

[Law Firm Marketing: ABA Wants Educators to Provide More Practical Training](#)

By: [Stephen Fairley](#)

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Last week, the ABA House of Delegates adopted a resolution urging law schools to better prepare students for the “real-life experience” of practicing law and for CLE providers to help bridge the gap between education theory and real-life practice.

Here’s the resolution:

RESOLVED, That the American Bar Association, take steps to assure that law schools, law firms, law examiners, CLE providers and others concerned with continued professional development provide the knowledge, skills, values, habits and traits that make up the successful modern lawyer.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the American Bar Association urges legal education providers to implement curricular programs intended to develop practice ready lawyers including, but not limited to enhanced capstone and clinical courses that include client meetings and court appearances.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the constituent bodies of the American Bar Association consider the requirements for the success of future lawyers as they carry out their responsibilities.

As I’ve said many times: law schools are great at teaching their students how to *think* like lawyers, but fail miserably at teaching them how to actually *be* lawyers.

If the 50+ comments to this [announcement](#) on the ABA Journal website are any indication, this is a long time coming. One attorney from Atlanta posts: “I have NO IDEA what I am doing.”

Some commenters posit that law schools have traditionally relied on law firms to provide the practical knowledge to newbies. However, the old model of getting a law firm job fresh out of law school is no longer the case, as noted by a [Wall Street Journal article](#) late last week on how the downturn in the economy has affected the hiring of law school graduates, who are increasingly going straight to work (when they can find it) for companies that are now hiring direct from law schools.

I have been teaching law firm marketing and business management to attorneys for years through state and local bar associations and our own Rainmaker Institute programs, including the [Rainmaker Retreat](#). In a vast majority of these sessions, at least one attorney will always ask me why they don’t teach these principles in law school.

Apparently, more and more attorneys are finding their voices when it comes to demanding more of the legal academy, which they accuse of being disconnected from the

actual practice of law. With crushing debt loads, more and more law school graduates are finding it difficult at best to “learn on the job” what they actually need to know to start and sustain a successful legal career.

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Stephen Fairley is a nationally recognized law firm marketing expert and has helped more than 7,000 attorneys from hundreds of law firms across the country to discover the secrets of generating more referrals and filling their practice. He is the international best-selling author of 10 books and 5 audio programs.

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