

## 12 GREAT QUESTIONS TO ASK A MENTOR

**Delivered positively, and with some advance preparation by you, a few of these are enough to focus on in a session with a mentor:**

1. There is a lot to building a practice... What do you wish you had known when you were first getting started?
2. So how is your practice?
3. How did you determine your type of practice? What should I consider if I'm opening an X law practice in X town?
4. What kind of business structure would work well for the type of practice I'm considering?
5. Do you do any volunteering, in what ways has volunteering and pro bono work helped your career? Would you recommend that a newer attorney become involved?
6. How are your kids/hobbies/latest technological discovery?
7. What are some great books you've read that might help me with my X skills?
8. I am concerned about \_\_\_\_\_... is this something I should be focusing on now? How would you recommend I tackle it?
9. What CLE's would you recommend?
10. What groups would you recommend I join, I am already a member of \_\_\_\_\_?
11. A particular opposing counsel is difficult to work with because \_\_\_\_\_, I try not to let it get to me, but what would you recommend?
12. I have a client that is difficult to work with because \_\_\_\_\_ - how do you tackle difficult clients?

## SAMPLE EMAIL TO A PROSPECTIVE MENTOR

### (IF YOU ALREADY MET THE POTENTIAL MENTOR)

To: \_\_\_\_\_

I enjoyed meeting you briefly at \_\_\_\_\_ event. As a newer practitioner I am glad that I can rely on the more experienced attorneys in our field for insight. If you are available in the next couple of weeks I would like to meet with you over lunch, or coffee (Happy Hour if it went really well) and follow-up on a couple of questions I am currently tackling.

I am free \_\_\_\_\_ dates/times. Let me know if those work for you. I am located near your office / I am frequently downtown, so we can meet in that area.

Thank you again, and I look forward to continuing our conversation.

Noah K. Williams

Attorney at Law

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**(IF YOU HAVE NEVER MET THE POTENTIAL MENTOR)**

**To:** \_\_\_\_\_

As a newer practitioner in our field I frequently meet with more experienced attorneys to discuss how to develop and build a great practice. \_\_\_\_\_ (referral) gave me your name as a great person to sit down with and discuss \_\_\_\_\_. (OR your name came up when I was looking for \_\_\_\_\_.) I am glad that I can rely on the more experienced attorneys in our field for insight.

If you are available in the next couple of weeks I would like to meet with you over lunch, or coffee. I have a couple of general questions about \_\_\_\_\_ and I would appreciate any insight you can give me.

I am free \_\_\_\_\_ dates/times. Let me know if those work for you. I am located near your office / I am frequently downtown, so we can meet in that area. You should also feel free to call me at \_\_\_\_\_ if it is easier to coordinate via the phone.

Thank you again, and I look forward to continuing our conversation.

**Noah K. Williams**

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## SOURCES OF HELP

### WSBA SERVICES

An overview of WSBA services (See <http://www.wsba.org/> for detailed information and updates).

**Addiction Counseling:** Confidential assistance with questions or concerns about alcohol and drug problems. Call 206-733-5988; 800-945-9722, ext. 5988.

**Alternative Dispute Resolution Program (ADR):** Provides a procedure for settling disputes without litigation through mediation and fee arbitration. 206-733-5923; 800-945-9722, ext. 5923.

**Career Transition Issues:** Confidential assistance with job or career management, or transitioning out of the law. 206-727-8269; 800-945-9722, ext. 8269.

**Casemaker:** Online research library provided free to WSBA members. Access through [www.wsba.org](http://www.wsba.org), click on Casemaker logo on the right sidebar. For help, call 206-733-5914; 800-945-9722, ext. 5914.

**Computer Software:** For help, call 206-733-5914; 800-945-9722, ext. 5914.

**Computer Clinic:** Classes to help you make the most of software you already own. Call 206-733-5914; 800-945-9722, ext. 5914.

**Depression:** Confidential assistance. Call 206-727-8268; 800-945-9722, ext. 8268.

**Diversion Program:** Option for less serious disciplinary grievances. Goals are to educate, rehabilitate, provide restitution, and protect the profession and the public. Call 206-727-8267; 800-945-9722, ext. 8267.

