

PRACTICE POINTERS

HANDLE|BAR Incubator Takes Flight

BY SHERI LONG, HANDLE|BAR PRACTICE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

If you look up the definition of “incubator” for business, you’ll find “a workspace created to offer startups and new ventures access to the resources they need, all under one roof.” Most incubators are temporary and expect their tenants to move out in a finite amount of time. The Handle|BAR incubator (HBI) program lives up to this definition and more. The State Bar of Nevada’s incubator is designed for attorneys with an entrepreneurial spirit who want to open a solo practice, serve low- and modest-means Nevadans, and learn the ropes of the business side of running a firm.

There are four attorneys who have joined the program for its inaugural class: **Trevor Hartzell**, Trevor Hartzell Law in Reno, trevorhartzell.com; **Grayson Moulton**, Moulton Law in Las Vegas, moultonlawlv.com; **Benjamin Pearce**, Reno; and **Edward Wynder**, Mustang Law Firm in Las Vegas, mustanglawfirm.com.

The first month of HBI was jam-packed with education on setting up these attorneys’ solo practices. Topics and invited guests included:

- General planning for a law firm presented by Matt Saltzman, Saltzman Muga Dushoff;
- Top 10 rules to run your business presented by Eric Dobberstein, Dobberstein Law Group;
- Developing a business plan and budget, with a one-page business plan presented by Jay Kamlet, LawBank;
- Determining the organization structure of your practice;
- Creation of business entity and licensing;
- Setting up IOLTA accounts presented by Sarah Guindy, Bank of Nevada;
- Malpractice insurance basics and cybersecurity presented by Mark Bassingthwaite, ALPS Insurance;
- Practice management software overviews;
- Legal research software training with Fastcase;
- Fee agreements;
- Marketing basics;
- Client intake;
- General accounting advice presented by Archie McRimmon, CPA; and
- Pro bono service and access to justice with Chief Justice James Hardesty and Justice Kristina Pickering.

The incubator has also become a community that fosters collaboration among the participants, and the exchanging of ideas and experiences. Shain Manuele, the practice management advisor, brings his years of expertise to the program and contributes to this community by sharing many of his own learnings from setting up his firm, and he is readily available to discuss and advise on any topic that arises.

Another component of being in the incubator is serving pro bono and modest-means clients. To facilitate this service, HBI participants are encouraged to take modest-means cases through the state bar’s Lawyer Referral Service, and they will hear from statewide legal aid organizations on how they serve the community and how HBI attorneys can gain experience through pro bono work.

In the coming month, the topics covered will include lawyer well-being, client lawyer relationships; conflicts of interest; client relations; diversity, equity, and inclusion; and the benefits of joining a section.

A new incubator class is launching at the end of June 2021. If you would like to learn more or apply you can visit nvbar.org/incubator. The deadline for applications is Monday, May 31. You can also call Sheri Long, practice management director, at 702-317-1454 to get more information about the incubator.

What the participants are saying about the program:

“There is a gap between learning the practice of law and learning business and law practice management. The incubator program’s access to the state bar’s educational resources as well as experienced firm owners from several practice areas has given me more confidence in taking this big personal step.”

– Edward Wynder



“Handle | Bar is an invaluable tool to any solo practitioner early in their formation or contemplating going solo in Nevada.”

– Trevor Hartzell



“I have found the incubator program to be invaluable as I have ventured off on my own. Access to industry standard tools (Clio, Fastcase, CLEs, etc.) at reduced or no cost has made the leap that much easier to make. Additionally, the opportunity to routinely meet with, and bounce ideas off of, fellow attorneys in the same boat has helped me work out several ideas and strategies I am currently implementing.”

– Grayson Moulton



“The incubator program has been an amazing experience, and has helped me meet and network with people I would not have met otherwise. I feel now confident in opening my own firm because of the tools and resources made available to me.”

– Benjamin Pearce

