



NEW JERSEY STATE  
BAR ASSOCIATION

RESOURCE

# GUIDE

*for*

SOLO



SMALL FIRM

*PRACTITIONERS*

# INTRODUCTION

Maybe you're considering hanging that shingle and going into business for yourself as a solo practitioner. Maybe you have a partner in this adventure, who has decided to set up shop alongside you. Maybe you've been in the solo/small-firm game for a while now, but could use some new ideas.

Maybe, you're just looking for a community of people who are facing the same challenges you are balancing the running of a business with the practice of law.

***This guide is for all of you.***

The majority of lawyers in the state of New Jersey belong to law firms of five individuals or fewer. At the New Jersey State Bar Association, we are committed to meeting your needs. Our Solo and Small Firm Section is robust and active, with members and leadership who are generous with advice and support. Many of them did just that and contributed to this guide.

So consider this free resource a first step, an introduction. Take what you need. And if you want to learn more about membership, reach out to the NJSBA membership department at [membership@njsba.com](mailto:membership@njsba.com).

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WHAT I WISH I KNEW

“

If you know the potential risks and they bother you less than the thought of working for somebody else the rest of your life, you should do it. You have to be a good networker, you have to be able to bring in business. You can't be too arrogant. You have to know that there's stuff you don't know and be willing to find out.”

**BETH MANES, WESTFIELD**



**ADVICE FROM OUR MEMBERS**



# NEW LAW PRACTICE

## CHECKLIST



The following checklist was developed over the years by members of the NJSBA Solo and Small-Firm section. It is meant to be a comprehensive list of to-do items when establishing a new law practice. If an item does not apply to you, skip it!

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<input type="checkbox"/> Accountant	Discuss with accountant tax consequences, type of entity and accounting basis (cash or accrual), Obtain FEIN from IRS on SS-4
<input type="checkbox"/> Accountant	Set up chart of accounts (Quickbooks template)
<input type="checkbox"/> Accountant	Establish schedule for preparation of monthly statements and account reconciliation
<input type="checkbox"/> Accountant	Determine policy for billing method and client costs advanced
<input type="checkbox"/> Accountant	Obtain forms: journals and ledgers, cash received receipt, time tickets, bill head, thank you letter forms
<input type="checkbox"/> Accountant	Determine need for accounting software
<input type="checkbox"/> Accountant	Develop revenue, expense, cash flow and capital needs budgets (don't forget start-up expenses: deposits, down payments)
<input type="checkbox"/> Advertising	Determine advertising need, review NJ ethics opinions re: advertising/signage



CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<input type="checkbox"/> Banking	Attorney Business account, banking supplies (checks, deposit slips deposit stamps), safe deposit box for firm valuables, will storage needs, determine account signers.
<input type="checkbox"/> Banking	Determine need for IOLTA account and/or safe deposit box for client property; review Rule 1:21-6 trust accounting rules.
<input type="checkbox"/> Banking	Determine need for line of credit, firm credit card.
<input type="checkbox"/> Bar Associations	Notify bar associations of physical and mailing addresses, email and telephone.
<input type="checkbox"/> Calendar and Diary	Determine process for maintaining calendar and diary (to-do and tickler system). Dual manual system, auto-mated? Backup procedures (copied or printed and when)
<input type="checkbox"/> Client Intake	Forms: new client/new matter intake form, client interview/initial consultation form representation agreements, fee agreements (flat fee or non-refundable agreement, cost and fee retainer agreements), narratives on how cases are handled, client's responsibilities, post-matter client evaluation forms.
<input type="checkbox"/> Courts	Electronic and file-by-mail capabilities
<input type="checkbox"/> Courts	Notify New Jersey Fund for Client Security re: new address.
<input type="checkbox"/> Dues and Licenses	Bar dues, city and county occupational licenses, if any.



CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<input type="checkbox"/> Equipment	Copier, scanner, fax, postage machine, shredder, binding equipment, DVD player, adding machine, etc. Determine which are purchased, which are rented and which are leased.
<input type="checkbox"/> Files	Cabinets, chrono file, accordion file, date stamp, reading files, filing supplies, binders (folders, file pockets, etc) incoming and outgoing mail procedures
<input type="checkbox"/> Files	Master open and closed file lists (manual or automated - or both); determine records retention schedule (see pdf file)
<input type="checkbox"/> Forms	List of needed forms for your practice and where these forms can be obtained.
<input type="checkbox"/> Furniture & Accessories	Art work, carpeting, chairs (executive, secretarial, visitors), conference room furniture, reception room furniture, desks (secretaries, paralegals, lawyers) credenzas, window treatments, umbrella and coat rack, trash and recycling bins. Determine where built-ins will suffice. Lease or purchase?
<input type="checkbox"/> Insurance <b>Critical</b>	Disability, health, professional liability, office pack (liability, business resumption, valuable papers, employee fidelity), workers' compensation. Flood
<input type="checkbox"/> Library, Legal Research	Determine need for on-line databases, hard copy library materials and directories, periodical subscriptions, bookshelves (floor strength?); Fastcase, Google Scholar.
<input type="checkbox"/> NJICLE Publications	Review available list of helpful start-up materials. Administrative and legal forms.





CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<input type="checkbox"/> Mail and Messengers	Mailing supplies (labels, USPS supplies etc.), express mail accounts (e.g., FedEx, UPS, etc.), email account, private courier account.
<input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance and Janitorial	Office cleaning, garbage removal, landscaping/snow removal, carpet cleaning services—may be included in office lease.
<input type="checkbox"/> Marketing	Business cards, stationery, announcements, holiday cards, thank you notes/form letters, practice-specific paper (e.g., will paper)



By Jacob V. Hudnut

# Ten Tips Learned the Hard Way

ARTICLE ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN THE JUNE 2012 NEW JERSEY LAWYER

**A**t first, a three-month road trip to the West Coast and back may not appear to have a lot in common with starting a solo law practice. But having done both, I can tell you they share a great deal. Both were among the most exciting and rewarding adventures of my life, because each led to unexpected places, introduced me to fascinating people, and imparted important lessons.

Yet, planning for the road trip was considerably easier than embarking on a solo career. I simply plugged my destination cities into Google Maps, hit print, and climbed in the car. As it turns out, there are no analogous turn-by-turn directions for launching your own law practice. Sure, there are great references out there, such as Carolyn Elefant's *Solo by Choice* and Jay Foonberg's *How to Start & Build a Law Practice*. But these books can be pricey when purchased, and hard to track down at a library. And even with these guides in hand, there's no standardized checklist for getting a solo's dream off the ground.

