

Chapter One: Business Planning

To be profitable, a law firm needs a business plan like any other business. This is a fluid plan that will change as your clientele increases, technology changes, and what services you provide grows. A business plan consists of several components:

1. Who are your intended clients and how do you provide services they value (unbundled, convenient hours, etc.)
2. Choice of entity
3. Start-up costs and budget for 1-2 years
4. Marketing strategy (see Chapter 6)
5. Office procedures (billing, etc.) (see Chapter 5)
6. Technology needs

Business planning will not only give you focus, but it will also give you a perspective, timelines and ability to control your firm's growth.

Providing Value Through Legal Expertise

Providing value to your clients should be the guiding principle in everything that you do in your law practice. Potential clients are coming to you first and foremost for your legal expertise. Thinking about and determining how you can provide value is the first and most important step in the business planning process.

There are five ways you can offer value to a potential client in virtually any kind of legal matter: by *counseling*, *advocating*, *navigating*, playing the role of an *information broker*, and *connecting*.

Counsel: The trained and objective advice of a lawyer is increasingly critical today, even though potential clients have growing access to legal information and resources that enable them to do more tasks on their own. Even in relatively simple matters, where potential clients generally have access to information or forms that would allow them to proceed with a lawsuit or enter a contract, the potential clients often do not have:

- the expertise to understand the precise meaning of certain legal terms or the steps that must be taken to achieve their goals;
- the objectivity to determine whether proceeding on their own is the best option; or
- the confidence that they are pursuing the proper course of action for their individual situation.

Advocate: A skilled advocate may have even greater value to many potential clients, particularly where the potential client is on unequal footing in terms of power. Examples include:

- a consumer debt case where the creditor has deep pockets and is represented by counsel;
- a divorce case where one spouse has significantly more resources and is represented by counsel; and
- a business case where a budding small business is working on an important deal with a much larger company.

Having a trained advocate on the client's side can make a tremendous difference in the outcome of the matter and his or her peace of mind.

Navigator: In most instances, the legal system is still very complex and intimidating to the general public. Brief advice and coaching to help clients navigate the system may provide huge value to a client who is unfamiliar with the system but otherwise is well positioned to adequately handle his or her case.

Information Broker: While this was traditionally a core value that lawyers provided to their clients, many consumers today expect to find answers to many of their questions on the internet. Therefore, a great way to build trust and loyalty with potential clients is by knowing where they can get free and reliable information and resources, such as the Court websites, and making this information freely available. ([Jay Baer, *Youtility: Why Smart Marketing is about Help not Hype* \(N.Y.: Penguin, 2018\).](#)) Providing potential clients with this information means that you can focus your time on more significant and income-generating services.

Connector: A client may need services in addition to the legal assistance you provide in order to fully resolve his or her problem. For example:

- where a domestic violence victim seeking an order of protection also needs non-legal counseling; and
- where a small business client also needs a valuation consultant.

By identifying these needs and acting as a connector, you are offering value to the client.

Create and Test Assumptions About What Clients Value

Incorporate Client Value into Business Strategy

Throughout this toolkit, we will go into greater detail about three most popular and effective approaches to incorporating client value into your business strategy. These approaches are:

- Incorporating limited scope representation (Chapter 5: Unbundling and Limited Scope Representation);
- Alternative fee arrangements (Chapter 3: Pricing); and
- Virtual law practice components (Chapter 8: Technology).

Once you are familiar with these three concepts, you need to determine what clients in your target market value and what corresponding value you can offer them. The best way to do this is to create assumptions about what those clients value and test those assumptions:

Example 1: Based on the market research you have conducted and what you know, your assumption is that moderate income clients in your target market value convenience. Specifically, they value being able to access your legal services outside regular business hours (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.). To test this assumption, you advertise on your website and to your networks that your office will be open on Saturday mornings. What happens? Do clients take advantage of the Saturday morning hours? If they do, why did they? If they do not, why didn't

they? Maybe your assumption is correct. Maybe it is incorrect. Maybe it is actually partially correct, but you need to adjust it because potential client feedback indicates Saturday afternoons are actually more convenient for clients than Saturday mornings. The point is to ask specific questions in order to properly evaluate the results. A second way to test this assumption would be by developing an online client portal and then asking clients the same questions regarding it.

