

# Oregon Law Practice Management

Practice Management Tips for Oregon Lawyers

## Improve Your Practice & Avoid Malpractice with TEAMWORK

Posted on **03/24/2010**

*By Lynne J. DeVenny*

In a perfect world, you and your staff, including your paralegals, are a highly efficient and successful business team, committed to serving your clients well and to being part of a reputable and profitable law firm. All of you are professionals, possessing your own special skills and training essential to the team's function – and all of you are needed to make your practice successful.

But sometimes in the real world of a fast-paced, deadline-oriented law practice, the team is not as effective as it could be, for many different reasons. The supervising attorney, as the team captain and coach, is ultimately responsible for the team's success, including producing a high quality work product and avoiding costly malpractice errors.

An emphasis on **T-E-A-M-W-O-R-K** is what it takes to lead a team that not only makes few mistakes, but is also invested in and proud of the final work product.

### **T-E-A-M-W-O-R-K**

**T ~ Train your staff members well.** The higher the level of their competencies, including legal and technology skills, the lower the chance [Follow](#) in committing

costly errors. As the leader, it's equally important to ensure your own competencies current.

## Follow "Oregon Law Practice Management"

Get every new post delivered to your Inbox.

Join 4,289 other followers



Powered by WordPress.com

**A ~ Assess your staff members' performance regularly.** Review their work product, and provide constructive feedback in areas where they can improve. Make sure evaluations are held regularly and that expectations are clear – and fair.

**M ~ Make staff relations a priority.** Treat everyone as valued professionals and get to know them. Even small gestures, such as asking how their families are doing, taking them to lunch once in a while or attending a professional conference together, can make a difference in everyone's comfort level – and ability to communicate openly and professionally.

**W ~ Write down your office policies.** Pay particular attention to procedures for maintaining client confidentiality and complying with ethics rules. Make sure all staff members have a copy, and ask them to acknowledge in writing that they read and understand the policies. Ask for their feedback as to how existing policies can be improved.

**O ~ Observe your staff members' strengths and weaknesses.** Give positive feedback and praise for projects well done whenever possible, but make sure that everyone is held accountable for errors – including you. Give staff members an opportunity to learn from their mistakes. Assign work to staff members whose skills are best suited to the tasks.

**R ~ Recognize good work.** Reward talented staff members with recognition and thanks, as well as appropriate salaries and financial incentives, such as profit-sharing, matching retirement contributions or bonuses, when possible. You'll be more likely to retain talented staffers, and they'll stay motivated to maintain high

standards and provide an excellent work product.

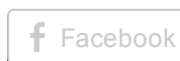
**K ~ Keep your door open to your staff.** Let them know that you're available for questions and concerns, and encourage them to come to you for appropriate supervision and feedback. Make time for regular team and case meetings, and make time at the beginning of each day to establish the priorities for the day.

You're all playing for the same team, the one that is passionate about the law and the success of your practice. Everyone benefits when the team plays well – and plays well together. You're ultimately responsible for the final work product and compliance with ethics rules, but when you make everyone on the team feel professional and valued, they'll respond by making you and your firm look like a World Series winner.

***Lynne J. DeVenny** is a North Carolina State Bar Certified Paralegal employed by Elliot Pishko Morgan P.A. in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. She blogs for paralegals (and lawyers who want to get to know paralegals better) at [Practical Paralegalism](#) and co-hosts the monthly podcast, [The Paralegal Voice](#), at [Legal Talk Network](#).*

---

#### SHARE THIS:



Be the first to like this.

---

#### RELATED

[Six Mistakes Lawyers Make with Staff, Part I](#)  
In "Appreciation"

[Why Should You Hire a Paralegal?](#)  
In "Staff"

[The Paralegal Voice](#)  
In "Appreciation"

This entry was posted in [Appreciation](#), [Malpractice Avoidance](#), [Staff](#) and tagged [@Expert Paralegal](#), [continuing education](#), [Legal Talk Network](#), [Lynne DeVenny](#), [Oregon law practice management](#), [Practical Paralegalism](#), [professional development](#), [Staff](#), [Teamwork](#), [The Paralegal Voice](#) by [beverlym](#). Bookmark the [permalink \[http://oregonlawpracticemanagement.com/2010/03/24/teamwork/\]](http://oregonlawpracticemanagement.com/2010/03/24/teamwork/)

3 THOUGHTS ON "IMPROVE YOUR PRACTICE & AVOID MALPRACTICE WITH TEAMWORK"

Pingback: [Why Should You Hire a Paralegal? « Oregon Law Practice Management](#)

Pingback: [Six Mistakes Lawyers Make with Staff, Part I « Oregon Law Practice Management](#)

Pingback: [Running a Successful Law Practice « Oregon Law Practice Management](#)

☺