Apparently the same is true to some extent for road trips as well; even those snazzy Google Map directions didn't warn me that postcard-esque Salina, Utah, on Interstate 70, would be my last chance to fill up the gas tank for over 100 miles. A tip from friends in Denver clued me in on that fact before it was too late. I was fortunate enough to be able to turn to people in the know for guidance

as I embarked on my adventure into solo practice as well.

Of course, even with the benefit of that guidance, I nonetheless encountered bumps in the road. Following are 10 tips on going solo that I learned the hard way. Hopefully, they will save new solos precious time and energy during the promising journey that lies ahead.

## **1. Get retainers; use your trust account.**

When I launched my solo practice, I had the big, bright idea that not obtaining a retainer upfront—and thus refraining from billing until the end of my services—would be less work. The way I saw it was that by not requiring a retainer I would save considerable time standing in line at the bank to make transfers between my trust and operating accounts. Well, I was wrong. Who would have known that even the happiest client just can't seem to reach for that checkbook, even after you've saved the day? So, unless you're a major *Sopranos* fan with a burning desire to spend your days making collections across greater New Jersey, get a retainer upfront no matter how small the fee. And, of course, follow the appropriate professional rules when managing that retainer.

## **2. Share office space with other attorneys.**

My first office as a solo attorney was on a remote desert island—the top floor of an office building full of doctors, only five convenient blocks from my apartment but over 10 uphill blocks from both the



courts and other law offices. I lasted about six months before moving to a suite of other attorneys. Turns out—even with phone and email—there is no substitute for basing your practice in close proximity to your bar colleagues. Increased face-to-face interaction not only leads to unparalleled opportunities for overflow work and general advice, but also heightened morale.

Even though going solo may be the most daunting challenge of an attorney's life, no one should lose sight of the fact that it's an option as old as the legal profession itself. There is value in simply being near others who have embarked on the journey too, and are surviving and thriving a little farther down that same road.

### **3. Never buy books.**

There are a handful of resourceful books on going solo, and hundreds more practice guides that will be useful, if not crucial, during a solo's journey. But they're pricey (even when bought used) and can quickly compound a new solo's overhead. My belief is they should never be purchased. (Nor should they be stolen.) Instead, check a nearby law school's library. The library stacks you perhaps rarely visited as a law student will become a favorite haunt as a solo practitioner. What's more—if your experiences are anything like my recent visits to Seton Hall Law's Peter Rodino Library you'll find the staff will be more than happy to help with special requests.

### **4. Marketing takes time; don't feel guilty.**

When I first opened my office, for every hour of billable work I did, I also spent at least another non-billable hour designing marketing materials, getting listed in print and online directories, writing website content, blogging, etc. At first, I was uncomfortable with this. I felt like I was doing something wrong. But think about it: Many solo attorneys (especially those new to the solo adventure) are burdened with the responsibilities of each and every role that would be filled by separate individuals at a larger law firm. This, of course, includes marketing, and eventually it will pay off. A new solo should rest assured that a non-billable hour of work can be just as valuable as a billable one.

### **5. Get comfortable with your cell phone.**

A solo's cell phone can be a powerful tool—a little office in the palm of your hand. Email, office calls, faxes, files, statutes, and more can all either be accessed from or forwarded to a smart phone. This level of remote access to your firm may be unnerving at first, but it ultimately enhances your ability to practice prosperously, so embrace it.

### **6. Get a soundtrack.**

The journey of a solo encompasses many uphill roads, lined with unexpected twists and turns. I surely had my share of tough moments during my first months. Heck, I still do. So how do I pull through? I have a playlist designed especially for those occasions; every solo should. Soloing is arguably the biggest leap you can take. It's cinematic, and therefore deserving of its very own movie score. Each solo's soundtrack will vary, but I'm happy to provide a few suggestions. If you're a solo with a soft spot for pop music, then try Jason Derulo's "Ridin' Solo." Fleetwood Mac's "Go Your Own Way" is perfect for the solo by-day/classic-rock-enthusiast-by-night. And "Defying Gravity" from *Wicked* is great for any solo Broadway buff at bar.

### **7. You won't always know the answer.**

While this point technically applies to every lawyer, unlike an attorney in a larger firm, solos don't have a building, floor, or even suite full of associates who can quickly jump in when you draw a blank in front of a client. So, how can a solo prepare for this? Simple: Acknowledge it when it happens. Don't blow smoke in your client's face. Instead, be honest; your candor will be appreciated and respected. Of course, feel free to give your best educated guess, but don't go out of your way to avoid admitting you have a little research ahead of you before you're sure. And you can always comfort clients by assuring them that they won't be paying for your learning curve. That'll be music to their ears.

### **8. Learn to dodge solicitation calls.**

Many of the most disappointing moments during the first months of my solo practice began with the excitement of an unrecognized number coming through on my phone. I just knew it had to be a potential client. Dollar signs seemed to float right off



the phone's screen as it vibrated. But it turns out, while an unrecognized number can be and often is—a potential client, it just as often is a sales call. And every one of those salespeople purports to have the copy machine, courier service, advertising package, or even binder clip that—if purchased—will send your business straight through the roof. Save yourself some time and get off these calls as quickly as possible. Your politeness can snowball into a 30-minute conversation, amounting to little more than lost billable time. If there is a tool or resource your solo practice needs, another solo attorney can recommend a vetted salesperson.

### **9. Watch out for per diem pitfalls.**

Per diem work is a great way to make ends meet. But if you're new to it, beware. I mostly practice criminal defense, and did some per diem appearances in criminal matters when I initially went solo. "It's only a status conference—just get a new date," was the extent of the instruction I typically received. Sounded easy enough, but I quickly learned it's never just a new date. Nine times out of 10, it's plea cut off. And you find yourself tap dancing before a judge who is hungry for a disposition and in no mood for an adjournment, however brief. The solution? Know the case. Never do a per diem appearance without the file in hand, as well as a substantive conversation with the attorney of record first. If this is not possible, then don't take the gig. The fast cash won't be worth the damage your reputation will suffer from a poor performance in court.

### **10. Not even the happiest client will be... happy.**

This is another point that applies to every lawyer. But if you're a solo who scores a big win and doesn't get that high-five from the client whose day you just saved, then who will be there to share that

victory? This past February, I successfully argued at sentencing for a three-year third-degree custodial sentence on a second-degree aggravated assault plea, in which the initial indictment included first-degree carjacking. I stepped into the hall with the defendant's family, expecting them to scoop me up and carry me out of the court house on their shoulders. It didn't play out that way. Instead, they insisted the judge's tone at sentencing was disrespectful (it wasn't) and demanded I do something about it (I didn't).

