

FIVE USEFUL ONLINE RESOURCES FOR SOLO PRACTITIONERS

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NKBA Partners
with HONK

by Bob Hoffer

The NKBA Board has decided to become a Community Partner with Housing Opportunities of Northern Kentucky ("HONK"). HONK has served the Northern Kentucky community since 1991 in elevating lives as well as strengthening families and neighborhoods by creating the possibility for lower income working families to share in the dream of home ownership. To learn more details about HONK, please visit their website at www.honkhomes.org.

The NKBA has committed to bring a group of volunteers to HONK on the third Saturday of each month from 9:00 a.m. until noon. Many people will say I don't have the skills to help out – what we really need is your time. Our responsibilities will vary each month from landscaping, painting, drywall work, etc. We are looking for a minimum group of eight to ten people per month to work at the assigned HONK project. HONK presently has housing projects in Covington, Florence and Bellevue.

NKBA's first HONK service project was a great success and we are very appreciative to all of the volunteers who participated. In order to volunteer, please e-mail me at bhoffer@dbllaw.com and I will include you on the master list of volunteers and give you further details. You do not have to volunteer to help each month. Feel free to involve your family, if you so desire. Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult but all are welcome. The NKBA will send out a monthly reminder to all about the HONK service project.

NKBA believes in the importance of giving back to our community. Through its HONK service project, NKBA hopes to make our community a better place to live.

For those of you who have considered striking out on your own in the legal world, there are quite a few websites that you should be aware of. Many of these resources are free and give you an opportunity to connect with your colleagues while obtaining insightful information about the realm in which you plan to travel. Many of these websites focus on ways to stay cost effective both in your practice and in the marketing of your practice. Here are five useful blogs, listservs and marketing sites that can help you become more successful in your small firm or solo practice:

1) ABA GPSolo's SoloSez Discussion Board – www.solosez.net. SoloSez is a listserv for solo practitioners or those in a small-firm setting, fewer than five attorneys. Practitioners can post questions or share advice and relevant information with other subscribers. Note: This is a partially monitored listserv so subscribers are expected to police themselves and to participate responsibly. Currently there are more than 3,000 subscribers and anyone is eligible to join, even those who are not ABA members. Becoming a subscriber is an easy process. Simply send an email to listserv@mail.americanbar.org that says "SUBSCRIBE SOLOSEZ" and your name. You can then begin sending messages by posting to solosez@americanbar.org. If you are a new member to SoloSez, you can access its archive to find topics that may be helpful to you. However, this is a listserv, so you may be inundated with email messages throughout the day. Also, be sure to look over the listserv rules before posting and sharing information so as to remain within the guidelines. For example, attachments of any kind are prohibited and you are limited to a maximum of five posts per day.

2) The Blogs of Carolyn Elefant: My Shingle & Nolo's Legal Marketing Blawg – www.myshingle.com and www.legalmarketingblawg.com. My Shingle and the Legal Marketing Blawg were created for solo practitioners and small firms by Carolyn Elefant, author of Solo by Choice. Both of these provide a wide

range of online resources for these individuals including blog postings, free e-books, checklists and forms, etc. This blog offers support to all types of practitioners whether they are practicing



part-time, full-time, in the corporate world or in criminal defense and there is growing discussion here about how one can go from a one-person firm to a firm of "one+." My Shingle brings the idea of solo practitioners to the forefront and showcases the fact that many attorneys in the United States are now in solo and small firms, and they should be applauded for their hard work and accomplishments. Following My Shingle is very easy on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, Vimeo, or simply by subscribing to the RSS Feed by visiting the homepage and clicking on "Subscribe" in the upper right corner. You can also browse the website or search previous topics by selecting the "Topics" tab and scrolling down the alphabetical list and clicking on the topic of your choice. One difference in the two blogs is that the purpose of the Legal Marketing Blawg is to discuss marketing concerns and resources for solo or small firm practitioners to reduce costs for marketing and advertisements.

3) The Lawyerist Blog – www.thelawyerist.com. The Lawyerist is a blog created to provide advice on marketing, practice management, technology issues and updates, career development, legal ethics, starting your own law practice, and much more. Subscription is relatively easy. Subscribing to The Lawyerist is just as easy as the aforementioned blogs and with the same options. Subscribers may sign up via Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, YouTube, Kindle, etc. Simply visit the homepage and put your email address into the toolbar on the left and

click "Subscribe." Presently there are more than 4,200 members to the RSS Feed and more than 13,000 followers on Twitter. There is also an archive that you can search for previously covered topics such as the best technology gadgets, opinion pieces about news articles, and other useful information. For example, there is a subpage on The Lawyerist that discusses how you can go about starting your own firm that includes advice about finding your own niche, marketing, creating a virtual office, and deciding on the appropriate amount to charge as a fee for yourself.

4) ABA's Legal Technology Resource Center – www.abanet.org/tech/ltrc.

The Legal Technology Resource Center (LTRC) provides technological assistance to ABA members and helps to make their practices more successful and efficient via a hotline members can either call or email with questions. When you are on your own or in a small firm setting, the necessary technology assistance may not be available to you and even with the small membership fee, your troubles could be minimized without spending a lot of money on an IT professional. The LTRC also posts information on the latest technological trends for the legal community, software comparisons for a variety of firm types, digitizing your billing, and numerous other helpful topics for firms that do not have the resources to pay an independent technology consultant. The LTRC is also responsible for producing the ABA Legal Technology Survey Report each year.


5) The Techno Lawyer – www.techno-lawyer.com. Techno Lawyer is a blog that provides information to attorneys and an environment where they can feel safe to communicate about technology that they simply do not know enough about. With membership being free, Techno Lawyer already has more than 14,000 members and is steadily increasing. There is a wide variety of newsletters published by Techno Lawyer each week that members may subscribe to. For example, there is a "Small

Law" newsletter that provides advice to forward-thinking firms and a "Fat Friday" newsletter where writers can talk about "whatever they damn well please." Like many other blogs, Techno Lawyer has a very easy subscription process. You can join on their homepage by filling in the form that is located in the center of the page.

All of these resources are geared toward cutting costs and how to maximize what you have. They would be very helpful to those who have, or are considering, hanging their own shingles as well as those in smaller firms who tend to have fewer resources to work with, both technologically and in a marketing

sense. There are also a number of printed materials that can be of some value such as Elefant's books Solo by Choice and Flying Solo, edited by K. William Gibson. The local law library at NKU Chase is also a good resource that practitioners can utilize. It has a sizeable collection of materials about starting one's own practice, including general practice materials and specialty materials, such as how to start an IP solo law firm. Always remember, you are not really alone!

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Learn more about the Center and meet our mediators and arbitrators at:

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