

# CARI'S TIPS ON

## “BUILDING A LAW PRACTICE BRICK BY BRICK”

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### I. LAYING THE GROUNDWORK BEFORE YOU START

#### A. Business Name

##### 1. *Cari's Tips*

- a. When starting a law practice, the attorney entrepreneur needs to have a long-term plan for his or her brand when considering the name of the business.
- b. When considering a name for a law practice, attorneys should consider any ethics rules that may prohibit trade names (e.g., “The Farmer Law Firm, LLC”).
- c. It is prudent to run a Google search from the outset to see if there are firms with substantially similar names that may confuse the public. Not only is this step crucial from a branding standpoint, but it may eliminate future trademark disputes. Also consider running a trademark search with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

##### 2. *Some Resources*

- a. Sonia Lakhany, “Choosing Your Company’s Name: Corporate Name Versus Trademark,” MyShingle (June 27, 2014), available at <http://myshingle.com/2014/06/articles/choosing-a-law-firm-name/choosing-companys-name-corporate-names-versus-trademarks/> (last visited April 4, 2016).

- b. Mathew Hickey, “Selecting a Name for Your New Law Firm,” RocketLawyer (April 18, 2012), available at <https://www.rocketlawyer.com/blog/selecting-a-name-for-your-new-law-firm-94467> (last visited April 6, 2016).

## **B. Malpractice Insurance**

1. *Cari’s Tips*. Malpractice insurance is not required at the onset of starting a law practice. When deciding whether to get malpractice insurance, attorneys should consider the volume of his or her work (i.e., part-time or full-time practice), the type of work they will be doing (i.e., high risk or low risk practice areas), overhead expense and budget, and risk appetite. It’s prudent to consider having at least some minimal coverage from the onset of a law practice.
2. *Some Resources*
  - a. Todd C. Scott, “Attorney Malpractice Insurance: Who’s Got Your Back?”, GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 31 No. 1) (January/February 2014) available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2014/january-february/attorney\\_malpractice\\_insurance\\_whos\\_got\\_your\\_back.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2014/january-february/attorney_malpractice_insurance_whos_got_your_back.html) (last visited April 4, 2016).
  - b. Daniel E. Pinnington, “The Biggest Malpractice Risks”, GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 28 No. 2) (March 2011) available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2011/march/the\\_biggest\\_malpractice\\_claim\\_risks.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2011/march/the_biggest_malpractice_claim_risks.html) (last visited April 4, 2016).

## **C. Virtual vs. Brick and Mortar Office**

1. *Cari’s Tips*. Your business needs a “home” both in terms of an address and where you physically do the work (those places do not need to be at the same place). Be careful about using a P.O. Box as your business address as some states’ ethics rules do not allow for it.
2. *Working from Home*
  - a. If an attorney decides to work from home, he or she should consider where the work will take place in the home exactly and where meetings with clients will take place.

- b. Additionally, if a lawyer is working from home, he or she should consider whether the home address will be used as the mailing address or whether a virtual office will be utilized.
- c. A map/diagram of the home office workspace may be useful for home office tax deductions (but please talk to an accountant about this first). A physical separation between home and office spaces is usually desired.
- d. Jan Matthew Tamanini, “Working from Home: Is It for You?”, GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 28 No. 7) (October/November 2011) available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2011/october\\_november/working\\_from\\_home\\_is\\_it\\_for\\_you.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2011/october_november/working_from_home_is_it_for_you.html) (last visited April 4, 2016).

### 3. *Launching a Virtual Law Office (“VLO”)*

#### a. Cari’s Tips

- i. A VLO is an office space that allows for attorneys to use the business address, receive mail and meet with clients in the conference room spaces. Day offices may be available for rent in some cases.
- ii. Some states prohibit lawyers from using virtual offices while others have specific rules. For example, New Jersey used to require that virtual offices state on its letterhead and email signatures “By Appointment Only.” Pay special attention to the ethics rules in your state before opening a virtual law office.
- iii. Although some lawyers refer to a VLO in terms of the physical place that the lawyer works and visits with clients, others refer to a VLO as a firm using cloud-based technology, use of virtual administrative assistants and office staff, including virtual associates.

#### b. Some Resources

- i. Cari Rincker, “How My Decision to Practice Law from a Virtual Office Jump-Started My Law Firm,” Law Firm Suites (March 8, 2016), available at

<http://lawfirmsuites.com/2016/03/decision-to-practice-law-from-a-virtual-office/> (last visited April 4, 2016).

- ii. Chad E. Burton, “Launching a Virtual Law Firm,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 31, No. 1) (January/February 2014), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2014/january-february/launching\\_virtual\\_law\\_firm.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2014/january-february/launching_virtual_law_firm.html) (last visited April 4, 2016).
- iii. Lisa Needham, “States that Require a Bona Fide Office,” Lawyerist (August 26, 2015), <https://lawyerist.com/86459/states-require-bona-fide-office/> (last visited April 5, 2016).

#### **D. Bookkeeping System**

##### ***1. Cari’s Tips***

- a. A bookkeeping system should be put into place at the onset of opening a law practice or it may be too difficult to go back and piece it together at a later date.
- b. Attorney owners should consider bookkeeping systems both in terms of Front Office (i.e., what the client sees) and Back Office (i.e., what owner needs to run the business). Some software programs only do Front Office (e.g., Clio) – some of these programs work with Back Office programs like QuickBooks. Some programs like PC Law handle both Back Office and Front Office.
- c. When deciding among bookkeeping computer programs, an attorney owner should consider cost/overhead, whether the program allows for long enough descriptions of time entries (if working by billable hour), the look/design of the bill, and whether the program works with the types of computer your practice intends to utilize (e.g., Mac or PC-based computers). Additionally, some programs allow for time-entries by more than 1 attorney. Think about the intended growth of your practice over the long term and choose a program that will (hopefully) grow with you over time.

## 2. *Some Resources*

- a. Daniel J. Siegel, “Law Practice Management: Charting a New Financial Course with QuickBooks,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 30 No.6) (November/December 2013) available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2013/november-december/law\\_practice\\_management\\_charting\\_new\\_financial\\_course\\_quickbooks.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2013/november-december/law_practice_management_charting_new_financial_course_quickbooks.html) (last visited April 4, 2016).
- b. Susan Carter Liebel, “What If Your Paralegal Lived Inside Your Computer?”, Solo Practice University (October 19, 2015), available at <http://solopracticeuniversity.com/2015/10/19/what-if-your-paralegal-lived-inside-your-computer/> (last visited April 4, 2016).

## E. Marketing

### 1. *Website*

- a. Cari’s Tips
  - i. In this day and age, attorneys need a website. It is the online brochure used by potential clients, referral sources and the public. It should be professional and represent the brand you are trying to project. An attorney’s contact information should be easily found on the website.
  - ii. It is recommended that an attorney hire a website designer to design his/her website and it should be done in the infancy of a law practice.
  - iii. Professional headshots done by a professional corporate photographer are recommended.
  - iv. Blog platforms such as Wordpress have great Search Engine Optimization (“SEO”). Consider building the website on such a platform.
  - v. Considering adding a blog to the website. Not only do blogs help with SEO, but they help give the lawyer credibility in a practice area. Provide thoughtful information to the community via the blog, do not just link to other resources available online.

b. Some Resources

- i. Andrew Cabasso, “How to Select a Domain Name for Your Law Firm,” Lawyerist (February 12, 2015), available at <https://lawyerist.com/80010/select-domain-name-law-firm/> (last visited April 4, 2016).
- ii. Carloyn Elefant, “Making Your Website More Inviting By Inviting Interaction,” Nolo’s Legal Marketing Blawg (June 29, 2010), available at <http://www.legalmarketingblawg.com/2010/06/make-your-website-more-invitin.html> (last visited April 4, 2016).
- iii. Gyi Tsakalakis, “Real Lawyer SEO Secrets Revealed,” Lawyerist (August 3, 2015), available at <https://lawyerist.com/83897/real-lawyer-seo-secrets-revealed/> (last visited April 4, 2016).