**Ethics Line:** Confidential opportunity to discuss prospective ethical dilemmas. 206-727-8284; 800-945-9722, ext. 8284.

**Ethics Opinions:** Ethics Opinions are approved by the Board of Governors and the Rules of Professional Conduct Committee. They address ethical concerns of the members. [www.wsba.org/](http://www.wsba.org/) .

**Fee Arbitration:** Program for resolving disputes over fees without litigation. 206-733-5923; 800-945-9722, ext. 5923.

**Financial Management:** Call the Law Office Management Assistance Program at 206-733-5914; 800-945-9722, ext. 5914.

**Judicial Assistance Service Program:** Confidential assistance for judges facing personal or professional challenges. Call 206-727-8265; 800-945-9722, ext. 8265.

**Lawyers Assistance Program (LAP):** A resource for lawyers who want to function at their best. Call 206-727-8268; 800-945-9722, ext. 8268.

**Lawyer Services Department (LaSD):** The WSBA department housing the Lawyers Assistance Program, Judicial Assistance Service Program, Law Office Management Assistance Program, Professional Responsibility Program, and Alternative Dispute Resolution Program. Call 206-727-8268; 800-945-9722, ext. 8268.

**Law Student Assistance:** Personal and professional counseling for third-year law students through the Lawyers Assistance Program. Call 206-727-8268; 800-945-9722, ext. 8268.

**Life Balance Issues:** The tension between work and personal life, including family, friends, avocation, recreation, and spiritual development.

**Law Office Management Assistance Program (LOMAP):** Assistance with the nuts and bolts of running the business of a law practice. Call 206-733-5914; 800-945-9722, ext. 5914, or visit [www.lomap.org](http://www.lomap.org).

- **“Starting Your Practice” links** lead to the information you need for establishing a practice based in Seattle. (See your local municipality for its requirements.) Information on business licenses, office space, court procedures, client file retention, mentorship, WSBA-sponsored **insurance programs**, and request to establish an **IOLTA** account.
- **Law Office in a Box for \$79.** Includes forms, published materials, information, examples, and an hour of LOMAP consultation time

**Mediation:** Call 206-733-5923; 800-945-9722, ext. 5923.

**Mental Health Counseling:** Confidential assistance with relationship issues, depression, anxiety, addictions, and other concerns through the Lawyers Assistance Program. Call 206-727-8268; 800-945-9722, ext. 8268.

**Office Management:** Call LOMAP at 206-733-5914; 800-945-9722 ext. 5914, or visit [www.lomap.org](http://www.lomap.org).

**Peer Counselors:** Lawyers trained to support and encourage other lawyers. Call 206-727-8268; 800-945-9722, ext. 8268.

**The Professional Responsibility Program (PRP)** concerns providing ethical guidance to members through the Ethics Line, issuance of ethics opinions, and continuing legal education presentations.

**Solo Attorney Help:** Call LOMAP at 206-733-5914; 800-945-9722 ext. 5914.

**Stress Management:** Call LAP at 206-727-8268; 800-945-9722, ext. 8268.

## **PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

### **WSBA Sections** <http://www.wsba.org/>

Administrative Law	Indian Law
Alternative Dispute Resolution	Intellectual Property
Animal Law	International Practice
Antitrust, Consumer Protection and Unfair Business Practices	Juvenile Law
Business Law	Labor and Employment Law
Civil Rights Law	Legal Assistance to Military Personnel Litigation
Construction Law	Real Property, Probate and Trust
Corporate Counsel	Senior Lawyers
Creditor Debtor Rights	Sexual Orientation and Gender Identification Legal Issues (SOGIL)
Criminal Law	Solo and Small Practice
Elder Law	Taxation
Environmental and Land Use Law	World Peace Through Law
Family Law	
Health Law	

### **ABA Groups and Sections** [http://www.americanbar.org/groups/view\\_all\\_groups.html](http://www.americanbar.org/groups/view_all_groups.html)

