12 GREAT QUESTIONS TO ASK A MENTOR

Delivered positively, and with some advance preparation by you, a few of these are enough to focus on in a session with a mentor:

1. There is a lot to building a practice... What do you wish you had known when you were first getting started?
2. So how is your practice?
3. How did you determine your type of practice? What should I consider if I’m opening an X law practice in X town?
4. What kind of business structure would work well for the type of practice I’m considering?
5. Do you do any volunteering, in what ways has volunteering and pro bono work helped your career? Would you recommend that a newer attorney become involved?
6. How are your kids/hobbies/latest technological discovery?
7. What are some great books you’ve read that might help me with my X skills?
8. I am concerned about __________... is this something I should be focusing on now? How would you recommend I tackle it?
9. What CLE’s would you recommend?
10. What groups would you recommend I join, I am already a member of ________?
11. A particular opposing counsel is difficult to work with because __________, I try not to let it get to me, but what would you recommend?
12. I have a client that is difficult to work with because ________ - how do you tackle difficult clients?
SAMPLE EMAIL TO A PROSPECTIVE MENTOR

(IF YOU ALREADY MET THE POTENTIAL MENTOR)

To: _____________

I enjoyed meeting you briefly at ___________ event. As a newer practitioner I am glad that I can rely on the more experienced attorneys in our field for insight. If you are available in the next couple of weeks I would like to meet with you over lunch, or coffee (Happy Hour if it went really well) and follow-up on a couple of questions I am currently tackling.

I am free ______________ dates/times. Let me know if those work for you. I am located near your office / I am frequently downtown, so we can meet in that area.

Thank you again, and I look forward to continuing our conversation.

Noah K. Williams
Attorney at Law
Emery | Reddy, PLLC
600 Stewart Street, Suite 1100
Seattle, Washington 98101

(206) 442-9106 tel (main)
(206) 812-1305 tel (direct dial)
(206) 441-9711 fax

WWW.EMERYREDDY.COM

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(IF YOU HAVE NEVER MET THE POTENTIAL MENTOR)

To: _____________

As a newer practitioner in our field I frequently meet with more experienced attorneys to discuss how to develop and build a great practice. _________ (referral) gave me your name as a great person to sit down with and discuss ___________. (OR your name came up when I was looking for _______________.) I am glad that I can rely on the more experienced attorneys in our field for insight.

If you are available in the next couple of weeks I would like to meet with you over lunch, or coffee. I have a couple of general questions about ___________ and I would appreciate any insight you can give me.

I am free ______________ dates/times. Let me know if those work for you. I am located near your office / I am frequently downtown, so we can meet in that area. You should also feel free to call me at _____ if it is easier to coordinate via the phone.

Thank you again, and I look forward to continuing our conversation.

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SOURCES OF HELP

WSBA SERVICES

An overview of WSBA services (See http://www.wsba.org/ for detailed information and updates).

Addiction Counseling: Confidential assistance with questions or concerns about alcohol and drug problems. Call 206-733-5988; 800-945-9722, ext. 5988.

Alternative Dispute Resolution Program (ADR): Provides a procedure for settling disputes without litigation through mediation and fee arbitration. 206-733-5923; 800-945-9722, ext. 5923.

Career Transition Issues: Confidential assistance with job or career management, or transitioning out of the law. 206-727-8269; 800-945-9722, ext. 8269.

Casemaker: Online research library provided free to WSBA members. Access through www.wsba.org, click on Casemaker logo on the right sidebar. For help, call 206-733-5914; 800-945-9722, ext. 5914.

Computer Software: For help, call 206-733-5914; 800-945-9722, ext. 5914.

Computer Clinic: Classes to help you make the most of software you already own. Call 206-733-5914; 800-945-9722, ext. 5914.

Depression: Confidential assistance. Call 206-727-8268; 800-945-9722, ext. 8268.

Diversion Program: Option for less serious disciplinary grievances. Goals are to educate, rehabilitate, provide restitution, and protect the profession and the public. Call 206-727-8267; 800-945-9722, ext. 8267.

Ethics Line: Confidential opportunity to discuss prospective ethical dilemmas. 206-727-8284; 800-945-9722, ext. 8284.