2. *Business Cards*

a. Cari’s Tips

- i. It is paramount to have business cards ready from the onset of starting your law practice. Business cards can be designed and printed cheaply if someone is on a shoestring budget. Attorney business owners need a business card ready to hand to prospective clients and referral sources that project that attorney’s brand along with his/her contact information.
- ii. It is recommended that attorneys use a professional to design a business card and perhaps a logo. Attorneys should consider using higher quality paper on the business card.

b. Some Resources

- i. Gyi Tsakalakis, “A Case for Business Cards for Lawyers,” Lawyerist (September 5, 2011), available at <https://lawyerist.com/32321/business-cards-for-lawyers/> (last visited April 4, 2016).

- ii. Lief Larson, “Electronic Alternatives to Business Cards,” Lawyerist (May 19, 2010), available at <https://lawyerist.com/9041/electronic-business-card-alternatives/> (last visited April 4, 2016).

### 3. *Letterhead*

- a. Cari’s Tips. Business owner attorneys should have letterhead designed that comply with the rules of ethics in that state. For example, some states require listing the bar licenses of attorneys at the firm so there is no confusion on who is licensed in what jurisdiction. Some states may require identifying Virtual Law Offices in some special way (e.g., New Jersey used to require “By Appointment Only”).
- b. Some Resources
  - i. Deborah Savadra, “DIY Law Firm Letterhead Using Microsoft Word,” Lawyerist (June 12, 2015), available at <https://lawyerist.com/70925/diy-law-firm-letterhead-using-microsoft-word/> (last visited April 4, 2016).

### 4. *Online Attorney Listings*

- a. Attorneys should consider setting up profiles online noting their practice areas. Here are a few examples:
  - i. Justia
  - ii. Avvo
  - iii. Yelp
  - iv. Findlaw
- b. Some listings, like Justia, pull in social media information such as tweets and blog posts. Other sites only allow for an attorney’s contact information to be posted.
- c. Overtime, incorrect data may be posted on certain sites (e.g., mailing address or practice areas). Do the best you can regarding contacting the websites to upload this contact information.
- d. Some of the attorney listings, such as Avvo, Yahoo, Yellow Pages, Yelp, allow for client reviews. Consider asking clients who had

positive experiences to post a review online to help build a positive online presence.

- e. Like with websites, attorneys should use professional photographs taken by a professional corporate photographer on these attorney profiles.

## **F. Retainer Agreements/ Engagements letters**

### **1. *Cari's Tips***

- a. It is prudent to think about retainer agreements and engagement letters before an attorney opens shop so that he/she has the retainer form ready to go for the first client.
- b. Check the ethics guides in the jurisdiction for specialized rules according to different practice areas. For example, in New York, attorneys have to give matrimonial clients a Statement of Client Rights and Responsibilities and attorneys in New York need a written retainer if the amount paid is over \$600.
- c. Local bar associations may have retainer forms available that can be used as useful building blocks for a retainer tailored for your practice.
- d. When drafting the retainer agreement, consider provisions regarding dispute resolution (e.g., fee arbitration), contesting charges, and payment options (e.g., credit card payment).

### **2. *Some Resources***

- a. Stephanie Kimbro, "How to Write a Client Engagement Letter for a Virtual Law Practice," Lawyerist (August 3, 2010), available at <https://lawyerist.com/12253/client-engagement-letter-for-virtual-law-practice/> (last visited April 5, 2016).
- b. Allison Shields, "A Non-Engagement Letter is as Important as an Engagement Letter," Lawyerist (March 11, 2010), available at <https://lawyerist.com/8870/non-engagement-letter-is-as-important-as-an-engagement-letter/> (last visited April 5, 2016).



## **G. Law Firm Technology**

1. When an attorney opens a law practice, it behooves the business owner if the technology side of the law practice is set up from Day 1.
2. Things to consider are the following:
  - a. Computer(s) – Mac vs. PC and laptop vs. desktop
  - b. Telephone(s)
  - c. Scanner – ScanSnap is recommended among many lawyers
  - d. Printer
  - e. Copy machine – if using a scanner, this might not be required; however, an attorney owner needs to have a plan for accessing a copy machine if needed (even if it is a Kinkos)
  - f. Tablet(s)

## **H. Phones**

1. *Cell vs. Ground Line*
  - a. Randall Ryder, “Should You Be Glued to Your Phone?”, Lawyerist (January 12, 2010), available at <https://lawyerist.com/7214/lawyers-answer-your-phone/> (last visited April 5, 2016).
2. *Answering Services*
  - a. Sam Glover, “Call Ruby is an Awesome Virtual Receptionist for Solos and Nimble Small Firms,” Lawyerist, <https://lawyerist.com/31126/call-ruby-virtual-receptionist/> (last visited April 5, 2016).
  - b. Sam Glover, “How to Avoid Answering Phone Calls,” Lawyerist, <https://lawyerist.com/27787/avoid-answering-phone/> (last visited April 5, 2016).

## **I. Filing System**

1. Many lawyers set up shop without thinking through a filing system. There should minimally be a plan for storing and keeping track of ongoing and closed matters.

2. It is recommended that lawyers label folders and files in some way. Most billing programs allow the attorney to give matters file numbers. It is suggested that lawyers using that matter number on the files and keep track of which files are at the office and which files have been archived to another location.
3. Lawyers should consider developing a Client Intake Sheet with contact information that is easily accessible in the client file.

## II. GETTING CLIENTS

### A. Telling People You Know that You Are in Business

#### 1. *Cari's Tips*

- a. One of the most important steps in starting a law practice is to tell people you know that you opened shop. There is a lot of business that can be cultivated from the current contacts that a business has in his or her Rolodex.
- b. The business or law firm announcement can take place for wallets of any size. Here are a few examples:
  - i. Send an email to your contacts announcing that you're in business with a link to the website;
  - ii. Post an announcement via social media (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat) linking people to your firm's website or social media pages;
  - iii. Send hard copy law firm announcements to people you know;
  - iv. Host a party at your new office inviting people in your community; and/or
  - v. Send a newsletter electronically or hard copy form to your contacts list.

### B. Think about Target Audience – Who is Your Ideal Client?

#### 1. *Who Are You Marketing?*

- a. A common mistake that people make when opening their law practice is that they practice “door law,” which means they take everything that comes through their door. It is easier to begin with

the end in sight and think about who that target audience really is. For example, are you targeting start-up businesses, middle class people seeking divorce mediation, high income estate planning work, or tech nerds looking for an intellectual property lawyer? Everything you do should be geared to finding and attracting those types of clients.

- b. Think about narrowing your practice areas from the infancy of the law practice and stay away from general practice work. The riches are in the niches – and clients usually feel more comfortable using a lawyer that is focused in certain areas. If you have an industry-based practice (e.g. Food/Agriculture, Fashion) then think about what you do and do not do within those industries and change your marketing information accordingly.

## 2. *Your First Client*

### a. Cari's Tips

- i. When you speak to attorneys who hung their own shingle, that “first client” usually is referred by a person that they already know. This is why the law firm announcement is so important.
- ii. In some cases, that “first client” can be obtained through good ol’ fashioned advertising.