Example 2: Based on the market research you conducted and what you know, your assumption is that moderate income clients in your target market value having choices with respect to legal service offerings. To test this assumption, you advertise on your website and to your networks that you offer alternative fee arrangements (*e.g.*, fixed fees by phase, task, or case or contingency fees). See Chapter 3: Pricing. When talking with clients about your various fee arrangements, what do they choose? Why? Did they know that you offered alternative fee arrangements before they came to you? Which fee arrangements do they like the best and why?

Example 3: Based on the market research you conducted and what you know, your assumption is that moderate income clients in your target market will pay \$800 for an uncontested divorce. To test this assumption, you advertise on your website and to your networks that you will charge \$800 for an uncontested divorce. Do any clients take you up on your offer? If not, your price might be too high and you may need to lower it and retest this assumption with a new price. You may also need to adjust your marketing strategy or simply ask people in person for purposes of this exercise so you can get to the heart of the matter.

Example 4: Based on the market research you conducted and what you know, you want to take advantage of your second language capability with the community where you practice. You will market your services in those community centers with language-specific advertising. Do you get an immediate response? If not, you may have taken for granted that just because you speak the language, you will be accepted as credible. Perhaps you will need to be introduced to the community by a trusted source or you need to show your commitment to the community by participating in their cultural events. Becoming a counselor on sensitive personal issues may take some time.

Example 5: Serving Underserved Communities can be a successful strategy. Identifying a unique community that has traditionally been underserved can be a source of business that is not only profitable but meaningful to you. For example, many attorneys eschew clients on the assumption that they will not have successful claims, such as bicycle accident victims, particularly bicycle riders struck by cars. However, handled properly, these claims can be successful, especially with increasing favorable attitudes towards bicycle riders. Or, identifying an unpopular specialty, such as dental malpractice, can help an attorney build a niche practice. (*See Resources*)

It is advisable to continue to test assumptions, evaluate client feedback and adjust your business strategy accordingly so you can grow your practice going forward.

Prepare a Business Plan

After considering how you can provide value to clients, the next step is to develop a basic business strategy, plan, and budget to help guide you through the rest of the startup process.

Why Should I have a Business Plan?

Dwight D. Eisenhower once said, “[I]n preparing for battle I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable.” The same can be said about business planning for start-ups, including law practices. While your initial business plan will likely not get you all the way through the start-up phase, going through the process of creating a business plan is still essential because it forces you to give at least some initial thought to your strategy for launching, maintaining, and growing your firm.

Additionally, writing a business plan forces you to think about the business aspects of a legal practice. If you are considering borrowing money from an investor or a bank, you will need to provide a business plan in order to be extended a line of credit.

Elements of a Business Plan

Initial business plans should contain the following sections:

- **Executive Summary.** Summarizes what the firm does and usually contains an executive summary. Why does your law practice exist and what are you looking to achieve?
- **Strategy.** What value are you going to offer to clients in your target market, and how are you going to market and monetize that value? Where do you want your firm to be in one, five, and ten years? See subsection above for information about client value.
- **Attorney Overview.** Who will be practicing in this firm? Include lawyer biographies.
- **Financial Plan.** What expenses are associated with operating your practice and what are expected revenue projections. See below for more information on writing a thorough budget.
- **Marketing Strategies.** What is your marketing plan? See Chapter Ten: Marketing for more detailed information.
- **Metrics and Milestones.** How are you going to measure and evaluate your law practice performance? What are your short- and long-term goals for your law practice?