Ethics Opinions: Ethics Opinions are approved by the Board of Governors and the Rules of Professional Conduct Committee. They address ethical concerns of the members. www.wsba.org/.

Fee Arbitration: Program for resolving disputes over fees without litigation. 206-733-5923; 800-945-9722, ext. 5923.

Financial Management: Call the Law Office Management Assistance Program at 206-733-5914; 800-945-9722, ext. 5914.
Judicial Assistance Service Program: Confidential assistance for judges facing personal or professional challenges. Call 206-727-8265; 800-945-9722, ext. 8265.

Lawyers Assistance Program (LAP): A resource for lawyers who want to function at their best. Call 206-727-8268; 800-945-9722, ext. 8268.

Lawyer Services Department (LaSD): The WSBA department housing the Lawyers Assistance Program, Judicial Assistance Service Program, Law Office Management Assistance Program, Professional Responsibility Program, and Alternative Dispute Resolution Program. Call 206-727-8268; 800-945-9722, ext. 8268.

Law Student Assistance: Personal and professional counseling for third-year law students through the Lawyers Assistance Program. Call 206-727-8268; 800-945-9722, ext. 8268.

Life Balance Issues: The tension between work and personal life, including family, friends, avocation, recreation, and spiritual development.

Law Office Management Assistance Program (LOMAP): Assistance with the nuts and bolts of running the business of a law practice. Call 206-733-5914; 800-945-9722, ext. 5914, or visit www.lomap.org.

- “Starting Your Practice” links lead to the information you need for establishing a practice based in Seattle. (See your local municipality for its requirements.) Information on business licenses, office space, court procedures, client file retention, mentorship, WSBA-sponsored insurance programs, and request to establish an IOLTA account.

- Law Office in a Box for $79. Includes forms, published materials, information, examples, and an hour of LOMAP consultation time

Mediation: Call 206-733-5923; 800-945-9722, ext. 5923.

Mental Health Counseling: Confidential assistance with relationship issues, depression, anxiety, addictions, and other concerns through the Lawyers Assistance Program. Call 206-727-8268; 800-945-9722, ext. 8268.

Office Management: Call LOMAP at 206-733-5914; 800-945-9722 ext. 5914, or visit www.lomap.org.

Peer Counselors: Lawyers trained to support and encourage other lawyers. Call 206-727-8268; 800-945-9722, ext. 8268.

The Professional Responsibility Program (PRP) concerns providing ethical guidance to members through the Ethics Line, issuance of ethics opinions, and continuing legal education presentations.
Solo Attorney Help: Call LOMAP at 206-733-5914; 800-945-9722 ext. 5914.

Stress Management: Call LAP at 206-727-8268; 800-945-9722, ext. 8268.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

WSBA Sections [http://www.wsba.org/]
- Administrative Law
- Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Animal Law
- Antitrust, Consumer Protection and Unfair Business Practices
- Business Law
- Civil Rights Law
- Construction Law
- Corporate Counsel
- Creditor Debtor Rights
- Criminal Law
- Elder Law
- Environmental and Land Use Law
- Family Law
- Health Law
- Indian Law
- Intellectual Property
- International Practice
- Juvenile Law
- Labor and Employment Law
- Litigation
- Real Property, Probate and Trust
- Senior Lawyers
- Sexual Orientation and Gender Identification Legal Issues (SOGILI)
- Solo and Small Practice
- Taxation
- World Peace Through Law

ABA Groups and Sections [http://www.americanbar.org/groups/view_all_groups.html]

County Bar Associations (many have young lawyers divisions)
[http://www.wsba.org/]

Minority Bar Associations in Washington
[http://www.wsba.org/]
- Asian Bar Association of Washington
- The Cardozo Society
- Filipino Lawyers of Washington
- GLBT Bar Association (QLaw)
- Korean American Bar Association
- Latina/Latino Bar Association of Washington
- Loren Miller Bar Association
- Middle Eastern Legal Association of Washington
- Mother Attorneys Mentoring Association of Seattle
- Northwest Indian Bar Association
- Pierce County Minority Bar Association
South Asian Bar Association of Washington
Vietnamese American Bar Association of Washington
Washington Attorneys with Disabilities Association
Washington Women Lawyers

Non-legal Professional Associations Related to Practice Areas and Potential Clients.