### b. Some Resources

- i. Jennifer R. Willner, “How to Land Your First Client,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 31 No. 1) (January/February 2014) available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2014/january-february/how\\_land\\_your\\_first\\_client.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2014/january-february/how_land_your_first_client.html) (last visited April 4, 2016).

## 3. *Additional Resources*

- a. MICHAEL PORT, BOOK YOURSELF SOLID (2010).
- b. Cari Rincker, “Strategies for Developing and Retaining Ag Clients,” Fifth Annual Ohio Agricultural Law Symposium, (June 23, 2013), available at

<http://www.slideshare.net/rinckerlaw/strategies-for-developing-and-retaining-ag-clients> (last visited April 5, 2016) and Cari Rincker, “Survey Says: What Farmers and Agri-Businesses Have to Say About Agricultural Lawyers,” JD Supra (June 28, 2013), available at <http://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/survey-says-what-farmers-and-agri-busi-19720/> (last visited April 5, 2016).

## C. Networking

### 1. *Referral Marketing*

- a. Referral Marketing can be some of the most powerful devices for generating business. However, referral marketing is much more like farming than hunting and takes time and patience to build a fruitful field.
- b. In a survey conducted by Rincker Law, approximately two thirds of farmers, Agri-business owners, and food entrepreneurs used a food and agricultural lawyer that they either knew or were referred by someone they knew. See “Strategies for Developing and Retaining Ag Clients” in Section II(B)(3)(b). This is why it is important to be the lawyer that people know or know the people referring these matters. This statistic is similar for other industries, as well.
- c. It is also important to always be courteous to opposing counsels because the legal community is small and your opposing counsel may refer (or not refer) clients your way depending on your attitude when communicating with other attorneys.

### 2. *Networking Groups*

- a. It is recommended that lawyers hanging their own shingle think about joining at least one networking group, depending on the time commitment and schedule of the lawyer. It is a nice way to build contacts quickly in a community.
- b. Business Networking International (“**BNI**”) is one example of a structured, referral-marketing group that meets weekly. BNI notoriously meets at 7AM but there are some groups that meet later in the morning or at night, depending on the geographic region. Networking groups like BNI are non-compete groups,

which means there is only one person per profession (e.g., one real estate lawyer, one matrimonial lawyer).

- c. There are other groups that are similar to BNI in various regions of the country that require different levels of commitment. In New York City, for example, there are lawyer-only networking groups (e.g., Downtown Lawyers, Small Firm Luncheons at the Association of the Bar for the City of New York) and some groups specifically for women (e.g., Running in Heels). Here are other examples of networking groups in New York City for both lawyers and nonlawyers:
  - i. My Networking Group (“MNG”)
  - ii. Gotham Networking
  - iii. Adrian’s Network
  - iv. Network! Network!
- d. Bar associations can be used as a great way to network with other lawyers. Think about networking with lawyers who practice in different areas. For example, transactional lawyers refer business to litigation attorneys and vice versa.
- e. Time should be dedicated for networking with both lawyers and nonlawyers. In fact, there are some nonlawyer networking groups that allow for lawyers to visit (e.g., accounting, real estate centered groups).
- f. Attend events that attract people that might be your ideal client.
- g. Some Resources
  - i. Tyler White, “Networking Groups and Lawyers,” Lawyerist (July 7, 2011), available at <https://lawyerist.com/30142/networking-groups-lawyers/> (last visited April 5, 2016).

### 3. *Networking Tips*

- a. No matter how young you are in your law practice, you can *always* help the other person in some way. Networking is always mutual. Think about how you can help them.

- b. Do not sell our services to that person. For example, if you are having coffee with someone, do not offer to do their Last Will and Testament for them. It is about getting to know them... You want them to refer future business to you.
- c. It takes time to cultivate relationships. Do not expect referrals from someone after one coffee. It might take a coffee then a lunch, then a Yankees game to really cultivate that relationship built on trust.
- d. Do ask that person permission before introducing them to someone else.
- e. Do think of people that you want to meet. For example, would accountants and financial advisors be a good introduction?
- f. Some Resources
  - i. Cari Twitchell, “An Essential Networking Ingredient: Followup,” Lawyerist (February 19, 2015), available at <https://lawyerist.com/79808/essential-networking-followup/> (last visited April 4, 2016).
  - ii. Esther Hyun, “How to Stop Wasting Your Time When Networking,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 33 No. 1) (January/February 2016), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2016/january-february/how\\_stop\\_wasting\\_your\\_time\\_when\\_networking.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2016/january-february/how_stop_wasting_your_time_when_networking.html) (last visited April 4, 2016).
  - iii. Sam Glover, “How to Network: Get Out and Do Things. With People.”, Lawyerist (October 31, 2013), available at <https://lawyerist.com/33769/how-to-network-get-out-and-do-things-with-people/> (last visited April 4, 2016).

#### 4. *Additional Resources*

- a. KEITH FERRAZZI, NEVER EAT ALONE (2014).
- b. IVAN MISNER & MICHELLE R. DONOVAN, THE 29% SOLUTION: 52 WEEKLY NETWORKING SUCCESS STRATEGIES (2008).

- c. IVAN MISNER, HAZEL M. WALKER & FRANK J. DE RAFFELLE JR., BUSINESS NETWORKING AND SEX: NOT WHAT YOU THINK (2012).
- d. IVAN MISNER & BRENNAN SCANLON, AVOIDING THE NETWORKING DISCONNECT: THE THREE R’S TO RECONNECT (2015).

**D. Marketing**

**1. *Social Media***

- a. An attorney business owner should strongly consider using social media to help grow his/her brand, build relationships, connect with potential clients, and stay on top of news relating to his/her practice area.
- b. Here are some examples:

Cari has 3 Facebook pages:

- Business Page for Rincker Law  
<https://www.facebook.com/RinckerLaw/>
- Author Page for Cari Rincker  
<https://www.facebook.com/caribrincker>
- Personal Page for Cari Rincker  
<https://www.facebook.com/cari.rincker>

Each used very differently.

- i. Facebook – Not only should the attorney business owners have a personal page, but he/she should consider starting a business page as well. If the attorney does not feel comfortable connecting with business contacts on his/her personal Facebook page, then consider starting a second Facebook page to allow for these types of connection. If the attorney is operating a blog, then programs like Symphany automatically pull in the blog into the Facebook page (either on the personal page and/or business page). Facebook can also be linked to Twitter so a post on the Facebook page will send a tweet.
- ii. Twitter – Twitter is still a useful tool for information, connection, and branding. Set up your blogs so that a new blog post automatically posts a tweet. Use relevant hashtags and connect with people in your community. Tweet from conferences and meet tweeps IRL (“in real life”). Some owners like having a Twitter account for their personal brand (e.g., @CariRincker) in addition to the business itself (e.g., @RinckerLaw). Think about your brand when picking usernames. It is preferred to be uniform in the username across social media platforms.
- iii. LinkedIn – If you are only going to use one social media platform, I think this is the one. Make sure your profile has a professional headshot and update your “Current Position”

to add the new law practice. LinkedIn is a great online Rolodex. Don't be afraid to look at others' connections to see if there is someone you would like to meet. Some prefer get involved with discussion groups on LinkedIn. Be careful not to spam people on LinkedIn.