When a client or a client's loved ones behave this way, what can you do? Well, I always think about that cross-country road trip, when a tire went flat in the Rocky Mountains. After pulling off the interstate and finding the help I desperately needed at a mom and pop service station, I took a deep breath. I pictured my next destination (Las Vegas!) and the exciting possibilities ahead. If you're a solo who survives an unexpected detour, then do exactly the same thing. Keep your chin up. Pull out your calendar or to-do list. See what's coming up next. On a solo's journey, there's always another adventure—and with it a victory to score right around the corner.

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*Jacob V. Hudnut (Jake) is Jersey City's Chief Prosecutor. He was a solo attorney from 2011 to 2018, practicing criminal defense in Jersey City. Prior to that, he was law clerk to the Honorable Peter J. Vazquez, P.J.Cr. (Essex Vicinage) and a special assistant to a commissioner of the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey. He is a board member of the Hudson County Bar Association, N.J. Association of Municipal Prosecutors, and the Jersey City Employment & Training Program.*

PROTECTING YOURSELF

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1. Have a business plan and budget for your practice and office;
2. Become familiar with the business and trust accounting rules;
3. Become familiar with the court rules that apply to retainer agreements;
4. If you need help, ask.

**ALICE M. PLASTORIS, MORRISTOWN**



**ADVICE FROM OUR MEMBERS**



By Brian J. Fruehling

# Attorney Ethics: Considerations for the Solo

ARTICLE ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN THE JUNE 2012 NEW JERSEY LAWYER

*Editor's Note:* This article was originally published in 2012. The rules cited here have not changed. Please note that Supreme Court opinion *Balducci v. Cige*, 240 N.J. 574 (2020) contains an important discussion about retainer agreements in fee shifting cases. The decision indicates additional guidance from the Judiciary would be forthcoming. That guidance was pending at the time of publication (Oct. 2023).

For many newly minted attorneys, or those attorneys who have left large firms and recently hung out their own shingle, dealing directly with clients can present certain challenges. The newly solo or small-firm practitioner must be vigilant in complying with attorney ethics requirements, and would be well served to spend some time reviewing the Rules of Professional Conduct (RPCs).

Particular attention should be given to the rules governing client communications.

**A**t large law firms, often there is a buffer or bureaucracy separating the young attorney from the client. The large law firm typically has a partner in charge of a 'client matter.' In fact, in some instances the associate attorney never meets or even speaks with the client. The associate might report to a junior partner, who in turn reports to a senior partner, for example. In a large firm, therefore, the responsibility for maintaining client communication and satisfaction rests not with the associate attorney but with those higher up in the law firm.

Associate attorneys who only remain at large firms for one or two years, probably will not have had the opportunity to master the skill of dealing directly with clients in a lawyerly manner. As a result, the associate attorney is likely not well equipped to handle client needs and demands. Similarly, the recently admitted solo practitioner may lack experience in dealing directly with clients. Therefore, inexperienced newly solo or small-firm attorneys would be well advised to seek mentoring from seasoned practitioners, whether it be in the form of attending seminars or simply contacting their senior brethren by telephone, or through other informal settings, to discuss office concerns.

All attorneys, regardless of their level of experience, must be aware of and comply with the Rules of Professional Responsibility governing the bar of New Jersey, and should read and periodically review the RPCs. Lawyers are presumed to know the RPCs, advisory opinions issued by the New Jersey Supreme Court's Committee on Advisory Opinions, ethics opinions applying the RPCs, and the Rules of Court. Intent to violate an ethics rule, except for very limited circumstances, is not a prerequisite



to the finding of an ethics breach. In other words, ignorance of the RPCs is not a defense to an ethics violation.

#### **Client Communication Under RPC 1.4**

Of particular importance in the handling of client communications is RPC 1.4, which requires all attorneys to: (a) fully inform a prospective client of how, when and where the client may communicate with the lawyer; (b) keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and promptly comply with reasonable requests for information; (c) explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation; and (d) when a lawyer knows a client expects assistance not permitted by the Rules of Professional Conduct or other law, advise the client of the relevant limitations on the lawyer's conduct.

Compliance with RPC 1.4 by the solo practitioner is not just an ethics requirement; it can be an excellent tool in creating a rewarding relationship with clients. As contemplated by RPC 1.4, setting reasonable goals and expectations with the client from the outset will pay dividends in the long haul. At the initial client conference, after assessing the facts of the case and determining whether a valid cause of action exists, the attorney should clearly and openly "explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation." The attorney should then educate the client about the 'reasonable expectations' of the case.

The following are some tips to keep the assessment and objectives of the representation on point and within the understanding of the client:

- Educate the client generally about the law as it applies to the facts of his or her case, even if the client is savvy and appears to already understand the process.
- Explain the attorney's role in the client matter, so the client's expectations of the attorney's representation in the matter are reasonable, including the billing structure, and the manner and expected frequency of communications between attorney and client.
- Explain the process, including the likely time-frame, legal procedures, motions expected, and anticipated limitations on what the attorney can achieve in the case. Do not sugar-coat the matter or over-promise what can be gained by virtue of the lawsuit.

Overall, good communications will serve the solo practitioner well in running a successful law practice. Clients expect their attorneys to be very responsive to telephone calls and emails, and otherwise require constant communication and updates about their legal matters. As long as the client's requests for information are reasonable, the lawyer is obligated to keep the lines of communication open and respond to the client's requests according to RPC 1.4.

#### **Getting it in Writing**

For clients new to the firm, a written legal services agreement must be made, as required under RPC 1.5(b). The solo practitioner should explain to the client in the legal services agreement, exactly what services the attorney will perform, terms of payment, treatment of retainer funds, and the client's responsibilities to the attorney during the representation period. If the matter is a contingency fee case, compliance with Rule 1:21-7 is also mandatory. All retainers in matrimonial matters must be in writing, as required by Rule 5:3-5(a).

In any event, the fee agreement must be fair and, "may not provide for an unreasonable fee or any other unreasonable waiver of the client's rights."<sup>2</sup> Handling of client retainer funds must be treated in accordance with the terms of the legal services agreement.<sup>3</sup> The retainer funds must be earned before they are paid over to the attorney,<sup>4</sup> and RPC 1.16(d) requires that upon termination of representation the lawyer must refund any advance payment of fees that have not been earned.