Tips

- Continually think about and evaluate how you can provide value to your clients.
- Create a business plan.
- Prepare a budget, paying close attention to expenses and revenue projections. This sample budget allows you to insert projections and manipulate the budget to achieve desired goals.
- Determine what form of organization your practice will be.
- Consider a business contingency plan for the event of disaster or tragic loss.
- Consider marketing strategies, including building a website and creating business cards. See Chapter 6: Marketing & Business Development.
- Research malpractice insurance coverage and providers. See Chapter 10: Legal Malpractice Insurance.

Prepare a Budget

Calculating your business expenses and revenue target is extremely important in creating a viable business plan. You will need to consider:

- How much it costs to run your business,
- How much money you need to live on, and
- How much money you ultimately want to make beyond that.

Identify and Calculate Your Monthly Business Expenses

Your business expenses include all costs and expenses associated with running your firm, including office expenses, insurance, software and other technology expenses, marketing and other professional expenses, taxes, staffing, and general administration and overhead costs.

Identify and Calculate Your Personal Living Expenses/Minimum Annual Salary

For purposes of this toolkit, your annual personal living expenses include all expenses that are necessary to maintain health, safety, well-being, and the ability to earn money. Examples may include costs associated with housing, utilities, food, clothing, transportation, and various types of insurance, such as health, disability, and automobile. Once you have calculated your annual personal living expenses, add the income taxes that would be paid on your annual personal living expenses in order to calculate your minimum annual salary.

Determine Your Desired Annual Salary and Revenue Targets

Your desired annual salary will take into account your annual personal living expenses and the additional disposable income you want to spend and save each month (*e.g.*, for recreational activities, saving for vacations, saving for retirement, and so on), remembering to also take into account income taxes. Obviously, your desired annual salary needs to be realistic for the state of your practice. If you have just started your firm, your desired salary realistically may be just above what it takes to cover your expenses, while at later stages it should be more realistic to aim higher.

By understanding your costs and identifying realistic income goals, you can determine how much per month or per week you need to average in order to meet your goals. So, for example, if your business and living costs together add up to \$40,000 per year and you hope to make at least \$10,000 beyond that, your revenue target should be to average \$1,000 per week to achieve your goal (assuming you take off for holidays and some vacation time).

Looking at your expenses and goals in this fashion frees you from looking at things through the hourly lens, informs your pricing strategies, and helps you evaluate how you are doing. Instead of focusing on how much you should charge a client for each hour, you can focus on what mix of paid services you need to average each week/month/year to meet your revenue goals.

For a sample budget, as well as other business planning materials, please see the *Designing a Sustainable Practice* section of of the [Practising Law Institute's Solo Practice Bootcamp: Best Practices from Legal Incubator Programs to Help You Launch Your Own Practice](#) (Free).

Choice of Entity

Importantly, if you want to practice in a business organization, you must determine what form of organization your firm will be. There are various business entity options and choosing one is beyond the scope of this document. However, the most common types are:

- Sole Proprietorship: Owned and operated by one person with pass-through income taxation and personal liability;
- For-profit Corporation: Operated by a board with entity level income taxation and a franchise tax (minimum \$800/year in California) and limited liability;
- Non-profit Corporation: Operated by a board and no taxation after application and approval by the IRS and limited liability;
- General Partnership: Operated by a partnership (two or more people) with pass-through income taxation and personal liability;
- Limited Liability Partnership; similar to a general partnership, but all partners must be lawyers;
- Limited Liability Company (LLC); LLC members operate the company and there is pass-through income taxation (and often a franchise tax), and limited liability. **Note:** California prohibits LLCs from rendering professional services, so this is not an option in California; and
- Professional Corporation: Similar to a general corporation, but requires all shareholders to be lawyers.