Cari's Instagram is  
@CariRincker

[https://www.instagram.com/  
caririncker/](https://www.instagram.com/caririncker/)

iv. Instagram – This is easily one of the fastest growing (and most addictive) social media platforms. Lawyers have different styles with “Insta” or “IG”. Don't be afraid to share the human side to your life and law practice online. Everything you do online is your brand.

v. Blog – Wanna be a law blogger – or “blawgger?” It is suggested that lawyers build their website to

Cari's “Food, Farm and Family” Law Blog is available at  
[www.rinckerlaw.com/blog](http://www.rinckerlaw.com/blog)

allow for the blog instead of having it be on a different website completely. If you are concerned about SEO and want to use a different name for the blog to drive traffic then consider a website domain redirect.

vi. Tumblr – Tumblr is microblogging platform that can be used to further your brand. An attorney can link an Instagram account or other social media platforms with a Tumblr feed. Tumblr can be used to upload law firm pictures and post announcements. Like other social media platforms, Tumblr can be linked to Twitter.

Cari's Tumblr “City Girl-Country Heart” is available at <http://caririncker.tumblr.com/>

vii. Pinterest – This social media platform can be especially useful for the lawyer whose practice area, or the clients it targets, is more visual.

Cari's Pinterest is  
[https://www.pinterest.com/cariri  
ncker/](https://www.pinterest.com/caririncker/)

For example, Pinterest might be helpful for a food, fashion or art lawyer. Photos can be “pinned” and shared. If the lawyer writes a blog, the photo that goes with that blog can be linked on Pinterest.

viii. Snapchat – Snapchat is not just for the kiddos anymore. More and more lawyers are experimenting with this fast growing social media platform. Pictures and videos expire in 24 hours. Consider snapping about blogs and law

Cari's Snapchat username is caririncker and the snapchat code is the following:



Cari Rincker



developments. Let clients and potential clients see you rushing off to court and celebrating a “win” on a case. Don’t be afraid to share your personal side too. Each “snap” is 15 second long. Businesses can even design their own geofilter now on Snapchat!

<https://www.snapchat.com/on-demand>

- ix. YouTube – Google owns YouTube and it loves its video child. Consider vlogging and uploading the video blog to YouTube (or other video platforms like Vimeo) for more SEO help. Also imbed the vblog into your blawg and upload the video directly into Facebook for some extra SEO help. Law firm owners should consider getting a professional video done highlighting the attorney and practice areas.

Cari’s law firm YouTube channel is at <https://www.youtube.com/user/caririncker>.

- x. Periscope – Like Snapchat, video content on Periscope is good for only 24 hours, which forces followers to “pay attention” because the content disappears. Lawyer entrepreneurs should consider posting videos from law conferences, events, or speaking about issues important to potential clients.

Cari’s Periscope handle is the same as her main Twitter handle @CariRincker

- xi. JD Supra – Attorneys can post articles and forms on JD Supra, a professional social media platform targeted to attorneys.

Cari’s JD Supra Page is located at <http://www.jdsupra.com/profile/CariRincker/>

- xii. Google+ – This is Google’s version of Facebook where you create “circles” of friends or contacts. Remember that because it is owned by Google, it will help with SEO.
- xiii. Quora – This platform allows people to post and answer questions. Ask a question related to your field or be a wealth of knowledge for others. Like most things social media, this is about connecting with other people.

b. Some Resources

- i. Aviva Cuyler, “Generate Business with Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook”, GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 28. No. 4) (June 2011), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2011/jun](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2011/jun)

- [e/social\\_networkingleveragingtwitterlinkedinandfacebook.html](#) (last visited April 4, 2016).
- ii. Cari Rincker, “How Social Media Helped Jump Start My Practice,” JD Supra Business Advisor (October 19, 2009) <http://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/how-social-media-helped-jump-start-my-pr-37462/> (last visited April 4, 2016).
  - iii. Cynthia Sharp, “Social Media Ethics in the Age of Documented Mischief,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 32 No. 3), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2015/may-june/social\\_media\\_ethics\\_the\\_age\\_documented\\_mischief.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2015/may-june/social_media_ethics_the_age_documented_mischief.html) (last visited April 6, 2016).
  - iv. Julie Tolek & Justin L. Kelsey, “Hazards of an Online Life: How to Use Social Media Safely,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 32 No. 4) (July/August 2015), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2015/july-august/hazards\\_an\\_online\\_life\\_how\\_use\\_social\\_media\\_safely.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2015/july-august/hazards_an_online_life_how_use_social_media_safely.html) (last visited April 4, 2016).
  - v. Scott MacMullan, “What to Do About Your Hapless Social Media Presence,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 33 No. 1) (January/February 2016), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2016/january-february/what\\_do\\_about\\_your\\_hapless\\_social\\_media\\_presence.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2016/january-february/what_do_about_your_hapless_social_media_presence.html) (last visited April 4, 2016).
  - vi. Susi Schuele, “Quick Tips for Effective Social Networking,” GPSolo Marketing (June 2011), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2011/june/social\\_networkinghowtobeeffective.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2011/june/social_networkinghowtobeeffective.html) (last visited April 4, 2016).
  - vii. Cari Rincker, “How to Get LinkedIn: Guide for the Beef Industry,” National Cattlemen’s Beef Association’s Young Producers’ Council (2012-2013), available at

<http://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/how-to-get-linkedin-guide-for-the-beef-17213/> (last visited April 5, 2016).

- viii. Cari Rincker, “Advanced User Tips for Agriculture Producers Using LinkedIn,” Rincker Law, PLLC, available at <http://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/advanced-user-tips-for-agriculture-produ-78659/> (last visited April 5, 2016).

## 2. *Other Types of Marketing*

### a. Cari’s Tips

- i. From the infancy of a law practice, business owners should think about marketing.
- ii. Lawyers need to think about marketing, even when business is good. Everything that lawyers do is marketing – every networking event and lunch meeting. Every speaking engagement and blog they write. There needs to be some kind of focused marketing plan put in place.
- iii. Speaking engagements can also be a useful type of marketing. As a general rule, speaking is a great way to get in front of potential clients and referral sources. At first, it will be difficult to ask for travel expenses and/or speaker fees; however, over time this can be requested in some cases. Take speaking engagements that are consistent with your brand and long-term plan for your law practice.

### b. Some Resources

- i. Cari Rincker, “Multimedia Specialist: Grow Your Food & Agricultural Law Practice and Management of High Profile Cases,” Rincker Law, PLLC (December 18, 2015), available at <http://rinckerlaw.com/grow-your-food-agricultural-law-practice-and-management-of-high-profile-cases/> (last visited April 4, 2016).
- ii. Cynthia Sharp, “Low-Cost (or No-Cost) Marketing for Lawyers,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 31, No. 4) (July/August 2014), available at, [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2014/jul](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2014/jul)

[y-august-2014/lowcost\\_or\\_nocost\\_marketing\\_lawyers.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/law_practice_magazine/2011/january_february/do-it-yourself_marketing.html)  
(last visited April 4, 2016).

- iii. Michael R.J. Allinotte, “Do-It-Yourself Marketing: Tips for Solo and Small Firm Lawyers,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 37 No. 1) (January/February 2011), available at, [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/law\\_practice\\_magazine/2011/january\\_february/do-it-yourself\\_marketing.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/law_practice_magazine/2011/january_february/do-it-yourself_marketing.html) (last visited April 4, 2016).
- iv. “How to (Really) Get More Clients This Year,” Attorney at Work, available at [http://www.attorneyatwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/ReallyGoodMarketingIdeas\\_AttnyatWorkEguide\\_011713.pdf](http://www.attorneyatwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/ReallyGoodMarketingIdeas_AttnyatWorkEguide_011713.pdf) (last visited April 4, 2016).
- v. Cari Rincker, “Book Publishing,” Legal Marketing Studio (March 21, 2016), available at <http://legalmarketing.studio/cari-rincker-of-rincker-law-llc-discusses-expert-positioning-via-book-publishing/> (last visited April 4, 2016) (available for download via iTunes and SoundCloud).