### **County Bar Associations (many have young lawyers divisions)**

<http://www.wsba.org/>

### **Minority Bar Associations in Washington**

<http://www.wsba.org/>

- Asian Bar Association of Washington
- The Cardozo Society
- Filipino Lawyers of Washington
- GLBT Bar Association (QLaw)
- Korean American Bar Association
- Latina/Latino Bar Association of Washington
- Loren Miller Bar Association
- Middle Eastern Legal Association of Washington
- Mother Attorneys Mentoring Association of Seattle
- Northwest Indian Bar Association
- Pierce County Minority Bar Association

South Asian Bar Association of Washington  
Vietnamese American Bar Association of Washington  
Washington Attorneys with Disabilities Association  
Washington Women Lawyers

### **Non-legal Professional Associations Related to Practice Areas and Potential Clients.**

#### **Online association directories:**

- Weddles Association List <http://www.weddles.com/associations/index.cfm>
- Gateway to Associations Online  
<http://www.asaecenter.org/Community/Directories/AssociationSearch.cfm>
- Associations on the Net <http://www.ipl.org/div/aon/>
- *Encyclopedia of Associations*. Find organizations and associations offline through this library reference book, published by Gale Research, Inc.

### **50 WEB RESOURCES – with leads to recommended vendors and consultants\***

(Excerpted from the July 2009 ABA article by Jim Calloway and Allison C. Shields, “50 Web Resources for the Suddenly Solo Lawyer.”)

#### **Great Articles to Read – Starting a Practice in Tough Economic Times**

Weather the Storm, by Gerry Riskin and Robert Millard

[http://cbanational.rogers.dgtlpub.com/2008/2008-05-31/pdf/weather\\_the\\_storm.pdf](http://cbanational.rogers.dgtlpub.com/2008/2008-05-31/pdf/weather_the_storm.pdf)

The National, Canadian Bar Association, (April/May 2008 issue)

What Should You Do Now? A Roundtable Discussion on Law Practice in a Time of Great Economic Turmoil Moderated and Edited By Dennis Kennedy

<http://www.abanet.org/lpm/lpt/articles/mgt11082.shtml>

Law Practice Today (November 2008)

Going Solo on a Budget by Dennis Kennedy, ABA Journal (April 2009)

[http://www.abajournal.com/magazine/going\\_solo\\_on\\_a\\_budget/](http://www.abajournal.com/magazine/going_solo_on_a_budget/)

Teaming Up, Starting Anew by Dennis Kennedy, ABA Journal (May 2009)

[http://www.abajournal.com/magazine/teaming\\_up\\_starting\\_anew/](http://www.abajournal.com/magazine/teaming_up_starting_anew/)

Law Office Start-up: Law Office on a Shoestring, by Sheila Blackford

<https://www.osbar.org/publications/bulletin/08oct/practice.html>

Oregon State Bar Bulletin - October 2008 - Managing Your Practice

Weather the Storm: Law Firm Risk Management in Hard Times, by Mark J. Fucile  
<https://www.osbar.org/publications/bulletin/09may/practice.html>  
Oregon State Bar Bulletin - May 2009 - Managing Your Practice

Managing Anxiety in Uncertain Times  
[http://www.oaap.org/data/documents/insight/Anxiety\\_march09.pdf](http://www.oaap.org/data/documents/insight/Anxiety_march09.pdf)  
Oregon Attorney Assistance Program In Sight Newsletter - March 2009

Choices: Law Firm Billing and Accounting Software, by Dee Crocker  
<https://www.osbar.org/publications/bulletin/08dec/practice.html>  
Oregon State Bar Bulletin - December 2008 - Managing Your Practice

Business Competency for Lawyers, A LawBiz Management Special Report  
By Edward Poll  
[http://www.lawbiz.com/aba\\_bus\\_comp.html](http://www.lawbiz.com/aba_bus_comp.html)  
(60 page free downloadable e-book)