Within the legal services agreement, the solo practitioner should advise the client when he or she will receive updates on their billing status. In certain matters, it would be appropriate for the attorney to provide monthly statements of account, keeping the client constantly aware of their financial status with the attorney. If a client is regularly updated on their account, the element of surprise and





dissatisfaction with progress on their case can be averted. A client who regularly receives detailed legal invoices from his or her attorney will not only be aware of the costs associated with the representation, but will have (by virtue of the detailed invoice) a written report of everything the attorney has done.

In the event a client makes excessive and unreasonable demands for information about their file, the attorney should confront the client about the problem without delay. Attorneys will rarely have to address this issue (e.g., excessive or daily calls about a case that is not at the trial level, for example) if they initially explain the frequency with which clients should expect to be updated. If the client is regularly updated, the instances of client unhappiness will likely be minimal. The client's overall satisfaction with the attorney is often not based on the outcome of the matter, but on whether he or she believes the attorney has worked hard on the case and kept the client's best interests as the focal point of the representation. Typically, the client will be satisfied if he or she believes in the attorney's commitment to the case and if the attorney has been updating the client on a regular basis, thereby alleviating any surprises or problems the client was not expecting. This all leads back to great communications between attorney and client.

### Conclusion

Year after year, the majority of ethics complaints are based on attorneys' failing to adequately communicate with clients. A majority of these ethics grievances are filed against solo practitioners or small law firms, possibly because solo practitioners and small firms often engage in the type of practice areas ripe for complaints, such as divorce, real estate and general practice work.

Fortunately, there is a ready solution for the newly solo practitioner and small-firm lawyer: Complying with RPC 1.4, educating the client about their legal position, managing the client's expectations about legal proceedings and potential outcomes, and providing the client with a sufficiently detailed legal services agreement whereby the client is updated regularly, will serve both the attorney and the client well. *tr.*

### Endnotes

1. RPC 1.4(c).
2. *Cohen v. Radio-Electronics Officers*, 146 N.J. 140,156 (1996).
3. *In re Stem*, 92 N.J. 611, 619 (1983); *In re Youmans*, 118 N.J. 622, 636 (1990).
4. *In re Spagnoli*, 115 N.J. 504, 516 (1989).

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*Brian J. Fruehling is a solo practitioner in Madison, former chair of the District X Ethics Committee, and handles employment, commercial and personal injury litigation. He also represents attorneys in ethics cases.*

### ETHICS HOTLINE FOR NEW JERSEY LAWYERS

**1-800-285-2221**

**ADDITIONAL ATTORNEY  
ETHICS HELP**



# LAWYERS' PROFESSIONAL

# LIABILITY CHECKLIST



## Key Issues to Consider Before You Buy Lawyers' Professional Liability Insurance

### What are the coverage terms exclusions?

#### Does the policy provide coverage for:

- All legal services performed by the firm?
- Activities of members of the firm when acting as officer or directors?
- Extended reporting periods?
- Claims first made and reported during the policy period?

#### Is coverage excluded for:

- Any services critical to the firm (e.g. securities, real estate)?
- Dishonest, criminal or malicious acts? If so, is coverage afforded to innocent partners?
- Vicarious liability acquired by law or by contracts for the acts, errors or omissions of others?



### NJSBA MEMBER PERK ALERT

As an NJSBA member, USI Affinity's services as an insurance broker are available to you. They are dedicated to working with NJSBA members to research the best insurance plan for your individual/or firm needs and will walk members through the process of selecting the right insurance plans for each individual member.



### Are you carrying the appropriate limits/deductibles for your firm?

- Are claims expenses included in the limits of liability?
- Are limits of liability per claim or annual aggregate?
- Are deductibles per claim or annual aggregate?

### Does your policy provide coverage for all persons for whom the insured is legally responsible?

#### Does the definition of the insured include:

- Named Insured and Predecessor (s)?
- Former lawyers, partners, officers, employers and shareholders?
- Current lawyers, partners, officers, directors and shareholders?
- Future lawyers, partners, officers, directors and shareholders?
- Independent contractors?
- Attorneys in an "Of Counsel" capacity?
- Others—i.e. heirs, executors, administrators, legal representatives, or assigns of insured?

### Does your policy provide for prior acts coverage?

#### Does this coverage include:

- Prior acts of attorneys and the firm for professional services before inception of the policy?
- Prior acts of attorneys for professional services before joining the firm?
- Requirement to give notice to the insurance company of potential claims?



### Is the insured's consent required to settle a claim?

- Who selects defense counsel?
- Is the agreement to defend claims sufficiently broad enough to offer full protection?
- Does the policy provide for arbitration of coverage dispute between the insurer and the insured?

### Are you confident in the stability of the carrier?

#### Does the definition of the insured include:

- What is the A.M. Best rating of the carrier?
- How long has the carrier been writing lawyers' professional liability?



# DISASTER PLANNING GUIDE



A natural or man-made disaster raises a number of practical and logistic challenges for law firms. Here is some guidance, practical tips and checklists to help you think about what you need to do now to be prepared should a disaster interrupt your business.



**NJSBA DISASTER PREPAREDNESS GUIDE**



# CYBERSECURITY



## **Be aware: Tips to Avoid Falling for Email or Phishing Scams**

Email scams are rampant and many of them can fool even a sophisticated professional. The New Jersey State Bar Association is looking out for its members and offers the following tips to keep your practice and private information safe.

## **Beware of Suspicious Emails and Do not Click Suspicious Links**

- Be very suspicious of any emails you receive from trusted entities like your bank. While these addresses may look official, they usually contain inconspicuous differences that redirect you to a fraudulent site.
- If the email contains a link, don't click on it.
- Deceptive links that mimic legitimate URL addresses are a common tools con artists use in phishing scams.
- Instead of clicking on the link, type in the web address of the institution into the browser to access the website.

## **Know the Common Phishing Language:**

- Look out for common phishing language in emails like: "Verify your account."
- Legitimate businesses will not send you an email to ask for your login information or sensitive personal information.
- Also, look out for emails that try to convey a sense of urgency.
- Warnings that your account has been compromised, for example, are a common way to lure victims. Again, contact the company directly to inquire about such emails rather than using any link or other contact information provided in the email.
- Finally, be wary of any email that does not address you directly.
- While some phishing scams will use your name in the email, many are sent out as spam messages to thousands at a time.
- Most legitimate businesses will use your first and/or last name in all communication.

