other's guest posts at our respective blogs, she tweeted, "I'd love to have you share how a highly successful, in-office paralegal feels about the upsurge of virtual paralegals." Since I think the "highly successful, in-office paralegal" is supposed to be me, I'm honored! My reply to Tina: "Are you kidding? I want to BE a virtual paralegal!"

Whether you work as an independent contractor providing paralegal support services to attorney clients, or as a law firm employee that skips the physical commute and works from home full or part-time, working virtually only expands skilled paralegals' employment possibilities – and right now, that is a GOOD thing. In an era of exploding technological advances combined with the need for lawyers to economize in order to continue to provide affordable legal services – and survive a recessionary economy that is hitting law firm earnings hard, it just makes sense to view virtual paralegals as the wave of the future. "Traditional" paralegals (like me) should not view them as a threat to our own survival, but as role models and pioneers who are opening doors for the rest

of us.

Why am I such a fan of virtual paralegals? When I didn't know as many as I do now, I used to think it was because they didn't have to find matching shoes every single week day morning. But it's so much more than that. Here are a few reasons that they represent positive change and an expanded future for the paralegal profession:

- **Innovation:** Successful virtual paralegals are innovators and technological whizzes. They are utilizing the latest technology to not only work securely from remote locations but reduce paper (go green!) and perform essential legal support tasks more efficiently than ever. They are masters of legal software applications and cutting-edge technology that no legal professional can afford to ignore.
- **Opportunity:** Virtual paralegals help talented attorneys stay in practice who might otherwise be unable to afford expensive office space and traditional personnel expenses. They are maintaining and creating employment opportunities during a time when everyone's need to economize is leading to new solutions for staffing needs.
- **Flexibility:** The opportunities that virtual paralegals provide for flexibility is a two-way street benefiting both attorneys and paralegals. Quality of life is always a key issue in the fast-paced legal profession. Working virtually allows both sides to choose full or part-time work, work on a project basis or as a permanent staffer, select an array of services and providers for entry-level tasks to much more substantive and highly specialized support, live in locations best suited to their families' needs, and set schedules that allow them to work when they're most productive yet be there for their families.
- **Independence:** While all paralegals, virtual or

otherwise, work under the supervision of an attorney, becoming self-employed via a virtual legal support business offers paralegals the chance to experience business ownership and entrepreneurship, and to even employ other paralegals. Having access to these businesses full-time or on a project basis allows attorneys to build small or solo practices, especially if they've recently been down-sized themselves.

Traditional paralegals will always be needed to provide physical legal support services in many legal specialty areas. But the number of successful virtual paralegals will continue to grow as more intellectual legal specialty areas become available, as more law firms search for creative ways to adapt to the current economy, and as more paralegals discover that their employment opportunities will expand in a virtual world. I can definitely see a future where I give up the almost always matching shoes and offer attorneys the litigation support for serious injury cases and writing services that I love – from the beach.

Lynne J. DeVenny is a senior paralegal employed by [Elliot Pishko Morgan](#), P.A. in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. She co-hosts [The Paralegal Voice](#), a monthly podcast hosted by Legal Talk Network, with Vicki Voisin, and blogs for and about the paralegal profession at *Practical Paralegalism*, <http://www.practicalparalegalism.com>

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Lynne J. DeVenny

Aug 26, 2009

I forgot about those frozen Lipton Green Tea (Citrus) Slushies, Tina! And thanks so much for your wonderful guest post, "5 New Technologies that Paralegals Need to Learn Now" at my blog: <http://www.practicalparalegalism.com/2009/08/5-new-technologies-that-paralegals-need.html>

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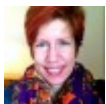


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Aug 26, 2009

What a great article - glad you were able to have Lynne share it Tina!!

Like Reply



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