

# PERSPECTIVES

Strategies to Manage Your Law Firm's Professional Liability Exposures

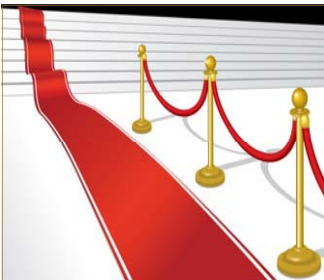
MSP L 03/08 "Practice Management Strategies Part 20 — Service, Turnover, and Sexual Relations"

March, 2008

## Practice Management Strategies

### Part 20

## Service, Turnover, and Sexual Relations



#### Service to Clients

View your firm as a service provider - Viewing your firm as a provider of legal services to your clients provides a useful frame of

reference from several standpoints. For one thing, your mission as a firm and your firm's objectives become a lot clearer. Essentially, the goal is to provide the highest-quality legal services you can to clients on a timely basis.

The service provider world view also makes your results easier to identify and quantify by asking some simple questions to clients in the form of client surveys or informally. The key core questions include:

- Are we providing you with an acceptable level of legal services?
- Do we provide our legal services within a timetable that is acceptable to you?

Gain the competitive edge by providing fast, personalized service to all of your clients - The way to get a competitive edge service-wise in the legal field is to provide your services quicker than the competition, and in a personalized way to the extent that it is possible. Because the legal system tends to move slowly at times, providing faster than average service clearly contrasts you with - and therefore sets you apart from - your competition.

Personalized service can consist of delivering a completed will to a client in person, as opposed to

mailing it out. On the whole, accessibility to their lawyer is most important to clients.

#### Turnover

Avoid being a "revolving door" - Stability and continuity in operations are among the most important tools for avoiding professional liability claims. If you have constant turnover in partners, associate lawyers, paralegals, support staff, or clients, you have high potential for experiencing professional liability claims.

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Published by

**Cavignac & Associates**

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The reason for this is that by having a high level of turnover, you create ever-changing standards of performance, work product, and expectations. People are much more likely to make mistakes when everything is new to them, rather than when it is all familiar. In a world of constant change and flux, it is advisable to strive for continuity in operations.

## Sexual Relations with Clients or Staff

Avoid having sexual relations with any of your clients or staff — In a socio-legal environment in which a claim for sexual harassment by a client or staff member has the potential to financially bankrupt a professional firm, the only safe risk management technique is total avoidance.

For better or worse — and regardless of the circumstances or merits — clients who have sexual relations with their lawyers will often be portrayed as victims. It is recommended that there be a strict, no nonsense policy against lawyer sexual relations with clients or staff, and a zero tolerance policy for any kind of behavior by lawyers or clients which even borders on sexual harassment. Some currents are simply too strong to swim against. ✨

**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.

## Vision Care—UV Protection

### Keeping Your Eyes Safe from the Sun

Article courtesy of Employee Benefits Department

Exposure to UV-A and UV-B rays can damage your eyes. Long-term exposure to UV rays can result in vision loss from conditions like cataracts or macular degeneration. Long hours at the beach or skiing without proper eye protection can cause corneal sunburn, which can be very painful and may cause temporary vision loss, and skin cancer (around the eyelids). UV protection does not cost a lot of money and does not get in the way of seeing clearly.

### Exposure Risk Factors

Everyone is at risk for eye damage from UV radiation that can lead to vision loss. The risk of sun related eye problems is even higher for people who:

- Spend long hours in the sun
- Have had cataract surgery or have certain retina disorders
- Are on certain medicines, such as tetracycline, sulfa drugs, birth control pills, diuretics and tranquilizers that increase the eye's sensitivity to light

### Proper Eye Protection

Adequately protecting your eyes from the sun and other elements like wind or water is crucial to maintaining your vision and eye health.

- Use everyday eyewear that absorbs UV rays — Prescription and non-prescription eyewear, contact lenses and lens implants should absorb UV-A and UV-B rays. Options such as UV-blocking lens materials, coatings and photo chromic lenses are available.
- Select the right sunglasses — Sunglasses filter light and protect your eyes from damaging UV rays. Look for

labels that clearly state they block 99 to 100% of UV-A and UV-B rays and also reduce glare. Select glasses that protect your entire eye area, are comfortable to wear, and do not distort color.

If you are at the beach or on the ski slopes, wear sunglasses with a darker tint to block more light — your risk of eye damage from the sun is greater because of reflection off the water and snow.

- Wear a brimmed hat or cap - A wide-brimmed hat or cap will block about half of UV rays, and also limit UV rays that hit the eyes from above or around glasses. ✨

## 2008 FOCUS Seminars

Cavignac & Associates' FOCUS Room  
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450 B Street, 18th Floor, San Diego, CA

- **Office Ergonomics**  
Friday, April 18, 2008 — 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM
- **Defensive Driver Training and Fleet Safety Management**  
Friday, May 23, 2008 — 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

All training sessions available to our clients  
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\* NOTE: Due to the popularity of our seminars and limited space available, we regret we cannot provide refunds or credits with less than 72 hours advance notice of cancellation.