

*What They Don't Teach
You Anywhere About
Starting (and Managing) a
Solo Practice*

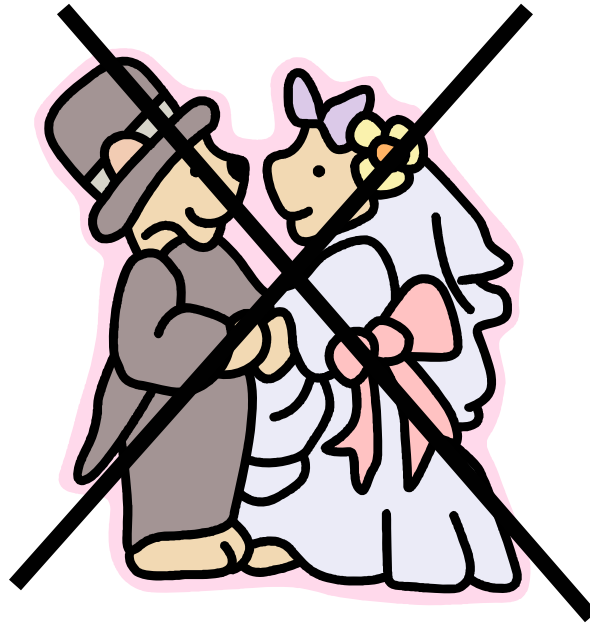
Patricia A. Yevics

Director, Law Office Management Assistance

Maryland State Bar Association

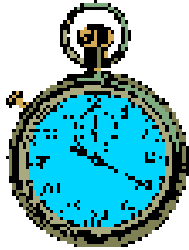
Waiting for Mr./Ms. Right

NOT!



We are what we repeatedly do.
Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit.
- Aristotle

Develop the right habits from the start. It will save you time, money and trouble later. Good office management is something you do every day for as long as you practice law. It is NOT an accident. Being a solo or small firm practitioner is no excuse for poor management.

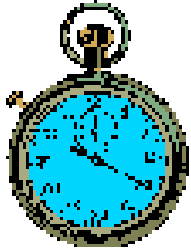


Getting Started

Location, Location, Location

**What type of law you practice could
determine where you practice**

**It is possible to practice from your home
but not for all practice areas**



Getting Started

Understand budgeting

- **Determine your current fixed expenses**
- **How long can you survive without an income**

Miscellaneous



**Services you need before you hang
out your shingle**

Good Childcare

Good Housekeeper

CPA

Practicing from a Home Office

Separate phone lines with one for business.

Instruct others about interruptions.

Answer machine.

Perception is reality: You are NOT a part time lawyer.

Confidentiality issues.

Separate computers??



Learn to Manage Your Time

- **Allows you to have emergencies**
- **Can actually accomplish more**
- **Suffer less stress and anxiety**
- **Improve concentration**
- **Increase happiness and satisfaction**
- **Improve self-confidence**



Finances



- **Most banks in Maryland can provide trust accounts.**
 - Choose one of the banks on the MSBA/MLSC Honor Roll
- **Your checks should have “Escrow Account” on the checks.**
 - Have different color checks for escrow and general account checks.
- **All banks are required to immediately report to the Attorney Grievance Commission all overdrafts.**
- **You may keep enough money in your trust account to cover monthly bank fees.**



Maryland Legal Services Corporation
IOLTA - Interest on Lawyer Trust Accounts



[Jobs](#) + [Legal Services Directory](#) + [News & Events](#) + [Links](#) + [Contact Us](#)



By participating in the IOLTA Honor Roll, financial institutions and attorneys help support the provision of critically needed legal aid to those Marylanders unable to afford such services.

Maryland IOLTA Honor Roll

Through an initiative of the Maryland State Bar Association and MLSC, our Honor Roll recognizes financial institutions paying an annual net interest rate (gross interest minus charges) of at least 2% on all IOLTA deposits for Gold membership and at least 1.5% for Silver membership. Participation helps to support the provision of critically needed legal aid to those Marylanders unable to afford such services.

[For Financial Institutions](#)

[For Lawyers](#)

[For Grantees](#)

Financial Institutions: The MSBA & MLSC encourage attorneys to do their banking with Honor Roll members. Studies have shown that IOLTA participation at favorable rates of interest can bring in new attorney business.

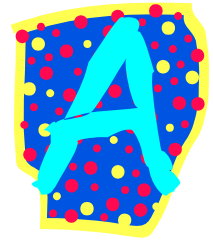
Attorneys: If your financial institution is not currently a member of the IOLTA Honor Roll, we ask that you encourage them to join this important program.