## **E. Advertising**

1. ***Cari’ Tips.*** Lawyers differ in viewpoints with advertising. Some think dollars are better spent with referral marketing and social media while other lawyers derive significant income from advertising. It may take some time to figure out the best formula for a particular law practice. Advertising dollars should be spent purposefully, either to help drive in new business, build relationships, or generate awareness in a community.
2. ***Some Resources***
  - a. Lisa Needham, “State Restrictions on Advertising,” Lawyerist, <https://lawyerist.com/90263/state-restrictions-advertising/> (last visited April 5, 2016).

### III. TAKING CARE OF CLIENTS

#### A. Developing Processes

##### 1. *Cari's Tips*

- a. No matter the size of your practice, it is important to consider the processes when obtaining new clients.
- b. Said processes do not have to be complicated. For example, the “process” could include having the new client fill out a Client Intake Sheet where that data is imputed into the billing system and Outlook contacts, and a file is set up with the Client Number and Matter Number.
- c. Some firms have more complex procedures that may include imputing the data in software programs, scanning intake documents, and having the client fill out a questionnaire.
- d. Think about rudimentary processes from the infancy of your practice, which can be honed over time.

##### 2. *Some Resources*

- a. Sam Glover, “Sample File Opening Checklist,” Lawyerist (October 22, 2015), available at <https://lawyerist.com/92592/sample-file-opening-checklist/> (last visited April 4, 2016).

#### B. Finding Mentors

##### 1. *Cari's Tips*

- a. Finding good mentors is perhaps the most important part of starting a new law practice. Find mentors who practice in the area(s) you wish to practice. These mentors can be found through networking and relationship building.
- b. Think about paying (or offering to pay) your mentors for their time and experience. Sometimes the mentors want the payment while others will refuse it – but offering this is *always* appreciated. We want clients to pay us for our time so why wouldn't we pay other

lawyers for their time? Sometime the gesture of buying lunch or a nice bottle of wine will suffice, but it is suggested to offer pay full billable rate (or agreed upon rate) for guidance.

- c. If you are fortunate enough to have a mentor that does not want payment, do not overuse this mentor. Do your homework ahead of time and do not rely on your mentor for legal research.
- d. Like networking, you can *always* help your mentors in some way (besides a paycheck). Ask who/she is looking to meet. Can you introduce him/her to life coaches or personal injury lawyers that might be able to help them in some way? Social capital is worth something.

## 2. *Some Resources*

- a. Kendra Brodin, “How to Maximize Your Mentor Relationship,” Lawyerist (November 23, 2011), available at <https://lawyerist.com/34832/maximize-mentor-relationship/> (last visited April 5, 2016).
- b. Nena Lenz, “Mentor and Be Mentored,” Lawyerist (October 19, 2009), available at <https://lawyerist.com/4802/mentor-and-be-mentored/> (last visited April 5, 2016).

## C. Customer Service

### 1. *Cari’s Tips*

- a. Like any business, customer service is important in the law practice. You are not the only shop in town to get a divorce or real estate lawyer. What can you do that is that “little extra” (or the mint on the pillow, if you will)?
- b. Customer service begins from the first phone call. If you do not have a receptionist, then you are the receptionist. How you answer the phone matters! If you don’t have a good phone voice, then consider hiring a virtual receptionist, like Ruby Receptionist, if the budget allows. First impressions matter.
- c. Getting back to clients is also part of customer service. A common complaint from clients is lawyers who don’t return their phone calls or emails. Don’t be that lawyer. Similarly, don’t feel

obligated to return the phone call or email immediately. Try to get back to clients by the end of the business day or within 24 hours.

## 2. *Some Resources*

- a. Seth Rosner, “Keeping Clients Happy and Avoiding Complaints,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 28 No.1) (January/February 2011), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2011/january\\_february/keeping\\_clients\\_happy\\_and\\_avoidingcomplaints.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2011/january_february/keeping_clients_happy_and_avoidingcomplaints.html) (last visited April 4, 2016).
- b. Frank T. Lockwood, “Reinventing Client Selection and Case Management,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 31 No. 4) (July/August 2014), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2014/july-august-2014/reinventing\\_client\\_selection\\_and\\_case\\_management.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2014/july-august-2014/reinventing_client_selection_and_case_management.html) (last visited April 4, 2016).
- c. André C. Wharton, “Representing the Unpopular Client or Cause,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 31 No. 5) (September/October 2014), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2014/september-october/representing\\_unpopular\\_client\\_or\\_cause.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2014/september-october/representing_unpopular_client_or_cause.html) (last visited April 4, 2016).

## **D. Communication with Clients /Responsiveness**

### 1. *Cari’s Tips*

- a. As mentioned above, develop a system to get back to clients by the end of the business day or within 24 hours.
- b. If you are a solo practitioner and will be out of the office for a certain period of time, consider having an auto reply on your email explaining to clients that you are away and will answer their email when you can. Consider having a “back-up” lawyer in those cases to handle client matters if on an extended vacation.
- c. The more face to face time you can have with clients, the better. Client do not feel as connected to their lawyer via phone and email. If there is a disagreement, consider having a face to face

meeting to discuss it with the client (telephone preferred over email if that is not possible).

- d. Ask the client their preferred contact method. Some clients have email addresses but would much prefer a phone call or text message (as a caveat, consider whether you feel comfortable giving clients your cell phone number).

## 2. *Some Resources*

- a. Kathleen Balthrop Havener, “How to Deliver Bad News to Your Client,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 33 No. 1) (January/February 2016), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2016/january-february/how\\_deliver\\_bad\\_news\\_your\\_client.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2016/january-february/how_deliver_bad_news_your_client.html) (last visited April 4, 2016).
- b. Sharon Meit Abrahams, “How to Establish and Manage Client Relationships,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 31 No. 4) (July/August 2014), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2014/july-august-2014/how\\_establish\\_and\\_manage\\_client\\_relationships.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2014/july-august-2014/how_establish_and_manage_client_relationships.html) (last visited April 4, 2016).
- c. Dianna M. Anelli & Mary Andreoni, “What to Do When Your Client Files an Ethics Complaint,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 33 No. 1) (January/February 2016), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2016/january-february/what\\_do\\_when\\_your\\_client\\_files\\_ethics\\_complaint.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2016/january-february/what_do_when_your_client_files_ethics_complaint.html) (last visited April 7, 2016).

## IV. LAW PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

### A. Calendar

1. It is paramount that the lawyer entrepreneur decides on some type of dependable calendaring system, preferably electronic.
2. Here are some examples of calendaring systems:
  - a. Outlook
  - b. Google Calendar
  - c. iCal or smart phone programs
  - d. Desktop software programs like P.C. Law or Time Matters



## **B. Computer Software**

### ***1. Cari's Tips***

- a. Which computer software programs are needed (or useful) vary on budget, type of computer (i.e., Mac or PC) and practice area. When starting a law practice consider keeping things simple and growing into the programs that can best service your practice.
- b. Here are some examples of programs that may be in a lawyer entrepreneur starter kit:
  - i. Microsoft Word, Word Perfect or some type of drafting programs
  - ii. Excel, Numbers or some type of spreadsheet program that may be useful for budgets, client data, or cases
  - iii. Bookkeeping program (remember both from office and back office, if not combined)
  - iv. Email program such as Outlook unless logging into email on the web
- c. Over time you may decide to use practice specific software like MatLaw, FamilyLaw Software, or Wealth Counsel. Furthermore, there are drafting programs that can be useful, such as Drafting Libraries. As your practice grows, you will determine what works best for your practice and budget.