Online association directories:
- Gateway to Associations Online http://www.asaecenter.org/Community/Directories/AssociationSearch.cfm
- Associations on the Net http://www.ipl.org/div/aon/

50 WEB RESOURCES – with leads to recommended vendors and consultants*

(Excerpted from the July 2009 ABA article by Jim Calloway and Allison C. Shields, “50 Web Resources for the Suddenly Solo Lawyer.”)

Great Articles to Read – Starting a Practice in Tough Economic Times

Weather the Storm, by Gerry Riskin and Robert Millard
The National, Canadian Bar Association, (April/May 2008 issue)

http://www.abanet.org/lpm/lpt/articles/mgt11082.shtml
Law Practice Today (November 2008)

Going Solo on a Budget by Dennis Kennedy, ABA Journal (April 2009)
http://www.abajournal.com/magazine/going_solo_on_a_budget/

Teaming Up, Starting Anew by Dennis Kennedy, ABA Journal (May 2009)
http://www.abajournal.com/magazine/teaming_up_starting_anew/

Law Office Start-up: Law Office on a Shoestring, by Sheila Blackford
Oregon State Bar Bulletin - October 2008 - Managing Your Practice
Weather the Storm: Law Firm Risk Management in Hard Times, by Mark J. Fucile
https://www.osbar.org/publications/bulletin/09may/practice.html

Managing Anxiety in Uncertain Times
Oregon Attorney Assistance Program In Sight Newsletter - March 2009

Choices: Law Firm Billing and Accounting Software, by Dee Crocker
Oregon State Bar Bulletin - December 2008 - Managing Your Practice

Business Competency for Lawyers, A LawBiz Management Special Report
By Edward Poll
http://www.lawbiz.com/aba_bus_comp.html
(60 page free downloadable e-book)

How to Take Control of Your Practice By Creating Vision and Mission Statement
By Allison Shields
www.abanet.org/genpractice/newsletter/lawtrends/0602/business/visionstatements.html

Practicing Law in Tough Economic Times
By Jim Calloway
(Oklahoma Bar Journal, January, 2009)

More Thoughts on Practicing Law in Tough Economic Times
By Jim Calloway
(Oklahoma Bar Journal, February, 2009)

In a Tough Economy, the Importance of Effective Client Screening
By Deborah E. Gillis
http://www.abanet.org/lpm/lpt/articles/mgt11084.shtml
(Law Practice Today, November, 2008)

http://www.practicepro.ca/LawPROmag/2008LawPROMag.asp#lawpro4

Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers (Massachusetts) Spring 2009 newsletter Theme issue on Responding to Trying Times
http://lclma.org/contentnews.htm?sid=27
Robert Ambrogi’s Law Sites keeps lawyers up to date on websites for lawyers: http://www.legaline.com/lawsites.html

David Bilinsky’s Thoughtful Legal Management discusses law firm finance, profitability and the use of technology in law practice. http://thoughtfullaw.com/

JD Bliss: http://www.jdblissblog.com/ helps lawyers balance work and life

Jim Calloway’s Law Practice Tips blog talks about practice management, the Internet and technology: http://jimcalloway.typepad.com

Look to Counsel to Counsel for all things related to legal careers: http://www.counseltocounsel.com/

Ellen Freedman’s Law Practice Management blog helps lawyers manage the business side of their practice: http://pa-lawpracticemanagement.com/

Matt Homann’s the [non]billable hour: http://thenonbillablehour.typepad.com/ discusses innovation and productivity


Tom Kane’s Legal Marketing Blog is dedicated to lawyer marketing in any size firm: http://legalmarketingblog.com

Dennis Kennedy’s Dennis Kennedy.com focuses mostly on legal technology: http://www.denniskennedy.com/blog/

Erik Mazzone’s Law Practice Matters Blog shows lawyers how to practice smart: http://www.lawpracticematters.com/

Tom Mighell’s Inter-Alia blog is among other things, an internet legal research weblog: http://inter-alia.net/


