

PERSPECTIVES

Strategies to Manage Your Law Firm's Professional Liability Exposures

MSP L 09/05 "Practice Management Strategies Part 10—Law Firm Technology and Practice Groups"

September 2005

Practice Management Strategies Part 10 Technology and Practice Groups

Law Firm Technology

Embrace technology – In many law firms there is still a level of emotional resistance to computers and technology. In reality, technology is revolutionizing the way law is practiced, and will continue to do so.



In many areas, technology provides you with opportunities for speed and efficiency that did not previously exist. Encourage all lawyers and support staff to be as computer literate and proficient as possible.

Keep up with client technological demands – Sophisticated clients want their law firm to be as technologically sophisticated as possible. The short reason for this is that the client knows that the more technologically advanced the law firm is, the faster the service and the better the product the client will receive. If you do not keep pace with your clients technologically, they will find a law firm that will.

Computerize all of your administrative functions – Prior to the advent of widespread computerization, approximately 25% of all professional liability claims involved administrative breakdowns or oversights. With extensive use of computers, you can “computerize away” this exposure to a meaningful degree.

As a general rule, it can be said that the more computers you use and the more sophisticated and widespread their applications are, the lower your

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2005 Training Sessions

In Cavnac & Associates' Training Room

Bank of America Plaza
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- **Workers Compensation Claims Management**
Friday, September 16th, 9:00—11:00AM
- **Personal Protective Equipment and Post-Accident Response Training**
Friday, September 30th, 9:00—11:00AM
- **How to Bullet-Proof Your Workers Compensation Audit**
Friday, October 7, 2005, 9:00—11:00AM
- **Sexual Harassment Training (AB 1825 Compliant)**
Friday, October 21, 2005, 9:00—11:00AM
- **Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP): How to Set Up an Effective Training Program**
Friday, November 4, 2005, 9:00—11:00AM
- **Fleet Safety**
Friday, December 2, 2005, 9:00—11:00AM

**All Training Sessions Available to Our Clients
Seating Is Limited!**

Contact **STUART NAKUTIN** by e-mail at snakutin@cavnac.com or by phone at **619-744-0589** for information about upcoming training sessions. ✨

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professional liability exposure will be. Whenever possible, invest in worthwhile hardware and software upgrades.

Use fully integrated computer systems whenever possible – The more fully integrated your systems are, the less need there will be for your staff to re-enter the same data into multiple databases. Not only is this less expensive and more efficient, the chance of error during both the input and output phases is drastically reduced.

Ideally, all of the computers in your office should be part of the same network.

Backup critical files that are stored on office computer systems on a regular basis – Since the possibility of files

being erased, lost or corrupted exists even with the best computer systems, it is important to identify all critical files and create backup files on a regular basis.

Often this can be done by putting backup copies of the documents on disk, and storing these in a safe place. A specific person, such as the law firm legal administrator, should have the responsibility of making sure this process is completed on a daily or weekly basis.

The backup function is considered to be so important relevant to computer-stored data that it is suggested that backups are done as frequently as possible, and that the backup data be tested periodically to make sure it is useable. Backup data or disks should be stored in secure off-site storage places.

Practice Groups

Make sure each practice group is functional and profitable – A challenge exists in law firms that have multiple practice groups, one for each area of the law that the firm practices.

On the one hand, the practice group usually needs a high level of operating autonomy in order to succeed from operations and profitability standpoints.

On the other hand, if each practice group becomes its own fiefdom with its own separate systems and client intake procedures, the whole law firm is at risk of deficiencies or mistakes made by one of its practice groups.

The most important strategy is to make sure that all practice groups are part of the same firm-wide centralized systems and procedures, especially client intake procedures. ✨

Disclaimer: "Perspectives" is published as a service to lawyers. While the information contained herein is believed to be reliable, readers are advised to consult their own legal and insurance counsel for assistance in applying it to their unique situations.

"The law is reason free from passion." — Aristotle

"Where law ends, tyranny begins." — William Pitt

"Honest disagreement is often a good sign of progress." —Mahatma Gandhi