### ***2. Some Resources***

- a. Wells H. Anderson & JoAnn Hathaway, "All-in-One Practice Management Applications," GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 31 No. 4) (July/August 2014), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2014/july-august-2014/allinone\\_practice\\_management\\_applications.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2014/july-august-2014/allinone_practice_management_applications.html) (last visited April 4, 2016).
- b. Nicole Black, "Collaboration Tools You Should Already Be Using," GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 31 No. 4) (July/August 2014), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2014/july-august-2014/collaboration\\_tools\\_you\\_should\\_already\\_be\\_using.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2014/july-august-2014/collaboration_tools_you_should_already_be_using.html) (last visited April 4, 2016).

- c. Wells H. Anderson, “Client Relationship Management,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 28 No. 4) (July/August 2011), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2011/june/client\\_relationshipmanagement.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2011/june/client_relationshipmanagement.html) (last visited April 4, 2016).
- d. Sharon D. Nelson & John W. Simek, “Data Security for Law Firms,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 28 No. 4) (July/August 2011), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2011/june/security\\_in\\_the\\_newdecadewhatgoesaroundcomesaround.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2011/june/security_in_the_newdecadewhatgoesaroundcomesaround.html) (last visited April 4, 2016).
- e. Wells H. Anderson, “The New Lawyer’s Guide to Cybersecurity and Protecting Your Practice,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 32 No. 3) (May/June 2015), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2015/may-june/the\\_new\\_lawyers\\_guide\\_cybersecurity\\_and\\_protecting\\_your\\_practice.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2015/may-june/the_new_lawyers_guide_cybersecurity_and_protecting_your_practice.html) (last visited April 4, 2016).
- f. Sharon D. Nelson, David G. Ries, & John W. Simek, “What to Do When Your Data Is Breached,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 33 No. 1) (January/February 2016), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2016/january-february/what\\_do\\_when\\_your\\_data\\_breached.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2016/january-february/what_do_when_your_data_breached.html) (last visited April 7, 2016).
- g. Cari Rincker, “My Technology Choices for My Ag Law Practice,” American Agricultural Law Association, Agriculture Law Symposium (October 20, 2012), available at <http://www.slideshare.net/rinckerlaw/my-technology-choices-in-my-ag-law-practice> (last visited April 5, 2016).
- h. Chelsey Lambert, “Technology Bargains When Starting a New Practice,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 32 No. 3) (May/June 2015), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2015/may-june/technology\\_bargains\\_when\\_starting\\_new\\_practice.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2015/may-june/technology_bargains_when_starting_new_practice.html) (last visited April 4, 2016).
- i. Peggy Gruenke, “Tech Tips for Young Lawyers to Get and Stay Organized,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 32 No. 3) (May/June 2015), available at

[http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2015/may-june/tech\\_tips\\_young\\_lawyers\\_get\\_and\\_stay\\_organized.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2015/may-june/tech_tips_young_lawyers_get_and_stay_organized.html) (last visited April 4, 2016).

- j. Jeffrey Allen, “Road Warrior: Murphy’s Law and Technology,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 33 No. 1) (January/February 2016), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2016/january-february/road\\_warrior\\_murphys\\_law\\_and\\_technology.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2016/january-february/road_warrior_murphys_law_and_technology.html) (last visited April 7, 2016).
- k. Wells H. Anderson, “How to Recover from a Hard Drive Crash,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 33 No. 1) (January/February 2016), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2016/january-february/how\\_recover\\_a\\_hard\\_drive\\_crash.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2016/january-february/how_recover_a_hard_drive_crash.html) (last visited April 7, 2016).
- l. Jeffrey Allen, “The Road Warrior and the iPad Pro,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 33 No. 2), at 4.

## **C. Developing Systems**

### ***1. Cari’s Tips***

- a. The books E-Myth and E-Myth Attorney talk a lot about developing systems in your law practice so you can teach others to do what you do. This is *not* required when an attorney opens his/her shingle; however, it is prudent for a lawyer entrepreneur to think about these systems and document an operations manual for the firm. Attorney blogger Carolyn Elefant has an example of an Operations Manual on her blog “My Shingle”. See <http://myshingle.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/proceduresbook.doc> (last visited April 14, 2016).
- b. As an attorney-owner, your role in your business is to be the rainmaker and bring in business. As your practice grows, you need attorneys, paralegals and/or secretaries to help you so that you can spend more time managing and minding your business.
- c. There are three parts to a law practice: the Finder (the rainmaker), the Minder (the person running the business) and the Grinder (the

person doing the work). Solo practitioners have to invariably wear all three hats from the beginning of the law practice. The goal is that over time, one or two of those hats can be delegated to other people. This is where the Operation Manual can be helpful.

- d. Furthermore, the act of developing an Operations Manual helps highlight inefficiencies in processes. Should it really take 19 steps to process a new client?

## 2. *Some Resources*

- a. MICHAEL E. GERBER, *THE E-MYTH REVISITED: WHY MOST SMALL BUSINESSES DON'T WORK AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT* (2004).
- b. MICHAEL E GERBER, ROBERT ARMSTRONG AND SANDFORD FISCH, *THE E-MYTH ATTORNEY: WHY MOST LEGAL PRACTICES DON'T WORK AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT* (2010).

## V. MONEY

### A. Billing Practices

#### 1. *Cari's Tips*

- a. Undoubtedly, lawyer entrepreneurs need to develop a process for billing clients from the infancy of a law practice. Here are some questions:
  - i. What program will be used (if any)?
  - ii. Will clients be billed on a flat fee or billable hour basis?
  - iii. What is your rate?
  - iv. How will disbursements be billed? (e.g., paper, postage)
  - v. How often will you bill? (e.g., monthly, bi-monthly, whenever you want)
  - vi. Will you show the client detailed time entries or just share with them the total due?
- b. As mentioned earlier, if budget allows, it is ***highly recommended*** to invest in a billing program that may work for the law practice for a few years. It is challenging to piece together past history when purchasing a billing program later.

## 2. *Some Resources*

- a. Ann M. Guinn, “Tasty Solutions for Timekeeping, Billing, and Accounting,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 31 No. 4) (July/August 2014), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2014/july-august-2014/tasty\\_solutions\\_timekeeping\\_billing\\_and\\_accounting.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2014/july-august-2014/tasty_solutions_timekeeping_billing_and_accounting.html) (last visited April 4, 2016).
- b. Arita Damroze, “What to Do When Your Billing Process Stinks,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 33 No. 1) (January/February 2016), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2016/january-february/what\\_do\\_when\\_your\\_billing\\_process\\_stinks.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2016/january-february/what_do_when_your_billing_process_stinks.html) (last visited April 7, 2016).