For more information on IOLTA interest rates, specific bank locations, and the Honor Roll program, contact MLSC at 410.576.9494 or 1.800.492.1340. Financial institutions may use the Fax-Back [Honor Roll Enrollment Form](#) to enroll in the Honor Roll program. Honor roll banks that wish to have web links from the MLSC web site should sent link information to info@mlsc.org.

Click here for [printable list](#).

<http://www.mlsc.org/honor-roll.htm>

Quality Client Service

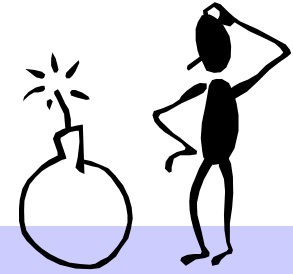


**Good client service starts with
good client selection.**

Know the warning signs.

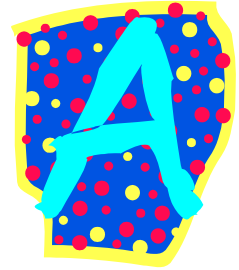
Do not take bad clients.

Avoiding Trouble



- **Begins by choosing clients wisely**
- Develop client intake procedure and interview forms
- Do not take clients outside of your expertise
- **Clients to Avoid**
- Who have had three or four previous attorneys
- Who have unrealistic expectations
- Who bash lawyers (even jokingly)
- Who need serious handholding
- Who act as though they know the law or have a brother-in-law who once went to law school
- Who are looking for revenge or who have serious hurt feelings
- Who make the legal fees a serious issue

Quality Client Service



Do not over promise but if you see you cannot keep a promise, call and explain. It is better to be honest.

Technology



You need to personally understand technology but still have someone you can contact in an emergency.

Solo and Small Firm Practice MSBA Listserve Discussion

The following are some questions and responses from the MSBA Solo Listserv. The information will remain on the site until it becomes obsolete in the case of technology. We will include these questions and responses for law office management and technology subjects. If you would like to subscribe to the MSBA Solo Listserv, you must be a member of the section. If you are a member, you can subscribe at /sec_comm/listserves/join.asp?join=MSBAsolo. If you are not a member but would like to join, go to

<https://www.msba.org/forms/membership/sectregform.asp?secid=14>.

If you have any questions, please contact Pat Yevics at pyevics@msba.org.

Treo VS Blackberry May 28, 2007

Question: I am considering (with trepidation) making the plunge and getting a superphone. The question de jour is: what are the pros/cons of the Blackberry versus the Treo. I would love to hear from anyone who uses either (the specific models available are the Blackberry 7130 and the Treo (either 700 or 755).

Going "Paperless" Networking and Organizing Files November 2006

http://www.msba.org/sec_comm/sections/solo/listdisc/index.htm

Technology



Email - If you are going to use email for business, do NOT put restrictions on it.

Make sure the email address is accurate.

Technology

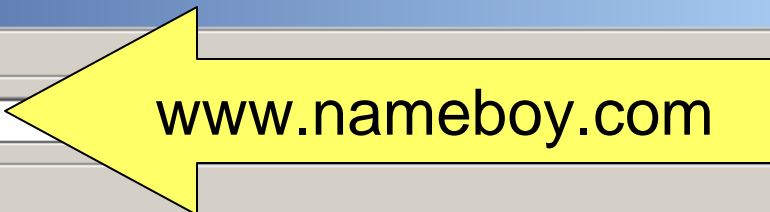


Get Your Own Domain Name

janelawyer@mylawfirm.com



http://www.nameboy.com/



Submit Your Site to Over 400 Search Engines
And We'll Guarantee Your Listing In 48 Hours!
[Click Here](#)

[New Search](#) | [FAQ](#) | [About Us](#) | [Affiliates](#) | [Appraisals](#) | [Renew Domains](#) | [Clubhouse](#)
Not logged in. [Login](#)

Home Page

Enter a few keywords to find, register and back-order related available domain names. NameBoy will generate domain names based on the keywords you enter, and you can register or back-order them right here!

New Search

Domain Cart

Beta Tools

Primary Word:

Secondary Word: *(optional)*

yeovics

law firm

Example: *silly*

Example: *string*

Allow hyphens

Rhyme


tip: Enter words that describe the domain name you're looking for. Nameboy will generate available domain names based on your keywords.

[go nameboy go!](#)

 **NOW \$15** .COM .NET .ORG

 **Now Register** .INFO .BIZ .TV .CC
All from NAMEBOY!

 **Domain Appraisals**
\$9.95
Instant
Market Based

 **Nameboy's Hosting Partner**
hostingandmore.com

 **100 Best Sites Top Pick**
[click here for more](#)

Technology



Email

If you give it out, respond to it

Update it

Voicemail

Use it to give information

Update it

Listservs

Join listservs through the MSBA



2005 ABA Antitrust Law Upcoming CLE Conferences
International Forum
January 24-25, 2005
Miami, FL
Spring Meeting
March 30 - April 1, 2005
Washington DC

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MSBA's Latest

Take the MSBA On-line Survey!

