

A new way to work-life balance

By Tara Puckey

It's no secret that the "just do more" habits of law school stick around well into the professional practice - an endless cycle of overwhelming stacks of work, overflowing inboxes and late nights

- because "that's just what it takes to succeed in law."

But success brings its own set of challenges. Growth isn't isolated, which means more work in every area of your

practice, and for most, the answer is to work harder and longer. I'd argue that over time the work simply *becomes* life, a nasty side effect of success without the proper "treatment." In the end, the consequences can be dire. A 2016 study by the American Bar Association found that nearly 21 percent of lawyers reported problematic drinking, more than 61 percent suffer from anxiety, and close to half struggle with depression.

Despite the dismal statistics, it's difficult to see or manage a path to a successful practice without the deeply engrained, high-priced model of endless work, especially for those who built a practice of their own. A growing practice breeds a tendency to chase the next goal before completing the first, to assess cost before benefit and to revert frequently to the "that's the way we've always done it" mentality.

At the core, the deeply rooted issues symptomatic to the business, not legal, aspect of operating a practice are far more complicated than drawing a simple line in the sand: work here, life here. At best the decades-old advice that rests on strict separation is outdated. A healthier future depends on an integrated, authentic work-life balance that focuses on finding a new and better way to operate the business of the business. So where to start?

Level up your management skills.

You already have a deep understanding of the law, but building and managing a practice is a different beast. Don't assume you're up to speed on the latest ways to manage your practice's finances, to hire and fire employees or to structure a plan for growth, not to mention the complicated management of employees and clients alike. Take advantage of skills-based training programs that help you work smarter, not harder, when it comes to managing your business.

Superior risk,adjusted returns with an emphasis on

QUALITY ASSETS.



Over \$1 billion in assets under management for clients.

DIAMOND
CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

Fee-only portfolio management.

317-261-1900 | www.dmdcap.com | Indianapolis

Not FDIC Insured - No Bank Guarantee - May Lose Value

©2019 Diamond Capital Management

Build a better team - and use them. A team is leverage, especially if it's used properly, and without one, you're just doing a job - one that runs out of value when you're not present. With the *right* team, you're able to pass along the things you're not interested in, surround yourself with people who excel in areas where you struggle, and increase your practice's capacity while freeing up your own personal capacity for other things, *not* more work!

Work with a focus on systems and technology. Creating processes and procedures that help you and your team work smarter, not harder, is an up-front investment in time and, sometimes, money. Putting new technology to good use can be the same way. Don't skimp - you get what you pay for. Expert systems will free up your whole team to think about what comes next, and technology can unburden you in so many ways but only if those things are done correctly from the start.

Provide the best service (that isn't just about the law). Remember, most clients aren't hiring you because they agree with your legal opinion. They're hiring you because someone they trust said something good about you or your practice or because they have a "good feeling" about you. And while they want top-notch legal representation once they *have* hired you, they also want attentive customer service. Don't disregard the importance of communication, listening and common understanding.

Always be you - the authentic you. Every good transaction starts with a good interaction because, in the end, relationships drive success. Peers, employees and clients want to know that you're trustworthy, and that's usually tossed aside if they feel like they're working with a non-responsive robot. Set boundaries but don't forget that we're all human - and that commonality can be your greatest asset.

Remember, your legal knowledge is your product, not your purpose. Building a healthy, manageable integration between work and life requires a law practice that operates on a foundation of smart and strong business principles to guide everything from process to people, and it's never too late to start.

Tara Puckey is the Indiana State Bar Association's Law Practice Management Consultant. She conducts monthly training sessions as part of the LPM Training Series. She can be reached via email at tpuckey@inbar.org.



*Tara Puckey
Indiana State Bar Association
Law Practice Management
Consultant
tpuckey@inbar.org*

CLASSIFIEDS

Employment Opportunities

Email your classified word ad to Chauncey Lipscomb, clipscomb@inbar.org. You will be billed upon publication. ISBA members: \$30C per word, \$15 minimum; nonmembers ("Employment Opportunities" only) and nonlawyers: \$50C per word, \$25 minimum; \$5 blind-box fee.

ESTABLISHED NORTHWEST INDIANA law firm seeks highly motivated associate with a minimum of 2 years' legal experience to assist in its business law section. Experience in business formation and advice, business transactions, real estate matters, business and civil litigation required. Interest in the handling of municipal law matters preferred. Reply to Indiana State Bar Association, Attn: RG Box 100118, One Indiana Square, Suite 530, Indianapolis, IN 46204.

POSITION: ATTORNEY. O'Bryan, Brown & Toner, PLLC is seeking an Indiana licensed attorney for their Indianapolis office located in the N Meridian area. The successful candidate will have at least 2-4 years of civil litigation experience preferably in the area of medical malpractice defense. The candidate must have excellent references. This is a full-time position. Salary is based on experience, plus benefits. Send resumes to Mary Beth O'Bryan at obryanm@obtlaw.com.

ATTORNEY NEEDED for Danville law firm to represent existing and new clients in the practice areas of trusts, wills, estates, and guardianships. A secondary focus in handling or learning to handle personal injury and business litigation

cases is also desired. Prefer a candidate who wants to establish roots in the Hendricks County community. Please send resumes and cover letter to Kevin@Hinkle-Law.com. All submissions will be held in confidence.

WEALTH MANAGEMENT/ESTATE PLANNING: Established independent trust company seeking a relationship-focused individual with 10+ years' experience in trust administration and/or estate planning to serve as a trusted advisor for company's ultra-high-net-worth clients in central Indiana. Collaborative, strategically-minded individuals, who are actively engaged in the local community, preferred. Send resume and cover letter to khammond@indtrust.com.

VISITING ASSISTANT PROFESSOR in Legal Communication and Analysis: Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law invites entry-level and experienced applicants for a visiting professorship in the school's nationally ranked Legal Communication and Analysis Program.

The visitor position is a full-time position. The visitor is expected to teach up to 40 first-year students in Legal Communication and Analysis,

(continued on page 30)

600+ appeals
30+ years experience

**Stone Law Office
& Legal Research**

26 W. 8th St., P.O. Box 1322
Anderson, IN 46015

765/644-0331 800/879-6329

765/644-2629 (fax)
info@stone-law.net

David W. Stone IV
Attorney

Cynthia A. Eggert
Paralegal