## **B. Accounts Receivable (“AR”)**

### 1. *Cari’s Tips*

- a. The dreaded AR issue: the best advice here is to get big retainers and not have AR problems (easier said than done). But that might not be possible and AR issues are a necessary evil in some types of law practices, especially those that are litigation based. However, lawyer business owners should develop collection procedures when bills are past due and processes to mitigate AR risk.
- b. Here are some suggestions:
  - i. Have a minimum balance in the retainer that should be enough for two billing cycles as payment security
  - ii. Think about retainer language to support a change of attorney record on litigation cases when bill is past due
  - iii. Don’t be afraid to pick up the phone call and call clients who are late on their payment
  - iv. Take credit cards
  - v. Stop doing work (if possible) when the retainer needs to be replenished or a bill needs to be paid
  - vi. Listen to clients if they complain about payment problems and get permission from clients before doing work

## 2. *Some Resources*

- a. Bill Sansone, “What to Do When Your Cash Flow Dries Up,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 31 No. 4) (July/August 2014), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2016/january-february/what\\_do\\_when\\_your\\_cash\\_flow\\_dries\\_up.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2016/january-february/what_do_when_your_cash_flow_dries_up.html) (last visited April 7, 2016).
- b. Mark A. Neubauer, “Attorney Fees: How to Avoid Conflict with Your Client,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 28 No. 2) (March 2011), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2011/march/attorney\\_fees\\_how\\_to\\_avoid\\_a\\_conflict\\_with\\_your\\_client.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2011/march/attorney_fees_how_to_avoid_a_conflict_with_your_client.html) (last visited April 4, 2016).
- c. Ann M. Guinn, “The Top Ten Keys to Getting Paid,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 31 No. 1) (January/February 2014), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2014/january-february/the\\_top\\_ten\\_keys\\_getting\\_paid.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2014/january-february/the_top_ten_keys_getting_paid.html) (last visited April 4, 2016).
- d. Cari Rincker, “Getting Paid: Billing and Collection Strategies for the Food & Agricultural Lawyer,” American Agriculture Law Association, available at <http://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/getting-paid-billing-and-collection-st-56103/> (last visited April 5, 2016); <http://www.slideshare.net/rinckerlaw/getting-paid-billing-and-collection-strategies-for-the-food-agriculture-lawyer> (last visited April 5, 2016).

## C. Credit Card Payments

1. ***Cari’s Tips.*** It is highly suggested that the lawyer entrepreneur accept credit cards. As a caveat, make sure that credit card fees come out of the Operating Account vs. Trust Account when a client pays a retainer via credit card. There are some credit card merchants that specially work with lawyers.

## 2. *Some Resources*

- a. Amy Porter, “Accepting Credit Cards on the Go,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 30 No. 1) (January/February 2013), available at

[http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2013/january\\_february/accepting\\_credit\\_cards\\_go.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2013/january_february/accepting_credit_cards_go.html) (last visited April 4, 2016).

- b. Lisa Needham, “How to Accept Credit Cards from Clients,” Lawyerist (August 2, 2015), available at <https://lawyerist.com/21636/accepting-credit-cards/> (last visited April 4, 2016).

3. ***Alternative Methods of Payment***

- a. Sam Glover, “eChecks: a Simple Alternative to Credit Cards,” Lawyerist (August 28, 2015), available at <https://lawyerist.com/95209/echecks-a-simple-alternative-to-credit-cards/> (last visited April 4, 2016).

#### **D. Firing Clients**

1. ***Cari’s Tips.*** One of the benefits of being a lawyer entrepreneur means you can decide who you wish to work for. Don’t be afraid to fire non-communicative, rude clients who do not pay their bill, so long as it complies with your retainer agreement and the rules of ethics in your state.
2. ***Some Resources***
  - a. Randall P. Brett, “How to Dump That Dog of a Case,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 33 No. 1) (January/February 2016), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2016/january-february/how\\_dump\\_dog\\_a\\_case.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2016/january-february/how_dump_dog_a_case.html) (last visited April 4, 2016).

## **VI. REPUTATION MANAGEMENT**

### **A. Online Reputation Management**

1. ***Cari’s Tips.*** Attorney entrepreneurs should be proactive about maintaining his or her online reputation.
  - a. For starters, set up social media accounts projecting the brand that you want to have out in the public. When possible, add professional touches to social media accounts. You are your brand.
  - b. Set up attorney profiles and keep them cleaned up with the correct contact information. If possible, add professional pictures and link to your (already professional) social media websites. Ask happy customers to post a (hopefully positive!) review on those websites (e.g., Avvo) that help build a positive online image. Ask fellow

attorney colleagues to post a positive review on those websites (e.g., Avvo, LinkedIn) and do the same for them. Be proactive in building a positive online reputation.

## 2. *Some Resources*

- a. Gyi Tsakalakis, “Your Good Name: Online Reputation Management for Lawyers,” Lawyerist (February 6, 2012), available at <https://lawyerist.com/39633/your-good-name-online-reputation-management-for-lawyers/> (last visited April 5, 2016).
- b. Sam Glover, “Why You Should Claim Your Avvo Profile,” Lawyerist (September 22, 2010), available at <https://lawyerist.com/13326/claim-your-avvo-profile/> (last visited April 5, 2016).

## B. Word of Mouth

1. *Cari’s Tips*. As the golden rule says, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” The best way to avoid negative chatter about *you* is to avoid negative chatter about *others*. Nobody likes a gossip. Be a positive source of energy in your community.

## 2. *Some Resources*

- a. Cari Twitchell, “Cultivating Word-of-Mouth Referrals,” Lawyerist (March 4, 2016), available at <https://lawyerist.com/81078/cultivating-word-mouth-referrals/> (last visited April 4, 2016).

## VII. DEALING WITH GROWTH

### A. Hiring Employees

#### 1. *Cari’s Tips*

- a. Like any good business, a successful law firm will inevitably have growing pains. The key is to work through that grown conservatively and systematically. Growing too big too fast without a strong infrastructure in its foundation can cause the house to fall down. If a lawyer entrepreneur thinks his or her



practice is growing too quickly, focus on the systems to make sure the growth is built on solid ground.

- b. As E-Myth and E-Myth Revisited note, hire good people with solid work ethic and good character. You can teach them everything else but you cannot teach them to be good people and to be nice to your clients. See MICHAEL E. GERBER, THE E-MYTH REVISITED: WHY MOST SMALL BUSINESSES DON'T WORK AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT (2004) and MICHAEL E GERBER, ROBERT ARMSTRONG AND SANDFORD FISCH, THE E-MYTH ATTORNEY: WHY MOST LEGAL PRACTICES DON'T WORK AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT (2010).

## 2. *Some Resources*

- a. Mike Vraa, "How to Hire Your First Associate," Lawyerist (January 4, 2016), available at <https://lawyerist.com/96460/hire-first-associate-attorney/> (last visited April 4, 2016).
- b. Jonathan Rosenfeld, "How to Find the Perfect New Hire," Lawyerist (October 7, 2015), available at <https://lawyerist.com/89394/find-perfect-new-hire/> (last visited April 4, 2016).
- c. Robin Bull, "How to Hire a Paralegal," Lawyerist (December 30, 2015), available at <https://lawyerist.com/95159/the-benefits-of-relying-on-a-paralegal/> (last visited April 4, 2016).

## **B. Retaining Employees**

1. *Cari's Tips.* Employee turnover is expensive for any business, including a law firm. Consider ways to keep good people working for you, within the budget of the law practice.

## 2. *Some Resources*

- a. Jonathan Rosenfeld, "How to Retain Employees in a Competitive Work Market," Lawyerist (December 30, 2015), available at <https://lawyerist.com/93561/retain-employees-competitive-work-market/> (last visited April 4, 2016).

## C. Firing Employees

### 1. *Cari's Tips.*

- a. Inevitably, owners of businesses (including law firm businesses) must fire people who are not fulfilling their obligations or positions that no longer fit into the business's budget.
- b. An attorney law firm owner should consider consulting with an employment lawyer before firing an employee to take whatever legal precautions are necessary.
- c. Before firing an employee, consider any security concerns (e.g., access to passwords that might need to be changed).

