

PRACTICE POINTERS

Free Practice Advice: Another Benefit from the State Bar's Handle | BAR Practice Management Program

The Handle | BAR practice management program offers a multitude of resources for attorneys looking to start their own practices, manage, build and protect existing practices, and who are transitioning into a solo/small practice – or who may be looking to leave the practice of law entirely. Each phase of an attorney's career comes with questions and decision-making about the business of practicing law. The state bar's Handle | BAR program now offers free access to a Practice Advisor to get your business practice questions answered.

Shain Manuele, who was recently hired to take on the Handle | BAR Practice Advisor role, has some advice for lawyers starting their careers.

1. Based on your career, what advice would you give to new attorneys starting out today?

When I graduated from law school, I always had a desire to be my own boss and have my own firm. As a young attorney, I knew I had a lot to learn, and like many students who finish law school, I was tasked with finding a job or starting a practice. I chose to start my career with a firm in rural Nevada surrounded by very good attorneys who were very supportive and willing to help a young attorney learn the ropes. Given the nature of rural areas with their low volume of attorneys, a young attorney can

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gain experience in a variety of cases and see what areas of law they enjoy and what areas they don't want to get involved in.

2. How did you build your practice?

I am a solo practitioner and my predominate area of practice is in criminal defense. One of the ways I have built my practice is by engaging in contract work to provide representation to indigent defendants. That, plus the nature of practicing in smaller areas, means you get an opportunity to do a little of everything.

3. What are you looking forward to sharing with new attorneys as the Practice Advisor?

I truly enjoy helping new attorneys learn how to begin their career in the legal profession. I've heard people say law school teaches attorneys how to think, but it doesn't do much for teaching them how to practice law. When a newly admitted lawyer graduates law school, they have all these wonderful new analytical abilities but haven't been trained on how to make them work in the legal field or how to run a practice. I was fortunate enough to have attorneys help me as I started my career, and I've always felt a need to pay it forward.

4. Dealing with coronavirus has certainly been a challenge. What steps did you take to make your practice work well in this environment?

When an attorney makes the decision to open a firm, they encounter many

different types of challenges to keep that firm operating. The greatest challenges many lawyers today have faced are the challenges that have been presented because of the coronavirus pandemic. In order to keep a practice functioning well, attorneys need to spend a great deal of time not only staying up to date with current restrictions, but also with advances in technology to help keep people connected. For example, I worked closely with the rural courts in deciding how we were going to handle criminal representation with the restrictions. As a result, I have been able to plan accordingly.

This is one of the big concepts that I relay to new attorneys, that running a law firm is a lot more than just practicing law and representing clients. The business aspect is time consuming and requires a great deal of attention, often outside of regular office hours.

5. Can you share the best advice you received for your career?

The best advice I've received is, "Don't put off for tomorrow, what you can do today." Attorneys have a lot on their plate, especially if they are running a firm, and many of the things that need to be done are time sensitive. As I've practiced, I've found my quality of life improve as I've strived to follow that advice.

6. What comments do you have for those reading this?

I would like to ask the experienced attorneys to be more aware of young attorneys and the struggles they are facing. We all understand the difficulties associated with practicing law and a little advice or encouragement can go a long way in a young attorney's career.