Reminder: This information is NOT intended to serve as legal advice. Attorneys should consult with independent legal counsel to determine what is the best business entity for their practice. (See *Resources to this Appendix*)

It is important to note that the California Rules of Professional Conduct apply to all attorneys licensed to practice in California regardless of the form of business entity through which they are practicing. As such, although attorneys are allowed to practice through limited liability entities, no attorney can escape malpractice liability. Notably, law firms cannot be owned by non-lawyers as the practice of law cannot be influenced by non-legal, business partners. See Chapter 10 for more information.

For more detailed information about the pros and cons of each entity, please see [CEB's *Selecting and Forming business Entities*](#), or, for a free resource, please see the *Deciding to Start Your Firm and Forming the Practice Entity* section of the previously mentioned [Solo Practice Bootcamp: Best Practices from Legal Incubator Programs to Help You Launch Your Own Practice](#) from the [Practising Law Institute](#).

Basic Law Practice Checklist

At this point, you have considered what value you can offer your clients, incorporated that value into a business strategy and drafted a business plan that includes a budget. Now it is time to consider what things you need to open your doors.

A basic law practice should have:

- A law firm name, phone number, and email address);
- A basic website (so that potential clients can find you) with appropriate disclaimers (create static webpage and link to [ALPS Sample Website Disclaimer Resources](#)) (see the Appendix to this chapter);
- Basic letterhead and business cards (see the Appendix to Chapter 6: Marketing & Business Development);
- Selected a business entity and filed the necessary paperwork with the [California Secretary of State's Office](#) (see Appendix to this chapter);
- Malpractice insurance (see Chapter 10: Legal Malpractice Insurance);
- A space where you can meet with clients (see the Appendix to this chapter);
- A system for checking conflicts (see *Creating Conflicts of Interest Procedures to Protect You and Your Firm from Malpractice*, by Sandra J. Roberts (See Chapter 2: Client Intake, Counseling and Engagement Agreements);
- Business operating and client trust accounts (see the Appendix to this chapter);
- Basic billing and bookkeeping systems (see the Appendix to this chapter);
- A basic budget that includes your business expenses and minimum salary (see Appendix to this chapter);
- Assigned initial pricing to your legal services (see Chapter 3: Pricing);
- A basic business contingency plan in place;
- Access to legal research (see the Appendix to this chapter); and
- Basic technology security, file retention, and backup systems in place (see Appendix to this chapter).

Incubator Program Resources

Though you may be starting your own practice, that doesn't mean you need to do it all on your own. Attorney incubator programs can help you jumpstart your practice, so if you have access to one you should strongly consider whether applying to join one of the programs makes sense in your case.

Incubator Program Defined

Law firm incubator and residency programs enable newly-admitted lawyers to acquire a range of skills necessary to build on what they learned in law school and launch successful practices independently. The first incubator program was established by Fulbright Fellow Fred Rooney at the City University of New York over a decade ago. Similar incubator models and programs have been created by law schools, bar associations, and legal services organizations. Incubator programs generally encourage and support their graduates by providing substantive and skills training workshops, coaching in marketing and business development, mentoring, chances to network, etc. Program participants may also be provided with a space to work in and basic office supplies. In return, participants usually have a pro bono obligation and sometimes a tuition fee.

Benefits of Participating in an Established Incubator

Many incubator programs include benefits such as free access or discounted access to LexisNexis Advance, Clio and MyCase for case management, and other software solutions for

new solos. Incubator programs also typically include training, mentorship, networking opportunities, and potentially free or subsidized office space.

Resources for Incubator Participants

The San Francisco Bar has written a Solo and Small Firm Toolkit that is a must read for anyone considering opening his or her own firm. See <http://toolkit.sfbar.org/>

Additionally, the Lawyer Entrepreneur Assistance Program (LEAP) has posted various incubator-related resources on its website, from the draft materials for the 'incubator in a box' project to various training materials. See <http://incubator.legal-aid.com/>

The State Bar of California put together an [incubator guide](#) that explains how various incubator models (e.g. law school based vs. legal services organization based) differ, though the target audience is those starting an incubator program.