It's good practice to look at all the emails and websites suspiciously. Getting sucked into a phishing scam can cost you thousands of dollars and a good amount of your valuable time. An ounce of prevention now can save a pound of cure later.

# COMMUNICATIONS & NETWORKING

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I would suggest that someone starting a solo practice get a good mentor and if I knew of the Young Lawyers Division I would have joined to be able to discuss similar issues with similar people in my position.

**LARRY S. RAIKEN, MONTVILLE**



**ADVICE FROM OUR MEMBERS**





By Cedric Ashley  
and Cynthia Sharp

# A Guide to Referrals and Networking for Extroverts and Introverts Alike

ARTICLE FIRST PUBLISHED IN THE ABA PUBLICATION GPSOLO MAGAZINE, JULY/AUGUST 2017, VOLUME 34, NUMBER 4

**M**ost professionals agree that one of the most valuable ways to attract clients is through referrals. When starting a practice, the most expedient source of clients is people you already know, including family, friends, and former classmates. While cultivating these relationships is the immediate first step, creating and implementing a strategic networking plan is a close second. By showing up and meeting people in person, you will have the opportunity to create new relationships and deepen those that already exist. Not only can you meet new clients and referral sources, but you also can build a strong support system, which has its own value.

Even attorneys who are veteran networkers often engage in random acts of networking without developing advanced communication skills and systems that will greatly enhance the effectiveness of every encounter.

## Networking and Personality

The communication styles of introverts and extroverts normally differ widely. An understanding of these styles can help you learn to adapt your own approach to the environment in which you find yourself so that you can increase your chances of making a viable connection with your communication partner.

Co-author Cynthia Sharp has taken the personality test designed with the input of Susan Cain, author of *New York Times* Best Seller *Quiet* and founder of the Quiet Revolution (the personality test is found at

[quietrev.com/the-introvert-test](http://quietrev.com/the-introvert-test)). Co-author Cedric Ashley has taken and is a qualified administrator of the Myer-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) assessment. We have each been found to be basically in the middle of the introvert/extrovert spectrum and self-identify as ambiverts. We refer those interested in finding out more about various aspects of this topic to the website of the Quiet Revolution ([quietrev.com](http://quietrev.com)), as an in-depth discussion is beyond the scope of this article.

Our approach is to offer networking tips from the perspective of the introvert and the extrovert in three separate settings: (1) large networking event, (2) small networking event (one-on-one or one-to-few); and (3) networking by speaking or presenting (one-to-many). Cedric provides tips to the introvert while Cindy gives suggestions to the extrovert.

## Large Networking Event

**Introvert.** Get ready! Get psyched! Get hyped! If you tend to be an introvert, you really need to get ready for these energy-sapping events. This is not your natural space, so planning ahead will go a long way to make the event worthwhile. Even the little details matter. Picking an ideal time to arrive and depart (the “bookends”) is a starter. Planning to arrive a little after the start of the event will provide sufficient time for attendees to gather.

Have a talk plan in place. Come prepared with two or three small “chitchat” topics that will guide you through conversations with people you may not know. I like the broad question, such as, “so where are you from?” The question alone is so broad that



the person will likely seek clarification, which in turn will allow you to follow up with options such as place of birth, employer, childhood home, tribe, whatever. Depending on how the person chooses to answer the question, you will find an easy opening because it gives some insight as to what is top-of-mind for him or her.

As you are engaged in conversation, be sincere and by all means pay attention. By listening intently, you will be able to ask follow-up questions and allow people to talk, and talk, and talk about themselves or whatever they care to talk about. This is certainly the case when talking with an extrovert. And by the time the conversation is over, you will have found a new “friend.” Of course, if the person you are speaking with is just as sparing with their words as you, it is possible you are chatting with your kindred spirit—another introvert. Not a problem, having read this article and being the insightful and astute person you are, you just might turn the topic to the fact that you are an introvert and you have to work yourself up to attend this type of event. And BAAAAAM! Just like that you have opened the door for the fellow member of your introvert tribe to self-identify, and the conversation just flows from there.

Remember that as an introvert your natural energy focuses inward, so after several hours of this type of event you just might want to go home and crash. But that is okay.

**Extrovert.** Prior to attending the event, identify what you wish to gain from this investment of time and money. What type of potential referral source or client would you like to meet? Are you able to obtain the guest list ahead of time to help you prepare? Simply catching up socially with people you already know could be accomplished in another venue. The following three strategies will help you leverage your natural ability to meet and mingle:

- Prepare for the function by doing a little research. If attending an association meeting, take a quick look at the website so that you are up-to-date on the organization’s publications as well as news about the members. For example, a novice business attorney who did her home-

work ahead of a recent meeting of the local chamber of commerce was able to break the ice with an influential banker by complimenting him on a recent newsletter article and to congratulate the vice president of a small company on a recent promotion. If attending the meeting of a specific industry, make sure you are up-to-date on current developments. Karen, a lawyer who represents medical practices, is up-to-date and conversant with news related to the health care industry at both the local and national level. This enables her to engage in informed conversation in both the business and legal arenas.

- Use social media or other resources to research the background of any scheduled speakers, board members, and other key people who may be attending. Connect through LinkedIn, Twitter, or e-mail prior to the event, letting them know that you look forward to meeting. You have now warmed the atmosphere for an in-person encounter. Use the information to develop probing questions. My favorite go-to question when the energy of the conversation wanes is “What is the biggest challenge that you are facing in your industry/business?” Answers to this simple, open-ended question are educational and position us to understand the potential clients’ needs so that we can demonstrate that we are the right attorney to prevent or solve their problems.
- Engage fully while conversing. Glancing around the room, at your watch, or at your cell phone sends an unattractive message to your conversation partner. Many lawyers (and other adults) have unfortunately not mastered basic social skills. Be sure that you’re not one of them.

#### **Small Networking Event**

**Introvert.** Smaller networking events might be the sweet spot for introverts, allowing them to operate in their natural space. These events are ideal because they provide the opportunity for depth of interaction, not breadth. Here the introvert is able to focus on making greater, more meaningful connections with a fewer number of people. By their nature these smaller events will inevitably have a format that is less high-energy and likely less fast-paced.



The intimate feel of these events will likely put the introvert at ease. Ironically, for introverts these events may be better than one-to-one or one-to-few encounters. With a one-to-one encounter, introverts may feel as though they are an equal partner in keeping the conversation moving along. This in turn may bring about stress for the introvert (not always and not for everyone because some introverts may just flourish in this environment). But with the small networking event, there are enough people where introverts can share the load.