How to Take Control of Your Practice By Creating Vision and Mission Statement  
By Allison Shields  
[www.abanet.org/genpractice/newsletter/lawtrends/0602/business/visionstatements.html](http://www.abanet.org/genpractice/newsletter/lawtrends/0602/business/visionstatements.html)

Practicing Law in Tough Economic Times  
By Jim Calloway  
<http://www.okbar.org/members/map/articles/2009/011009.htm>  
(Oklahoma Bar Journal, January, 2009)

More Thoughts on Practicing Law in Tough Economic Times  
By Jim Calloway  
<http://www.okbar.org/members/map/articles/2009/021409.htm>  
(Oklahoma Bar Journal, February, 2009)

In a Tough Economy, the Importance of Effective Client Screening  
By Deborah E. Gillis  
<http://www.abanet.org/lpm/lpt/articles/mgt11084.shtml>  
(Law Practice Today, November, 2008)

LawPRO Magazine Surviving the Slide: Dealing with the Tough Economy (Winter 2008/2009)  
<http://www.practicepro.ca/LawPROMag/2008LawPROMag.asp#lawpro4>

Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers (Massachusetts) Spring 2009 newsletter  
Theme issue on Responding to Trying Times  
<http://lclma.org/contentnews.htm?sid=27>



## Blogs

Robert Ambrogi's Law Sites keeps lawyers up to date on websites for lawyers:

<http://www.legaline.com/lawsites.html>

David Bilinsky's Thoughtful Legal Management discusses law firm finance, profitability and the use of technology in law practice. <http://thoughtfullaw.com/>

JD Bliss: <http://www.jdblissblog.com/> helps lawyers balance work and life

Jim Calloway's Law Practice Tips blog talks about practice management, the Internet and technology: <http://jimcalloway.typepad.com>

Look to Counsel to Counsel for all things related to legal careers:

<http://www.counselltocounsel.com/>

Ellen Freedman's Law Practice Management blog helps lawyers manage the business side of their practice: <http://pa-lawpracticemanagement.com/>

Matt Homann's the [non]billable hour: <http://thenonbillablehour.typepad.com/> discusses innovation and productivity

Dan Hull's <http://www.whataboutclients.com/> blog (Don't miss his 12 rules of client service [http://www.whataboutclients.com/archives/2006/04/the\\_12\\_rules\\_of\\_1.html](http://www.whataboutclients.com/archives/2006/04/the_12_rules_of_1.html))

Tom Kane's Legal Marketing Blog is dedicated to lawyer marketing in any size firm:

<http://legalmarketingblog.com>

Dennis Kennedy's Dennis Kennedy.com focuses mostly on legal technology:

<http://www.denniskennedy.com/blog/>

Erik Mazzone's Law Practice Matters Blog shows lawyers how to practice smart:

<http://www.lawpracticematters.com/>

Tom Mighell's Inter-Alia blog is among other things, an internet legal research weblog:

<http://inter-alia.net/>

Home office lawyering is the focus at Chuck Newton Rides the Third Wave:

<http://stayviolation.typepad.com/chucknewton/> Other blogs focusing on the home office phenomenon include: Home Office Lawyer:

[http://gdgrifflaw.typepad.com/home\\_office\\_lawyer/](http://gdgrifflaw.typepad.com/home_office_lawyer/) and Home Office Warrior:

<http://homeofficewarrior.com/>

Ed Poll's Law Biz Blog is a practical guide for lawyers: <http://lawbizblog.com/>

Gerry Riskin's Amazing Firms, Amazing Practices covers legal practices from all angles:  
<http://www.gerryriskin.com/>

Allison Shields' Legal Ease Blog helps lawyers create more productive, profitable and enjoyable law practices: [http://legalease.blogs.com/legal\\_ease\\_blog](http://legalease.blogs.com/legal_ease_blog) (Additional articles from Allison can be found at: <http://www.lawyermeardown.com/articles.html> )