A Short Profile of Select Incubator/Residence Models

A selection from the American Bar Association's [Incubator/Residency Program Profiles](#).

BALI - Bay Area Legal Incubator

Volunteer Legal Services Corporation; the Alameda County Bar Association; University of California Hastings College of the Law; University of California, Berkeley School of Law; Golden Gate University School of Law; University of San Francisco School of Law; Santa Clara University School of Law; the Alameda County Law Library; and legal services providers.

Website: www.bayarealegalincubator.org

California Western School of Law

Access to Law Initiative

This program has been operational since June 2012. The program is operated under the auspices of the law school and is for graduates of the school. Participants operate their own independent law firms. The program requires participants to take some pro bono cases and provides for taking moderate-income cases. Participants are selected by a program director and there are fourteen to sixteen participants at any given time. The program is up to eighteen months. Participants are provided with mentoring on substantive legal issues, assistance and training with practice management issues, free or subsidized CLE programming, in-person networking, programming on client development, case referrals, and pro bono opportunities.

Website: <https://www.cwsl.edu/clinics-and-programs/access-to-law-initiative>

Community Law Practice Incubator (CLPI)

Bar Association of San Francisco & The Justice and Diversity Center

Under the direction of 2016 BASF President Michael Tubach, The Bar Association of San Francisco created the Community Law Practice Incubator (CLPI) in partnership with its Justice &

Diversity Center (JDC) and Lawyer Referral and Information Service (LRIS) to serve the professional needs of attorneys interested in developing a solo practice, and expand access to affordable legal services for low income persons.

CLPI participants are California licensed attorneys who possess an entrepreneurial interest to open a small or solo practice serving the local community including low and modest means persons (a community practice) and currently may have other work and sources of income to sustain their participation in CLPI.

The CLPI provides participants with training and supervision in four areas of practice in which the public's unmet need for representation remains high: Family Law, Landlord-Tenant issues, Immigration and Bankruptcy. Participants must enroll in the incubator program for six months, but may continue for a maximum of one year.

Website: www.sfbar.org/clpi

Thomas Jefferson School of Law Center for Solo Practitioners

The Center for Solo Practitioners has been operational since November 2012. The program is operated under the auspices of the law school and participants operate their own independent law firms. The program is funded through law school support and grants. The program requires that participants do some pro bono and requires that participants take cases serving moderate-income clients. The program limits cases to those that are within malpractice insurance limits. Participants are selected through applications and interviews. Nine participants are in the inaugural class and there will be between six to ten participants per year. The program is between twelve and eighteen months. Resources provided to participants are subsidized office space, mentoring on substantive legal issues, assistance and training with practice management issues, free or subsidized CLE programming, in-person networking, programming on client development, case referrals, pro bono opportunities, and legal research resources.

Website: <https://www.tjssl.edu/tjssl-alumni/incubator-program>

Lawyers for Family Justice

Family Justice Center

The Family Justice Center's legal incubator is a program for new or transitioning attorneys starting their own solo, small firm, or nonprofit practice.

It supports practice areas including family, immigration, consumer (debtors' rights), and housing law. The Center provides infrastructure, law practice software, training and mentor attorneys.

Incubator attorneys sign an MOU for 18-months to provide Pro Bono service in exchange for their training and the incubation of their practice. Ideally, upon completion of the program, incubator graduates will be able to launch a sustainable law practice, providing affordable services in Contra Costa.