Ed Poll’s Law Biz Blog is a practical guide for lawyers: http://lawbizblog.com/
Gerry Riskin’s Amazing Firms, Amazing Practices covers legal practices from all angles:  
http://www.gerryriskin.com/

Allison Shields’ Legal Ease Blog helps lawyers create more productive, profitable and enjoyable law practices: http://legaleaseblogs.com/legal_ease_blog (Additional articles from Allison can be found at: http://www.lawyermeltdown.com/articles.html)

Guides, Checklists and Other Sets of Resources

Carolyn Elefant’s MyShingle blog (www.myshingle.com) has long been recognized as a premiere resource for solo and small firm lawyers. See her resources and information for solos (includes forms and checklists for solos or those starting a law practice) http://sites.google.com/site/myshinglebarreview/Home/soloformania and her online guide to starting a law practice: http://www.myshingle.com/2008/01/resources/online-guide/

Maryland State Bar Association  
Economic Resource Guide  
http://www.msba.org/departments/membership/newmemben/empresources/default.asp

Starting Your Own Practice (Florida Bar)  
http://tinyurl.com/lrpmcm

Oklahoma Bar Association  
Starting a Law Practice Web Directory  
http://www.okbar.org/members/map/practice.htm

Checklist for Setting Up a New Law Office (Alabama Bar)  

Checklist for Starting a Law Practice (Missouri Bar)  
http://members.mobar.org/pdfs/lpm/checklist.pdf

practicePro’s “Managing” series of booklets  
http://www.practicepro.ca/managingbooklets/default.asp
Eight great downloadable booklets on managing your law practice. Your attention is directed to #6 “Managing the finances of your practice” where their sample law firm budget (in PDF or Excel) is their most popular download.

Unlock Your Potential: Hanging Out Your Shingle: A 79 page e-book in PDF format from the ABA Young Lawyer’s Division on setting up a law practice.  
JD Supra
Attorneys post forms, motions and other documents here, and you can post your profile and get known as well. http://www.jdsupra.com

IRS Starting a Business Resources
http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=99336,00.html

Small Business Administration
http://www.sba.gov/
(see Small Business Planner http://www.sba.gov/smallbusinessplanner/index.html, Tools and Local Resources)

Legal Discussion Groups

Solosez – An ABA listserv for solo and small firm lawyers www.solosez.net

Solomarketing – formed as a splinter group from Solosez, Solomarketing discusses all aspects of marketing for your law practice. For information, go to http://groups.yahoo.com and search for Sololawyermarketing.

Lawtech – Informal e-mail discussion list focused on legal technology. Get tech help and find out about the latest technology trends. View the archives and subscribe at : http://mail.abanet.org/archives/lawtech.html
(There are also many legal discussion groups on LinkedIn and other social networking sites)

Resources from the American Bar Association

ABA Law Practice Management Section
Website: http://www.abanet.org/lpm/home.shtml provides news, tips, great CLE programs and more.

Law Practice Magazine. Start with the current issue here: http://www.abanet.org/lpm/magazine

Law Practice Today
http://www.abanet.org/lpm/lpt/home.shtml
(If you got to this feature by a link from a friend or search, don’t forget to subscribe to this free monthly e-zine while you are here.)

ABA General Practice, Solo & Small Firm Division
http://www.abanet.org/genpractice

GPSolo magazine
Start with the Small theme issue (April/May 2009)
http://www.abanet.org/genpractice/magazine/2009/apr_may/#features
Then look through all of the other issues, online and free to non-members, here:
http://www.abanet.org/genpractice/magazine/past-issues.html

ABA Legal Technology Resource Center
http://www.abanet.org/tech/ltrc/ a collection of technology resources and information
Current articles: http://www.abanet.org/tech/ltrc/publications/
(Articles are free but access to certain archives require ABA membership)
ABA LTRC Solo and Small Firm Technology Center:
http://www.abanet.org/tech/ltrc/gpsstechcenter.html
Site-tation: Law Technology Resource Center's blog
http://new.abanet.org/sitetation/Pages/home.aspx
ABA Center for Professional Responsibility – resources for solo and small firm lawyers:
http://www.abanet.org/cpr/solo.html

*Vendors and consultants are not endorsed by the Washington State Bar Association*