The depth, connection, and familiarity that can exist in these smaller events can create a space for introverts to emerge to the point that they appear to be extroverts. Sounds strange? Not so. We all can exist and function along points of the spectrum—in fact, many introverts are excellent trial attorneys. However, we can't not operate outside of our hard-wired nature for too long or too often. Just like a battery, once we are run down we will need to find our natural source to recharge.

**Extrovert.** Psychologist Carl Jung originated the categories of introvert and extrovert and described an extrovert as a “person whose motives and actions are directed outward.” By and large, this characteristic can often drive extroverts to dominate conversations because most love to talk. While the introvert conversation partner may be entertained, he or she has not had the “space” to express himself or herself, which means that the extrovert has gained little knowledge or insight from the conversation. The following approaches are geared to improving communication skills and could be useful to extroverts and introverts alike.

- Develop sensitivity to distinctions in communication and personality types that will help in developing rapport and interacting on a deeper level. Reviewing the results of a DISC assessment that I took helped me greatly in understanding how to approach others who are different from me. Learn how to identify and work best with introverts as well as other extroverts.
- Become a respectful listener. All too often, extroverts and introverts alike are guilty of “self-listening,” which means that they are

focusing on their own clever thoughts and constructing their next sentence instead of giving full attention to their conversation partner. Space limitations prevent me from elaborating on this critical topic. Check out [listen.org](http://listen.org) (the website of the International Listening Association) for significant resources and tools.

- Ask open-ended questions of your conversation partner and then step back, giving him or her a chance to speak. Ask follow-up questions and always keep in mind that “still waters run deep.” You never know what you will learn by digging just a little.

### **Networking by Speaking or Presenting**

**Introvert.** You may be asking, “Are you serious? Me? Public Speaking?” Yes, you indeed. Being hard-wired as an introvert is not a limitation. It is just one beginning point of your personality makeup. You would be surprised at the number of great public speakers and presenters who are introverts. Being an introvert has no bearing on your ability to get up before small or large groups to speak. And the road to that platform is not difficult at all.

As disclosed already, I am an ambivert leaning towards introvert. Yet, I have presented or delivered speeches on numerous occasions. I am also a trial attorney, so I regularly try cases before juries. The fact that I'm not an extrovert does not mean that I cannot engage in extroverted activities. Does it mean that it will take a little more effort? Yes. But it will also depend on activity. A loud, large, fast networking event is much different than trying a case before a jury or speaking before a large audience on a topic with which you are fully engaged. As much as the delivery of the content is an extrovert activity, even much more time was invested in the introverted activity (being in your own head and thoughts) of preparing the materials for presentation.

Moreover, being hard-wired as an introvert does not mean you can't deliver a presentation with zeal, emotion, and enthusiasm. Every Sunday (well most Sundays) I am in my church listening to my pastor deliver home run sermons before several thousand attendees. He also regularly preaches and speaks around the world. But if you listen closely to



his comments and musings, you will also hear him speak about the solitude, aloneness, and me time that he cherishes.

You, too, can join the ranks of introverted public speakers. There are lot or great thoughts you have inside. Do yourself and the world a favor by sharing them with others.

**Extrovert.** Budget time so as to arrive early and leave late. Because lawyers are typically stretched thin, they often arrive at a speaking venue with only a few moments to spare before “showtime” and then careen out of the room immediately upon completing the presentation. This defeats one of the objectives of delivering the speech, which is to create and deepen relationships with audience members in the hope of gaining a new client or developing a referral source. Arriving early gives you an opportunity to network and your “new friends” and can help with audience connection during your actual presentation. Because I make it a practice of remembering a few names, I can engage during the speech as follows: “Larry and I were chatting before we began today’s session, and he related a unique way that his firm conducts memorable real estate settlements. Larry, do you mind telling everyone about your process”? Naturally, I would have his permission before beginning this line of conversation. After he tells his story, I then ask if other attendees have something to share, and many will jump on the bandwagon since another person “went first.”

Begin with the end in mind. What is the best results you can attain from giving the presentation, aside from the satisfaction that comes with sharing your knowledge. Certainly, you would like to attract both clients and referral sources. Perhaps you would like to develop more speaking opportunities. At the end of the presentation, “make the ask.” Don’t forget to practice this portion of the speech extensively before you take the platform.

Create a system that enables you to make periodic follow-up connections with audience members. Most speakers make little effort to create or deepen relationships with attendees beyond offering to distribute business cards or brochures (which may or may not end up in the nearest waste basket). The following suggestions are designed to elicit contact information from audience members. Naturally, it is your responsibility to actually follow up. Which ones

of these suggestions would attorneys in your firm be willing to implement?

- Encourage the attendees to connect on social media while displaying a slide with icons of the lawyer’s preferred platforms (e.g., LinkedIn, Twitter).
- Extend an invitation to sign up for the firm’s newsletter by leaving business cards with the speaker or by sending an e-mail.
- Offer to send an article, checklist, or other valuable content on request.
- Mention future live or virtual educational sessions in which the attorney is a featured expert.
- Ask attendees to complete an evaluation form.

### Conclusion

Whether you fall on the extrovert, ambivert, or introvert side of the personality spectrum, you should remember this is only the starting point, not the destination. Regardless of how nature has hard-wired you, it is important that you stretch yourself to operate outside your comfort zone to explore other perspectives. The ultimate goal is to become a fully developed human being. In no way should you interpret this article as giving you an excuse to say I can’t do it, or I’m not good at that because I’m a \_\_\_\_\_vert.

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*Cedric Ashley (cedric@ashleylawfirm.com) is a sole practitioner in Princeton, New Jersey, concentrating in business litigation and employment litigation. He has more than 25 years of experience in the investigation, mediation, and litigation of disputes. Additionally, he is a Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) Certified Practitioner and is certified as a Coach in Social and Emotional Intelligence from the Institute for Social & Emotional Intelligence (ISEI).*

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*Business development strategist and veteran attorney Cynthia Sharp, Esq., works with motivated lawyers seeking to generate additional revenue for their law firms. The business development strategies and skill sets that she shares were developed and tested over a period of 30 years in practice and are constantly refined to reflect modern marketing techniques. She can be reached at cindy@thesharperlady.com or 609/923-1017.*

MINDFULNESS  
& SELF-CARE

“

My advice is the same advice that was given to me by my original partner and mentor when I went out on my own almost 40 years ago and the advice rings true today: Don't take a case when you are starting out or when business is slow just because you are desperate for business. That case will wind up being an albatross when you get busier, you will regret taking it in the first place, and the client will be dissatisfied because you will put it at the bottom of the list.

