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LawBiz® TIPS – Week of April 12, 2011

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This week I am at the [ABA TECHSHOW®](#) in Chicago, learning about and using the latest and greatest technology aids for lawyers.

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Pain and Priorities

In recent weeks, I've been receiving a larger number of calls from lawyers around the country. They're in more pain than usual, pain about tight cash flow, about too few matters and clients to keep them occupied, about the stress of running their own practice. In fact, one lawyer called me because he understands that lawyers are running a business, not just a "practice." And the operation needs help from someone who can look at the business as a whole unit. In fact, he said that his stress was caused by the chaos inherent in being both the front office and the back office at the same time. He needs help setting his priorities.

Setting Business Priorities

Most lawyers who claim they have too little time, or are overwhelmed by the need to balance practice time with practice management time, generally either fail to make a list of priorities, hop around any list they do make, or allow themselves to be distracted by too many other tasks. The result is the dreaded phenomenon of procrastination, and the root cause is that lawyers simply do not prioritize. The way to set priorities is for the lawyer to define the self-consequences if business priorities are not achieved.

What About Multitasking?

Just as there is no such thing as "life / work balance," (see another commentary of mine on this subject), there is no such thing as multitasking. You can only do one thing at a time; you may be able to do many things fast sequentially, but you're only doing one thing at a time. Chaos is created when you fail to have your priorities in order so that you can do sequential tasks effectively.

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An example from a different context is that we see with one eye. But most of us move our eyes so fast that we never notice this. We think we're looking at the horizon with two eyes at the same time.

Hire a Coach

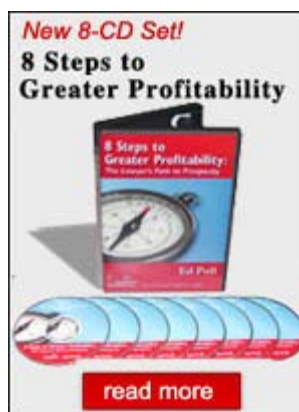
So, too, in the practice of law, successful lawyers are able to organize themselves well to do multiple tasks sequentially without the chaos. Acting as your own time management conscience for operational matters is difficult. The more practical way to get priorities established is to work with a coach and have the coach provide accountability. Call me if you want to discuss this further.

8 Steps to Greater Profitability

The Lawyer's Path to Prosperity

Are you frustrated with how your law firm or practice is running? Are you looking for ways to jump-start your business? Do you want to make the dream of starting your own successful firm a reality?

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LawBiz® Management
421 Howland Canal
Venice, California 90291-4619
www.lawbiz.com
edpoll@LawBiz.com

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