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LawBiz® TIPS – Week of November 1, 2011

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This past week, I had the pleasure of speaking before the Austin chapter of the Association of Legal Administrators and then participating in the annual meeting of the College of Law Practice Management. The presentations there were outstanding; it was illuminating to peer into the future of law practice as seen by some of the brightest minds in our profession.

I'm looking forward to remaining home for the balance of the year, continuing to coach lawyers throughout the country, writing, and getting back on the bike.

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How Do You Fully Leverage Paralegals?

The Role of Paralegals

Paralegals have long been considered a highly cost-effective form of leverage, undertaking routine legal tasks under the supervision of a partner while at reduced billing rates that are attractive to the client yet supportive of the firm's bottom line. These paralegals may be employed within the firm itself or they may provide outsourced services in a virtual relationship. Either way, the most typical tasks they engage in are generally technical in nature: research, document review, organizing client files and the like.

Paralegals Enable a Firm to Create Additional Business

A paralegal's fundamental task is to allow a firm's lawyers to do more client or marketing work without running up against the danger of not properly addressing client needs. Paralegals enable a firm to create additional business, using the principle of leverage, that would not otherwise be possible, in addition to reducing lawyers' stress level.

How to Leverage Paralegals

Once they understand the firm and its culture, paralegals can be leveraged not just through their technical abilities but also for their client

In this issue:

[How Do You Fully Leverage Paralegals?](#)

[3 Dimensional Lawyer](#)

[Video: There Just Is Not Enough Time](#)

Featured Video:



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What Clients Are Saying:

"It is a joy and pleasure

service strengths. Consider such strategies as these:

- **Failure to return phone calls or respond to letters is the number one complaint clients have about lawyers.** Lawyers may be otherwise engaged, but clients want to be assured that their matter is being dealt with. Having a paralegal step in and assure the client that their inquiry will be answered as soon as possible can prevent many client relations problems.
- **Clients want to know what's happening with their matter.** Even though the lawyer might be doing a great job, if the client doesn't know that, there's bound to be a problem - usually at fee-paying time. Paralegals can often handle the kind of communication that clients appreciate, by sending copies of documents, by writing, or making calls for updates. Clients kept informed at every step of their matter are happier clients. Happier clients pay their bills faster and refer other clients.
- **Clients should be able to connect directly with paralegals who may have an impact on their matter or who might be able to answer one of their questions.** The client who walks away with an answer, even if not from the mouth of the attorney, is far more likely to be a satisfied client. That means that client service education training is a must for paralegals.

Direct Supervision of Paralegals is Important

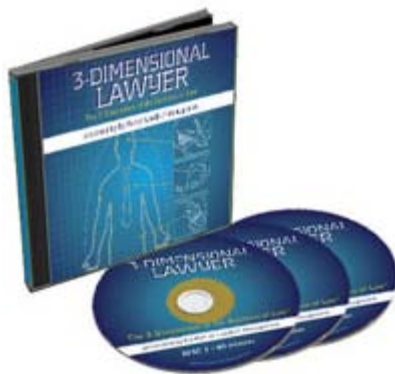
In such activities, of course, lawyers must continue to exercise direct supervision of paralegals. But given that, paralegals in such roles can enhance client service and firm profitability.

3-Dimensional Lawyer

Nine out of 10 Lawyers say "Managing the Practice Sucks."

Law practice management expert, Ed Poll, unwraps the business side of legal practice.

Have you ever wondered how you could improve your marketing, practice development, efforts? Do you stay up at night thinking about the client who didn't pay your bills, and wondering how you're going to pay the rent later this week? Have you ever wondered how you could be more efficient, and therefore more profitable so you could take home more money? [Learn more.](#)



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working with Ed and I look forward to each coaching session. My only regret is that I did not start sooner!"

JRL
Atlanta, GA

"It has been a pleasure and a real assistance speaking to Ed on a weekly basis about issues as they came up, and about developing a roadmap for future actions. It was great to know that no matter what the issue, Ed has been there to field questions and provide amazing ideas."

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