Website: <http://www.cocofamilyjustice.org/lawyers/>

Los Angeles Incubator Consortium

The Los Angeles Incubator Consortium (LAIC) is a collaboration between Pepperdine University School of Law, Southwestern Law School, UCLA School of Law, Loyola Law School, Los Angeles, local legal aid organizations and the Los Angeles County Law Library. The program was established as a pilot program in January 2015 through a grant from the State Bar of California's Commission on Access to Justice. Graduates from the consortium law schools are selected to join the program for one year and receive the basic training needed to get their solo legal practices up and running, and at the same time develop relationships that allow them to serve the local community's legal needs. Pro bono hours and training is provided by consortium members Bet Tzedek, Community Legal Services, Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles, Neighborhood Legal Services and/or Public Counsel.

LAIC works closely with their incubator participants (“new solos”) for a period of 12 months. During this time, they are receiving mentoring and training on substantive areas of law and ethical law practice management. A requirement for program participation is contribution of 100 hours of pro bono work (including the training required to prepare them for such work). This work is performed through a variety of opportunities developed by the legal services community partners. Program participants receive mentoring, including access to a group of lawyers and retired judges who are working with the new solos to provide feedback about strategy. Legal services organizations provide substantive legal training in the areas where new solos will be doing pro bono. Each new solo is gaining legal experience while performing pro bono while also developing relationships that may lead to building their practices.

For training beyond the capacity of legal services organizations (e.g. law practice management), LAIC is working with the law schools and the Los Angeles County Law Library to coordinate these trainings which consist of day-long or multi-day training sessions in substantive areas of law.

Website: <https://www.laincubatorconsortium.com>

Modest Means Incubator Program

California Lawyers for the Arts

The California Lawyers for the Arts [CLA] Modest Means Incubator Program [MMIP] is designed to offer new and young lawyers valuable experience and ongoing education to help build their professional career in entertainment, arts and innovation law while also developing sound business management skills with the highest ethical standards. The program is intended to accelerate the successful development of new lawyers in a mentoring environment that provides an array of support resources.

Website: <https://www.calawyersforthearts.org/modest-means-incubator-program.html>

Practical Lawyering Program

Monterey College of Law

Monterey College of Law's Practical Lawyering Program provides a business incubator setting to new solos with the goal of producing practitioners interested in serving modest means clients. Each academic year, the program will welcome six to ten new lawyers who have a desire to establish their own law practices. Participants will develop their practice in a cooperative, shared-space environment at Monterey College of Law. The program will facilitate access to affordable office space, guidance in managing a legal practice, quality continuing legal education, seasoned mentors and Monterey College of Law alumni attorneys. While they are building their practices, the lawyers in the incubator will provide low-bono services to increase the access to civil legal services for those in need. While providing those legal services, the incubator lawyers gain valuable legal experience and are exposed to professional networking opportunities.

Website: <http://montereylaw.edu/practical-lawyering-program/>

Lawyer Entrepreneur Assistance Program

Legal Aid Society of Orange County

Legal Aid Society of Orange County (LASOC) works in collaboration with the University of California, Irvine School of Law, Whittier Law School, Western State College of Law, and the Dale E. Fowler School of Law at Chapman University. It has been operational as of January of 2013 and the program is operated under the auspices of the Legal Aid Society. Participants operate their own independent law firms and their programs are funded by the law school partners. The program is staffed by volunteers and LASOC staff and requires participants to take some pro bono cases and the option of taking some moderate-income cases. There are no income or subject matter restrictions on the types of cases that are accepted. The LASOC staff hand selects participants and the length of the program is one year. The resources provided to participants are subsidized office space, mentoring on substantive legal issues, opportunities to shadow lawyers, assistance and training with practice management issues, free or subsidized CLE programming, in-person networking, programming on client development, case referrals, pro bono opportunities, and legal research resources.