### **Guides, Checklists and Other Sets of Resources**

Carolyn Elefant's MyShingle blog ([www.myshingle.com](http://www.myshingle.com)) has long been recognized as a premiere resource for solo and small firm lawyers. See her resources and information for solos (includes forms and checklists for solos or those starting a law practice) <http://sites.google.com/site/myshinglebarreview/Home/soloformania> and her online guide to starting a law practice: <http://www.myshingle.com/2008/01/resources/online-guide/>

Maryland State Bar Association  
Economic Resource Guide  
<http://www.msba.org/departments/membership/newmemben/empresources/default.asp>

Starting Your Own Practice (Florida Bar)  
<http://tinyurl.com/lrpmcm>

Oklahoma Bar Association  
Starting a Law Practice Web Directory  
<http://www.okbar.org/members/map/practice.htm>

Checklist for Setting Up a New Law Office (Alabama Bar)  
[http://www.alabar.org/pmap/articles/office\\_checklist.pdf](http://www.alabar.org/pmap/articles/office_checklist.pdf)

Checklist for Starting a Law Practice (Missouri Bar)  
<http://members.mobar.org/pdfs/lpm/checklist.pdf>

practicePro's "Managing" series of booklets  
<http://www.practicepro.ca/managingbooklets/default.asp>  
Eight great downloadable booklets on managing your law practice. Your attention is directed to #6 "Managing the finances of your practice" where their sample law firm budget (in PDF or Excel) is their most popular download.

Unlock Your Potential: Hanging Out Your Shingle: A 79 page e-book in PDF format from the ABA Young Lawyer's Division on setting up a law practice.  
<http://www.abanet.org/yld/publications/Unlockresourceguide.pdf>

JDSupra

Attorneys post forms, motions and other documents here, and you can post your profile and get known as well. <http://www.jdsupra.com>

IRS Starting a Business Resources

<http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=99336,00.html>

Small Business Administration

<http://www.sba.gov/>

(see Small Business Planner <http://www.sba.gov/smallbusinessplanner/index.html>, Tools and Local Resources)

### **Legal Discussion Groups**

Solosez – An ABA listserv for solo and small firm lawyers [www.solosez.net](http://www.solosez.net)

Solomarketing – formed as a splinter group from Solosez, Solomarketing discusses all aspects of marketing for your law practice. For information, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com> and search for Sololawyermarketing.

Lawtech – Informal e-mail discussion list focused on legal technology. Get tech help and find out about the latest technology trends. View the archives and subscribe at :

<http://mail.abanet.org/archives/lawtech.html>

(There are also many legal discussion groups on LinkedIn and other social networking sites)

### **Resources from the American Bar Association**

ABA Law Practice Management Section

Website: <http://www.abanet.org/lpm/home.shtml> provides news, tips, great CLE programs and more.

Law Practice Magazine. Start with the current issue here:

<http://www.abanet.org/lpm/magazine>

Law Practice Today

<http://www.abanet.org/lpm/lpt/home.shtml>

(If you got to this feature by a link from a friend or search, don't forget to subscribe to this free monthly e-zine while you are here.)

ABA General Practice, Solo & Small Firm Division

<http://www.abanet.org/genpractice>

GPSolo magazine

Start with the Small theme issue (April/May 2009)

[http://www.abanet.org/genpractice/magazine/2009/apr\\_may/#features](http://www.abanet.org/genpractice/magazine/2009/apr_may/#features)

Then look through all of the other issues, online and free to non-members, here:

<http://www.abanet.org/genpractice/magazine/past-issues.html>

ABA Legal Technology Resource Center

<http://www.abanet.org/tech/ltrc/> a collection of technology resources and information

Current articles: <http://www.abanet.org/tech/ltrc/publications/>

(Articles are free but access to certain archives require ABA membership)

ABA LTRC Solo and Small Firm Technology Center:

<http://www.abanet.org/tech/ltrc/gpsstechcenter.html>

Site-tation: Law Technology Resource Center's blog

<http://new.abanet.org/sitetation/Pages/home.aspx>

ABA Center for Professional Responsibility – resources for solo and small firm lawyers:

<http://www.abanet.org/cpr/solo.html>

\*Vendors and consultants are not endorsed by the Washington State Bar Association