**ALAN R. OSTROWITZ, MANALAPAN, NJ**



**ADVICE FROM OUR MEMBERS**



By Lori Ann Buza

# Ten Tips on Mindfulness Practice for Successful Lawyering and a Peaceful Life

EXCERPTED FROM THE FEBRUARY 2019 EDITION OF *NJ LAWYER*

**M**indfulness practice helps attorneys develop the tools to harmonize work with personal life, and to find peace, joy, and success in both. It helps attorneys with self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-appreciation, as it fosters a richer understanding and insight into oneself and others. Growth takes time and patience, but once one integrates mindfulness practice into his or her life, the rewards are invaluable. Here are some simple and basic techniques that may help attorneys on their journeys to mindfulness for successful lawyering and a more peaceful life:

- 1. Breathe.** Stop and breathe. Take breaks from work to direct your attention to your breathing. Start with full breaths from the chest, and then shift to diaphragmatic (belly) breathing. Focus on slowly inhaling and exhaling, and observe what it does to your body in that moment. Close your eyes and notice how your lungs feel as they cleanse.
- 2. Eat.** Use your diet as an opportunity to fuel your body, not mask or treat emotion. Savor each bite as you recognize how the food energizes your body. Taste your food, appreciate the different flavors, and enjoy it.
- 3. Move.** Be sure to exercise or move your body every day. If you don't have time for regimented exercise, find a way to move your limbs and raise your heartbeat in a healthy way. Take time to engage your muscles and joints. While doing so, notice how your body operates, observe your perspiration, feel the ground beneath you. Take note of changes to your inhalation/exhalation as you move and exert.
- 4. Rest.** Devote enough time to consistent, nightly sleep and also take short rest breaks from work throughout the day. Even if it is for just a few minutes during work, find time to rest your mind and your body. Close your eyes and develop a peaceful awareness of quiet. After rest periods, consciously acknowledge how you feel recharged.
- 5. Stretch.** When you wake and at bedtime, take time to stretch your muscles, expand your chest, and open your body. Stretch your limbs, including your fingers and toes. In stretching, reach beyond what you believe you can do. Be aware of your body as it relates to the physical environment around it.
- 6. De-Stress.** You may do so with music, art, dance, or a hobby you enjoy that makes you temporarily forget about the stresses of work or problems in your life. Prioritize joy in your life and make time for your healthy desires. Be fully present in that moment of enjoyment. Make a point to smile during these times; notice and enjoy how your forehead, eyes, and shoulders soften when you smile.



- 7. Love.** Make a conscious effort to love not only special people in your life, but also nature and the beauty around you in the world. Moreover, love yourself; one may only love and respect others after first developing a true love of self. Each day, allow a feeling of love for yourself to surface in your being and allow it to simmer there as you experience it.
- 8. Accept.** Accept yourself, including anything that society may identify as ‘flaws.’ Recognize that you are special and unique exactly the way you are. Accept your shortcomings and problems as opportunities for growth and learning.
- 9. Appreciate.** Feel gratitude for your life, health, opportunities, and everything that makes you, uniquely you. Be grateful for each moment in your life, with a conscious awareness and appreciation of those moments as you live them. Though after-reflection is also important, true appreciation should be felt in real time. Becoming in-tune with what each of your five senses is currently experiencing brings greater life fulfillment.

- 10. Meditate.** Meditating and removing thought from the mind for a short period of time (15–20 minutes) each day may enable one to find greater peace and grow in the above nine areas. Growth will come silently, just like the time one takes to find it. It is important to empty one’s ‘cup’ so that it may be refilled each day on the path to mindfulness, wisdom, and peace.

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*Lori Ann Buza is an attorney with KS Branigan Law, P.C., and a tenured professor of law at Saint Peter’s University, chairing its law and accountancy department. She is also certified in mindfulness (levels I, II, III and master), personal training, group fitness, and yoga, and is an accomplished martial artist.*





# NEW JERSEY LAWYERS

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(NJLAP)



The New Jersey Lawyers Assistance Program serves all attorneys, judges and law students in the State of New Jersey with free and confidential help for a broad range of problems and personal issues, including:

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### **If you Know a Lawyer in Trouble, Call for a Confidential Consultation**

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WHAT EVERY ATTORNEY  
IN NEW JERSEY NEEDS  
TO KNOW

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I recommend thoughtful consideration of the software tools you expect to rely upon for the next three to five years. Focus on relatively new offerings from stable companies. This will ensure that your technology does not become outdated too quickly and that the technology is reliable. It is particularly important to have a plan for storing, accessing (in office and remotely), securing, encrypting and backing up your electronic documents.

**ANTHONY WILKINSON, EAST BRUNSWICK**



**ADVICE FROM OUR MEMBERS**



# INFORMATION ABOUT

# ATTORNEY ANNUAL

# REGISTRATION AND PAYMENT



The Supreme Court requires every member of the bar to annually register, update personal information, and pay the applicable fees, provide pro bono information, and certify compliance with mandatory continuing legal education.



## NJSBA MEMBER PERK ALERT

NJSBA members stay in-the-know on of notices from the court, notable decisions, news from the *New Jersey Law Journal* and other must-have information with our Daily Briefing emails.

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# MANDATORY CONTINUING

# LEGAL EDUCATION

(MCLE)



All New Jersey active lawyers must complete 24 credit hours of continuing legal education every two years, at least four of which must be in ethics and/or professionalism. In addition, newly-admitted lawyers have specific additional requirements.

## How do I know my deadline for completing MCLE?

MCLE deadlines are determined by your birth month.

- If your birthday is between January 1 and June 30, you are in Compliance Reporting Group 1.
- If your birthday is between July 1 and December 31, you are in Compliance Reporting Group 2.



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LEARN MORE ON THE NEW JERSEY  
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# PRO BONO REQUIREMENTS



In the 1992 case *Madden v. Delran*, the New Jersey Supreme Court reaffirmed the bar's duty to take on pro bono cases, which are assigned through the Administrative Office of the Courts. Attorneys who can certify that they have performed at least 25 hours of voluntary qualifying pro bono service are exempt from taking one of these assigned cases for the following year.