Help us to evaluate Member Benefits, Technology and Education and Professional Satisfaction. Make your voice heard with these fast and easy questionnaires.

Applications Being Accepted for the 2005 - 2006 Leadership Academy

[Click here for details](#)

2005 EARNED INCOME CREDIT PROJECT VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

[Click here for more details.](#)

Visit the MSBA's Taxation Section's web page at http://www.msba.org/sec_comm/sections/taxation/

Hanging Out A Shingle

Developing a Rewarding Solo/Small Firm Practice
January 29, 2005



MICPEL Program of the Week

Hot Tips for the Family Law Practitioner

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2005

CALLING ALL (WOULD BE) AUTHORS

The American Inns of Court is sponsoring the Warren E. Burger Writing Contest. Here is your opportunity to see if you really have what it takes to be the next great writer. Go to <http://www.innsofcourt.org> and Good Luck.

Events Calendar

Program on Unpublished Opinions
Thursday, January 27, 2005

Hanging Out a Shingle
January 29, 2005

Introduction to the Federal Courthouse Program
March 18, 2005 (Baltimore)
April 15, 2005 (Greenbelt)

Annual Meeting
June 15-18, 2005 in Ocean City, MD

2005 State Legislative Program

The 2005 State Legislative Program is now available on line.



MSBA Section News

Become an MSBA Member

Ethics Hotline

January Hotline Numbers

www.msba.org
Committees/Sections
Listserve

Office

Microsoft

Environmental Law Council	Send Message
Estate and Trust Law	
Estates and Trust Law Section	Join List Send Message
Estates & Trust Law Council	Send Message
Family Law Section	
Family & Juvenile Law Section	Join List Send Message
Family & Juvenile Law Council	Send Message
Health Law	
Health Law Section	Join List Send Message
Health Law Council	Send Message
Judicial Administration	
Judicial Administration Council	Send Message
Labor and Employment Law	
Labor and Employment Law Section	Join List Send Message
Labor and Employment Law Council	Send Message
Legal Education and Admission to the Bar	
Legal Education and Admission Council	Send Message
Litigation	
Litigation Section	Join List Send Message
Litigation Council	Send Message
Appellate Practice Committee	Send Message
Federal District Court Liaison Committee	Send Message
Federal Pre-Trial Detention	Send Message
Negligence, Insurance & Worker's Comp.	
Negligence Ins. & Worker's Comp. Section	Join List Send Message
Negligence, Ins. & Worker's Comp. Council	Send Message
Real Property, Planning & Zoning	
Real Property Section	Join List Send Message
Real Property Council	Send Message
Senior Lawyers Section	
Senior Lawyers Council	Send Message
Solo & Small Firm Practice	
Solo & Small Firm Practice Section	Join List Send Message
Solo & Small Firm Practice Announcements	Join List Send Message
Solo & Small Firm Practice Council	Send Message
State and Local Government	
State and Local Government	Join List Send Message
State and Local Government Council	Send Message
Taxation	
Taxation Section	Join List Send Message

Office

Microsoft

Technology



- BACKUP
- BACKUP
- BACKUP

Marketing/Client Development



**You are ALWAYS Marketing
And
You NEVER know where your
next client may come from**

Marketing/Client Development

Find a way to distinguish yourself
NEVER apologize for being solo
Use it to your advantage



Marketing/Client Development

Track your marketing efforts



Marketing/Client Development

ENUNCIATE

(Don't mumble)

and

WRITE LEGIBLY



Administrative



Send "You are not my client. I am not your lawyer" letter to any client you met and did not take.

Administrative



Even if you are a solo (you and a computer) there should be procedures

This is the perfect time to start with procedures

The procedures should be written

The procedures can be adjusted as your practice grows



People

- In a solo/small firm there is no place for anything other than excellence. You do not have the luxury to allow mediocrity.

People



**Staff must have the same
commitment to excellence
and quality client service as
you do.**

People



You must have written descriptions and policies and people must know what is expected of them.

Sometimes it IS all about YOU!!

Take care of yourself



Exercise



Eat properly



Have a hobby

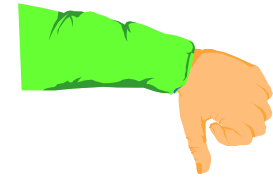
Ask for  **if you need it**

And Finally



- Enjoy yourself

- Know when perfection is not necessary



- Laugh often and loud