<http://incubator.legal-aid.com>

Justice Entrepreneurs Project

Chicago Bar Foundation

The Chicago Bar Foundation has been operational since June 2013. The program was started by a bar foundation as a directly supported project that may eventually become its own free-standing organization. Participants operate their own independent law firms and the program is funded through a combination of bar foundation supports, grants, donations, and revenue from participants. The program is staffed by the bar foundation and there is currently

one full-time director. The program prepares participants to take moderate-income cases and maintain a sustainable practice. The program includes a twenty-hour per week pro bono component during the first six months of the program. There are subject-matter and income guidelines on the cases accepted by the program participants. In terms of subject matter, there are restrictions on personal injury cases. In terms of income restrictions, participants' practices focus on moderate income clients up to four-hundred percent above the federal poverty level. Participants are selected through application process that accepts based on a resume, transcript, and statement of interest, and interview by alumni participants. The program began with ten participants and adds up to ten participants at six-month intervals for a maximum of up to thirty participants in different phases of the eighteen-month program. Resources provided to participants includes subsidized office space, mentoring on substantive legal issues, assistance with training and practice management issues, free or subsidized CLE programming, online and in-person networking, programming on client development, case referrals, pro bono opportunities, legal research resources, etc.

Website: <https://chicagobarfoundation.org/jep/>

Appendix

Resources

- [Tools for New Lawyers Looking to go Solo](#), Practising Law Institute (6 hour CLE program)
- [Forms](#) California Judicial Council
- [Rules of Court](#) California Rules of Court
- [Ethics Information](#)
 - [California Rules of Professional Conduct, Ethics Opinions & Related Statutes](#)
 - [Proposed New and Amended Rules of Professional Conduct](#)
<http://www.calbar.ca.gov/Attorneys/Conduct-Discipline/Ethics/Committees/Rules-Revision/Rules-Commission-2014/Proposed-Rules>
- [Trust Accounting](#) Client Trust Accounting for California Lawyers

Additional Resources

Billing & Bookkeeping

- [The Small-Firm Guidebook to Accounting Systems: Finding the Fit that's Just Right for You](#), Steve Feters and Christopher T. Anderson, LexisNexis® Law Firm Practice Management Products (2014)
- [How to Choose Billing and Accounting Software for Your Law Firm](#), Loretta Ruppert, *Blog Post on LegalEase.com* (Jan. 11, 2012)
- [Five Pitfalls of Legal Accounting](#), Rick Kabra, *Law Practice Today* (Feb. 12, 2016)
- See **Chapter 3: Pricing** for billing resources.

Developing a Budget

- [Budget Essentials for Law Firm Business Development](#)," Deborah C. Scaringi, *Legal Marketing Reader* (Oct. 2010)
- [Budgeting is the Key to Effective Alternative Billing](#)," Ed Poll, *LawBiz* (Oct. 2012)
- [Financing a Law Practice](#)," Laura A. Calloway and David J. Bilinsky, *GP Solo* (July/Aug. 2011)

- [“Increasing Profit by Decreasing Costs,”](#) K. William Gibson, *Law Practice Magazine* (July/Aug. 2012)

Borrowing Money

- [U.S. Small Business Administration](#)

Building a Basic Website

- [Why a Mobile-Friendly Law Firm Website is Essential](#), Austen Loft, Blog Post on SoloInColo.com
- [How to Select a Domain Name for Your Law Firm](#), Andrew Cabasso, Blog Post on Lawyerist.com (Feb. 12, 2015)

Business Continuity, Contingency, and Succession Planning

- [The Contingency Planning Guide for Lawyers](#), The Law Society of Upper Canada (Oct. 2014)
- [Surviving a Disaster: A Lawyer's Guide to Disaster Planning](#), ABA Special Committee on Disaster Response and Preparedness (Aug. 2011)

Checking Conflicts

- [Maintaining a Conflict-Checking System](#), Marian C. Rice, *Law Practice Magazine* (Nov./Dec. 2013)

Choosing a Business Entity

- [Choosing a Business Structure for Your Law Firm](#), author unknown, Blog Post on FindLaw.com (date unknown)
- [What Business Form to Use for your Law Firm](#), Ian E. Scott, Blog Post on TheStudentAppeal.com (date unknown)
- [How to Select a Law Firm Business Entity](#), Megan Zavierh, Blog Post on Lawyerist.com (Feb. 23, 2015)
- ALPS Getting Started Solo Manual