The New Jersey State Judiciary keeps a list of approved organizations where you can do pro bono work. You can access the pro bono portal here:



[NEW JERSEY JUDICIARY PRO BONO ORGANIZATIONS PORTAL](#)



## NJSBA MEMBER PERK ALERT

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[MILITARY LEGAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM](#)

The American Bar Association also has a significant resources for identifying pro bono opportunities. See more here:



[AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION: PRO BONO & PUBLIC SERVICE](#)



# WHAT IS IOLTA?



IOLTA stands for Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts. IOLTA is a way to improve access to justice for those living in poverty. The IOLTA system pools interest from lawyer trust accounts to support improvements to the justice system and provide civil legal aid to the pool.

A lawyer who receives funds that belong to a client must place those funds in a trust account separate from the lawyer's own money. Client funds are deposited in an IOLTA account when the funds cannot otherwise earn enough income for the client to be more than the cost of securing that income. The client—and not the IOLTA program—receives the interest if the funds are large enough or will be held for a long enough period of time to generate net interest that is sufficient to allocate directly to the client.



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Attorneys in New Jersey need to keep track of a lot. NJSBA membership provides discounts on a wide variety of office management, cloud-based storage, technology and other products designed to make keeping on top of your obligations a breeze. See them all here:

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## Who needs to worry about having an IOLTA Account?

If you are a sole practitioner, or if you are employed by a law firm of any size **even if you are not a signatory on a trust account**, or if you have a part-time or occasional practice, you need to satisfy the IOLTA account requirement.

Other exemptions include:

- Government attorneys who cannot, as a condition of employment, have a separate practice
- In-house counsels to corporations who cannot, as a condition of employment, have a separate practice
- Attorneys who have been admitted to practice for 50 years or more;
- Attorneys on full-time active duty with the armed forces, VISTA, or the Peace Corps and not engaging in any way in private practice, but are considered in all respects inactive New Jersey attorneys; and
- Attorneys who have retired completely from the practice of law, but are considered in all respects inactive New Jersey attorneys.



# FORMS



The New Jersey Judiciary has an extensive collection of forms for everything from handling matters in the Appellate Division, Tax Court, family court, civil division, foreclosure, and more.

Check out the library here:



## NJSBA MEMBER PERK ALERT

NJSBA members have access to a tremendous resource in CommunityNet, a private online community/social network where you can ask colleagues questions and connect with mentors and friends.

**NJSBA  
CommunityNet**



**LEGAL PRACTICE FORMS**





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[NEW JERSEY COURT SYSTEM](#)

You can get directions to all of the state's federal courthouses from here:



[STATE FEDERAL COURTHOUSES: DIRECTIONS](#)



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[PERSONAL BENEFITS](#)



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The New Jersey courts have launched eCourts for several types of cases, including civil, criminal and tax court. Find out more here:



[NEW JERSEY eCOURTS](#)



## **NJSBA MEMBER PERK ALERT**

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The federal district courts use an e-filing system called PACER, learn more about it here:



[PACER](#)

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I would advise the attorney to join the NJSBA Solo & Small Firm Section and any other sections that will be relevant to the attorney’s practice. I would advise the attorney to utilize CommunityNet for questions that he/she may have in regards to their files.”

Also, “I wish I sought out a good mentor prior to starting my solo practice.”

**ANASTASIA TSINETAKES, MOORESTOWN**



**ADVICE FROM OUR MEMBERS**



# MORE NJSBA MEMBER PERK ALERTS



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Through Decisis, NJSBA members have free access to the complete New Jersey law library, including cases of the New Jersey Supreme Court, New Jersey Appellate Division, and New Jersey Law Division, as well as cases from the U.S. Supreme Court and the U.S. District Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. It's the ideal legal research solution for solo and small firms.



## Business and Practice Solutions

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# MORE NJSBA MEMBER PERK ALERTS (CONTINUED)



## Volunteer Opportunities

The New Jersey State Bar Association, New Jersey State Bar Foundation and New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education offer opportunities for attorneys to volunteer in a variety of ways, including mock trial programs with students, speaking engagements in the community and more.

The NJSBA will train you to be a community leader ready to give presentations to local groups about the importance of the legal system and civics in our democracy. The Benchmark Civics Project is a joint project of the New Jersey State Bar Association and New Jersey Judiciary, created to foster a better public understanding of civics and the essential role the courts play in a vibrant democracy. In addition, lawyers that participate in the project can receive professionalism continuing legal education credits (CLE).

Find out more here:



**BENCHMARKS CIVICS PROJECT**

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**NJSBF VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**



# MORE NJSBA MEMBER PERK ALERTS (CONTINUED)



## CommunityNET

All NJSBA section and committee members can access private online communities to ask colleagues questions, learn about job opportunities and connect with mentors and friends. The NJSBA Solo and Small Firm section has an **exceptionally active online community**—small firm or not, you will never feel alone. Learn more about it here or in a webinar:



[NJSBA CommunityNET](#)

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## Contact Us

Want To learn more about membership in the New Jersey State Bar Association? Contact the membership department at [membership@njsba.com](mailto:membership@njsba.com).

“

My advice to anyone starting a new firm: if you have or will have one or more employees, make sure you hire a payroll service to handle payroll and all related tax filings. It will be impossible for you to practice law and build your firm while at the same time trying to handle these confusing and tedious HR tasks. Leave it to the pros.

**JOSEPH W. COIRO, SOMERSET**

One. join the NJSBA Solo and Small Firm group; Two, keep overhead down, do not sign up with every vendor in town; Three, join local county bar and put name on referral list.

**JOHN C. UYAMADU,  
CEDAR KNOLLS**

First piece of advice to attorneys starting their own solo practice: Learn recordkeeping Rule 1:21-6 and seek competent advice on how to properly maintain your attorney trust and business account books and records.”

**JOHN MCGILL, EDGEWATER**

Take a look at what tasks can be assigned to a paralegal or a secretary and then hire that person, whether as a 1099 or in-house. There are many options depending on what service you need and how many hours you want. Hiring an independent contractor paralegal has changed my practice and my stress level.”

**AYESHA KRISHNAN HAMILTON,  
PRINCETON**

If the attorney does not have a specialty, then, find a very narrow niche (e.g., Liquor License Law (perhaps a subset like restaurants), Cannabis Law, Gun Law (perhaps a subset like permit denials) and become known as an expert in the field.

**BARRY F. GARTENBERG,  
SPRINGFIELD**

What is the one piece of advice you would give an attorney contemplating the launch of a solo or small practice? It's not an easy decision, but you must decide one way or the other, push onward, and never look back. Also, don't hesitate to hire good attorneys and staff sooner rather than later.

**RAJEH A. SAADEH, SOMERVILLE**

”

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