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Contributor

Soloing by Trial and Error

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In this guidebook, Soloing by Trial and Error, Mujdah Rahim lays out how to set your law business up for success from the very start. Thoughtful planning and efficient procedures show, and are excellent client retention and marketing tools.

DEVELOPING A PLAN

> "I was thinking a law firm is completely different than a business. It is a business. I'm selling legal services."

Create a Business Plan Before You Open a Law Firm

Include in your business plan:

- **Mission statement.** Think long-term and big picture. It is what your firm is at its core.

- **Long-term and short-term goals.** Set realistic milestones and deadlines.

- **Policies and procedures.** Over time, your Return on Investment (ROI) analysis will lead to changes in your procedures and policies, but you need to have them in place before opening.

Keep This in Mind When Developing Your Business Plan

- Know that a strategic planning process is a series of steps that change.

- Distinguish facts from opinions and assumptions. It's OK to go at your own pace!

- Over the course of the business's life, it will evolve. What you put down in the beginning might change.

- Don't let fear prohibit or drive your decisions.

- Set realistic milestones and deadlines. Be specific! Break things down. For example, "I want to make $100k a year." Now, break it down by month and source.
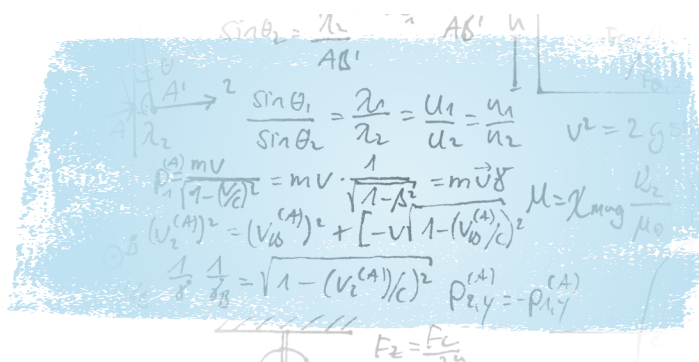
TIP Quick Tips on Branding

- Your brand should be at the forefront of your business. Start with your mission statement, logo and slogan. Your brand will constantly evolve.

- Create an elevator pitch that is 30 seconds or less.

- If it is difficult to discern you and your firm, then the firm will not be able to run without you. For example, we know who Mark Zuckerberg is, but we also know the logo for Facebook. We know what Facebook is without needing Mark to be there.

SETTING PARAMETERS

Why You Need Policies and Procedures

- To avoid miscommunication, inefficiency, or liability, set and know your firm's procedures before you hire.

- Put your policies and procedures in writing and implement them.

- Automate and integrate procedures as much as possible.

- You want your firm to run efficiently, even when you are not present.

- Efficient procedures show, and are good client retention and marketing tools.

Office Policies and Procedures Checklist

Sections to include in your plan:

- Hours of operation

- Opening and handling mail

- Phone/Website/Social Media

- Conflict check

- Scheduling consultations, appointments, etc.

- Opening and closing a client file

- Use of computer, e-mail, client portal

- Backup procedure—change of practice management

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MARKET AND MEASURE

When Does "Marketing" Occur?

- **Everyday interactions with people.** This includes clients, opposing party, opposing counsel, family, and friends. You never know who can be a source of a referral. For referrals to work, you must build meaningful relationships. You might not see the impact immediately.

- **Website**—blogs, vlogs, the site itself

- **Social media**—Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, TikTok. Know what times are optimal posting times.

- **Paid advertising**—Google Ads, Social Media Advertising, Avvo, Yelp, etc.

- **ROI analysis is important.** Whether you outsource it or do it in house, you should be able to understand the ROI. Don't just rely on what you're told.

- **Networking**—Be active in your local bar association, chamber of commerce, Business Network International, etc.
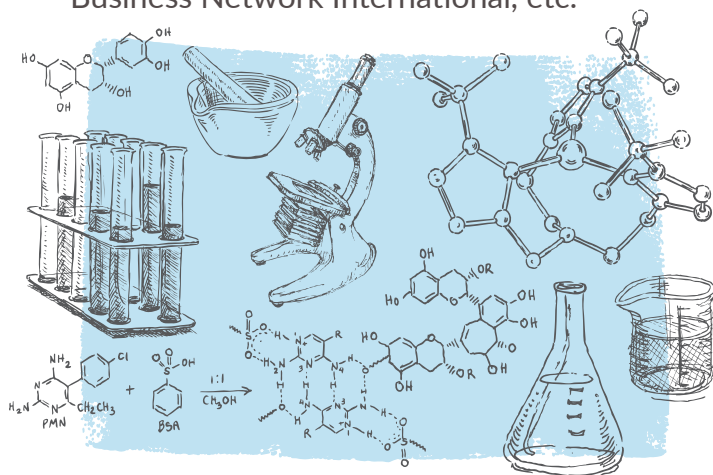
Track Return on Investment (ROI)

Have an ROI – everything should be measured, things like:

- If you offer limited scope consulting, track the number of clients who hire you at the end of the consulting job.

- Know where your clients and calls are coming from. Track referrals.

- Understand who's visiting you online. Google's free web analytics service allows you to analyze in-depth detail about the visitors to your website.

Resources

Have an ROI – everything should be measured, things like:

- Google Analytics: Measure ROI - website traffic (free)

- Analytics provided by FB/IG/Twitter - measure against Google Analytics (free)

- File sharing and cloud storage: Google Drive, Dropbox, Egnyte, One Drive (can be free)

- Conference call: Freeconferencecall

- Practice Management: Clio, MyCase, Practice Panther.

- Track Task: Trello, Asana (can be free)

- E-signature: Citrix RightSignature, HelloSign, Adobe

- Check out Zapier: integrate the web applications

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