Choosing a Law Firm Name

- [Selecting a Name for Your New Law Firm](#), Matthew Hickey, Blog Post on RocketLawyer.com (April 18, 2012)
- [Small Firms, Big Lawyers: Small Firms with Big Names](#), Jay Shepherd, Blog post on AboveTheLaw.com (July 27, 2011)
- [Choosing Your Company's Name: Corporate Names Versus Trademarks](#), Sonia Lakhany, Blog Post on MyShingle.com (June 27, 2014)

Client-Centric Law Firms

- [Why Your Firm Should Be Designed With Your Client In Mind](#), LegalPracticePro.com (Aug. 27, 2015)
- [CLP Speakers Series: Transforming the Delivery of Legal Services in Canada](#): Findings of the Canadian Bar Association’s Legal Futures Initiative with Fred Headon, Assistant General Counsel, Labour and Employment, at Montreal-based Air Canada and Chair of the CBA’s Legal Futures Initiative (published March 13, 2015)
- [Creating a Client-Centric Practice](#), Ed Finkel, *Illinois Bar Journal* (Nov. 2015)
- [For 2016, Should You Expand Your Practice to . . . Walmart?](#), Casey C. Sullivan, Blog Post on Findlaw.com (Dec. 22, 2015)
- [The Client-Centered Law Practice \(Part 1 of 2\)](#), Jim Calloway, *Oklahoma Bar Journal* (Jan. 17, 2004)
- [The Client-Centered Law Practice \(Part 2 of 2\)](#), Jim Calloway, *Oklahoma Bar Journal* (Feb. 14, 2004)
- [Youtility: Why Smart Marketing is about Help Not Hype](#), Jay Baer
- [“Reinventing the Practice of Law – Emerging Models to Enhance Affordable Legal Services”, Professor Luz Herrera](#), Editor, ABA Standing Committee on the Delivery of Legal Services 2014

Creating a Business Plan

- [Lean Startups Need Business Plans, Too](#), Tim Berry, Blog Post on Entrepreneur.com (July 10, 2012)
- [Write a Winning Business Plan With These 8 Key Elements](#), David Ciccarelli, Blog Post on Entrepreneur.com (June 23, 2014)
- [Are YOU Ready to Fly Solo?](#), Ed Poll, *Law Practice Today* (March 2011)
- [Future Perfect: Staged Business Planning for Law Firms](#), Jared Corraera, Blog Post on AttorneyAtWork.com (March 5, 2015)

Developing a Business Plan

- [“Law Firm Recruits Lawyers to Provide a la Carte Divorce Services in Cafe Setting,” Debra Cassens Weiss](#), *ABA Journal News* (Nov. 2012)
- [“Key Points to Consider When Borrowing Money,”](#) U.S. Small Business Administration, *FindLaw* (March 2008)
- [“Building a Great Business Plan for Your New Law Practice,” Freya Allen Shoffner](#) of Shoffner & Associates, Boston, MA, *Massachusetts Bar Association LOMAP*
- [“Six Tips to Take Charge of Your Own Economy,”](#) Cynthia Sharp, *GP Solo* (Jan./Feb. 2013)

eLawyering

- [eLawyering Blog](#), published by Richard S. Granat

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ABA “Going Solo” Portal

- The ABA “Going Solo” Portal is a great resource for attorneys opening their own practice. It contains information about many useful topics, including business registration/form of entity, computer advice and assistance, commercial general liability insurance, among others, as well as various links to helpful articles, blogs, books, and other websites.
- Visit the website at https://www.americanbar.org/portals/solo_lawyers/going_solo.html

State Bar of California – Incubator Projects

Visit the [Incubator Projects](#) section of the State Bar of California’s website for more information on incubator projects.