### 2. *Some Resources*

- a. Cedric Ashley & Tonya Woodland-Ashley, "How to Handle a Problem Employee," GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 33 No. 1) (January/February 2016), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2016/january-february/how\\_handle\\_problem\\_employee.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2016/january-february/how_handle_problem_employee.html) (last visited April 4, 2016).

## VIII. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### A. *Books*

1. JAY FOONBERG, HOW TO START AND BUILD A LAW PRACTICE (2004).
2. CAROLYN ELEFANT, SOLO BY CHOICE (2014).
3. HARLAN YORK, 3 DEGREES OF LAW (2015).
4. D.L. CARR, GOING SOLO – A NEW LAWYER'S GUIDE TO STARTING AND BUILDING A LAW PRACTICE ON A TIGHT BUDGET (2013).
5. CAROLYN ELEFANT & NICOLE BLACK, SOCIAL MEDIA FOR LAWYERS: THE NEXT FRONTIER (2010).
6. BEN SCHORR, MICROSOFT ONENOTE IN ONE HOUR FOR LAWYERS (2013).

7. BEN SCHORR, MICROSOFT OFFICE 365 FOR LAWYERS: A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO OPTIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION (2014).
8. MICHAEL RUIZ, CONTENT MARKETING FOR LAWYERS: HOW ATTORNEYS CAN USE SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGIES TO ATTRACT MORE CLIENTS AND BECOME LEGAL THOUGHT LEADERS (2016).

## ***B. Blogs***

1. Myshingle.com – Authored by Carolyn Elefant
2. Solo Practice University, <http://solopracticeuniversity.com/category/solo-small-firm-practice/> - A website offering courses, consultations, blogs, and other resources for lawyers with a solo law practice.
3. Attorney at Work, AttorneyAtWork.com – A blog created by practice management experts and communicators to provide attorneys with information and advice for building their law practice.
4. Lawyerist, Lawyerist.com – A blog dedicated to “helping lawyers build better law practices by bringing together a group of innovative lawyers to share ideas, experiments, and best practices.”
5. The Mac Lawyer, TheMacLawyer.com – Using Macs in the practice of law.
6. Legal Marketing Blog, LegalMarketingBlog.com – A blog dedicated to lawyer marketing in any size firm.
7. Blawing Lawyers, BlawingLawyers.com – Providing blogging tips for lawyers and how to optimize your website and posts to bring visitors to your website.

## ***C. American Bar Association***

1. **GPSolo** – Bi-monthly publication for Solo, Small Firm, and General Practices
  - a. Jocelyn Frazer & Nerino J. Petro Jr., “The GPSolo Guide to Opening a Law Office,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 31 No. 1) (January/February 2014), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2014/january-](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2014/january-)

[february/the\\_gpsolo\\_guide\\_opening\\_law\\_office.html](#) (last visited April 8, 2016).

- b. Michael Board, “Insurance and Retirement Planning for Solos,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 28 No. 1) (January/February 2011), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2011/january\\_february/insurance\\_and\\_retirementplanningforsolos.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2011/january_february/insurance_and_retirementplanningforsolos.html) (last visited April 8, 2016).
- c. Patti S. Spencer, “Estate Planning for Lawyers,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 28 No. 1) (January/February 2011), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2011/january\\_february/estate\\_planning\\_forlawyers.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2011/january_february/estate_planning_forlawyers.html) (last visited April 8, 2016).
- d. John R. Wachsmann, “GP Mentor: When Things Go Wrong,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 33 No. 1) (January/February 2016), available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp\\_solo/2016/january-february/gp\\_mentor\\_when\\_things\\_go\\_wrong.html](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2016/january-february/gp_mentor_when_things_go_wrong.html) (last visited April 7, 2016).
- e. Ira Meislik, “What I Wish I Had Known About (Practicing) Real Property Law,” GPSolo Magazine (Vol. 33 No. 2), at 80.
- f. **SoloSez** – Discussion group for solo & small practice lawyers - <http://www.americanbar.org/groups/gpsolo/resources/solosez.html> (last visited April 5, 2016).

#### ***D. State Bar Associations Starting Law Practice Guides and Checklists***

1. State Bar of Arizona, “Law Office Set-Up Checklist,” Law Office Management Assistance Program (2012), available at [http://www.azbar.org/media/475792/law\\_office\\_setup\\_checklist\\_2012.pdf](http://www.azbar.org/media/475792/law_office_setup_checklist_2012.pdf) (last visited April 5, 2016).
2. State Bar of Missouri, “Law Practice Start-Up Kit,” Missouri Bar Law Practice Management Center (2012), available at [http://www.mobar.org/uploadedFiles/Home/Member\\_Services/Law\\_Practice\\_Management/Starting\\_a\\_Law\\_Practice/Start%20Up%20Kit.doc](http://www.mobar.org/uploadedFiles/Home/Member_Services/Law_Practice_Management/Starting_a_Law_Practice/Start%20Up%20Kit.doc) (last visited April 5, 2016).

3. State Bar of New York, “Checklist for Starting a Practice in New York,” New York State Bar Association, available at <http://www.nysba.org/ChecklistStartingaPractice/> (last visited April 5, 2016).

#### E. *Lawline Presentations*

1. Justin Blitz, “Starting Your Own Personal Injury Practice,” Lawline (June 27, 2015), available at <http://www.lawline.com/cle/course/starting-your-own-personal-injury-practice> (last visited April 5, 2016).
2. Joseph Vozza, “Ethical Law Practice Management for Solo Practitioners,” Lawline (February 21, 2015), available at <http://www.lawline.com/cle/course/ethical-law-office-management-for-solo-practitioners-1> (last visited April 5, 2016).
3. Tamar Cerafici, “Ethics and New ABA Rules on Legal Outsourcing,” Lawline (September 22, 2014), available at <http://www.lawline.com/cle/course/ethics-and-new-aba-rules-on-legal-outsourcing> (last visited April 5, 2016).
4. Cory Morris, “Being ‘Shingle’: Starting a Solo Practice in New York,” Lawline (January 22, 2016), available at <http://www.lawline.com/cle/course/being-shingle-starting-a-solo-practice-in-new-york> (last visited April 5, 2016).
5. June Middleton, “Minding Your Own Business: Starting Your Own Law Practice,” Lawline (December 20, 2014), available at <http://www.lawline.com/cle/course/minding-your-own-business-starting-your-own-law-practice> (last visited April 5, 2016).
6. John Howley & Sigalle Barness, “The Happy Lawyer: Applying Business and Ethical Fundamentals,” Lawline (February 22, 2015), available at <http://www.lawline.com/cle/course/the-happy-lawyer-applying-business-and-ethical-fundamentals> (last visited April 5, 2016).
7. Cari Rincker, “How to Start and Grow a Food and Agricultural Law Practice,” Lawline (September 26, 2013), available at <http://www.lawline.com/cle/course/how-to-start-and-grow-a-food-and-agriculture-law-practice> (last visited April 5, 2016) and Slideshow presentation, <http://www.slideshare.net/rinckerlaw/how-to-start-and-grow-a-food-and-agriculture-law-practice> (last visited April 5, 2016).

## F. *Other Resources*

1. Cari Rincker, “How to Start an Agriculture and Environmental Law Practice,” SlideShare, available at <http://www.slideshare.net/rinckerlaw/how-to-start-an-agriculture-and-environmental-law-practice> (last visited April 5, 2016).

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