

November 2024

From the Desks of Your D.C. Bar Practice Management Advisors



Authenticity As an Antidote

by Kaitlin E. McGee

At [Practice 360°](#) last month, Frank Salvato and Libbey Van Pelt, two experienced litigators, shared their insights on an often overlooked element of being a lawyer: authenticity. Their program showed how embracing your true self can actually enhance client relationships, improve case outcomes, and lead to a more fulfilling career.

If you missed the program, you can [watch it here](#). Some of my favorite tips from Libbey and Frank were:

1. Be Yourself with Clients

Frank emphasized the importance of building genuine connections, even with difficult clients. Taking time to understand their situation, or simply sitting down for a quick chat, can build trust and create a stronger attorney-client

relationship. For Frank, approaching clients with empathy and a personal touch helped him find success even in challenging cases.

2. Market Your Authentic Self

Libbey shared her journey of building a brand around who she truly is, choosing the tagline "Smart + Kind Trial Lawyer." By being clear about her values, she attracts clients who resonate with her approach and understands that not every client will be the right fit. In her words, "Repel the many, compel the few."

3. Find Collaboration Over Competition

Libbey and Frank also stressed the benefits of co-counseling. Working alongside other lawyers can reduce stress, enhance your skills, and ultimately improve client outcomes. Frank shared how teaming up with Libbey has not only broadened his expertise but also made the practice of law more enjoyable and less isolating.

4. Let Go of Toxic Relationships

One of the strongest messages from Frank and Libbey was the importance of protecting your well-being by setting boundaries. It's okay to turn down clients or opposing counsel who drain your energy. As Frank put it, "It's okay to break up." If a client is causing unnecessary stress, you have the right to step back and prioritize your mental health.

5. Show Humanity in the Courtroom

Libbey and Frank also talked about the power of vulnerability. Instead of hiding behind a stoic façade, they encouraged lawyers to bring empathy into the courtroom. This human connection can be more persuasive than any legal argument.

If you missed [Practice 360°](#) this year, join us next year.

Whether you are starting a firm from scratch or growing and managing an existing firm, PMAS has resources to help you create and meet your business goals. For courses and resources we offer free to DC Bar members, visit our [website](#).

AI for Law Firms

If you haven't seen how AI works in the legal research realm, [follow Ed Walters on LinkedIn](#). He's going to be showing what [Vincent AI](#) can do in the coming weeks.

Curious about how to use AI tools in your law practice? In [my latest Washington Lawyer column](#) for the D.C. Bar, I break down what works, what doesn't, and how you can start integrating AI tools like ChatGPT into your daily workflow.

Here is guidance on [Attorneys' Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in Client Matters, Legal Ethics Opinion 388](#).

If you are using AI in your firm, let us know at PMAS@dcbar.org.

A banner for LSP Data Solutions. On the left, a green square frame contains the text "Trusted Experts. Tailored Solutions." in white and green. To the right, the LSP logo is displayed in white, with "DATA SOLUTIONS" in smaller green text below it. Further right, the text "Forensics and eDiscovery services that fit your needs." is shown in white. At the bottom right, there is a green button with the text "LEARN MORE" in white.

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Basic Training & Beyond

If you're starting a firm, [Basic Training & Beyond](#) is a great jumping-off point. Day One will teach you the essentials to get your firm off the ground, and Day Two will help you grow and manage your firm.

Here is how to start, grow and manage a law firm in a large, urban market.

Our monthly [Basic Training & Beyond](#) is set for **November 12 & 19** from **9:15 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.** We will meet in person in the Williamson Conference Room on the third floor of Bar Headquarters. The program is presented monthly for members and law firm staff.

This program has been presented more than three hundred times for more than 4,000 lawyers over the last fifteen years, and many have launched and are now operating small firms. We stay connected with many small firms, and what we learn informs the content for this program.

Managing Money

Managing Money

Our next in-person session of Managing Money is set for **December 9 2024**, from **9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

We also present Managing Money on request for a law firm or organization.



[Register for an upcoming session or schedule a session for your firm here.](#)

Successful Small Firm Course

Are you interested in a business incubator approach to growing your law firm?

Consider working with us on an individual basis. We now offer the Successful Small Firm Practice Course in a series of one-on-one sessions on Zoom.

The course serves as an incubator for solo attorneys and small firms and helps them work through their business and marketing plans with support, feedback, and guidance. Lawyers focus on the type of firm they want to create and work through the course at their own pace with built-in accountability for achieving their business goals. If you are interested in this approach to creating and growing a law firm, contact PMAS@dcbbar.org.

LAP Honest Conversation

[An Honest Conversation About Disconnecting and Reclaiming Your Time](#)

Are you feeling overburdened by the demands of your legal career? You're not alone. In a recent study by Bloomberg Law, 45% of attorneys reported an inability to disconnect from work.

We invite you to join us on **November 19, 2024**, at 2 p.m. ET for a meaningful conversation about the challenge of unplugging in today's fast-paced legal environment

[Register here.](#)

Resources

Our [video resource library](#) offers free webinars on a variety of practice management topics. New programs are added regularly. Our full archive of recordings and materials is [here](#). If you have an idea for a program, let us know at lunchandlearn@dcbar.org

Missed any of these recent sessions? You can [access the recordings and materials anytime](#).

Here's a glimpse of some recent sessions:

- **Recruiting and Hiring 101: How to Get Started When You Need to Hire Help**
- **Five Ways to Use Email Effectively as a Marketing Tool** with Marketing Nice Guys
- **Set It and Forget It: LinkedIn for Busy Rainmakers** with Angela Dunz

More News from PMAS...

[Practice 360° Offers Attendees Strategies to Innovate in a Competitive Marketplace](#)

We hosted a [LinkedIn Lab for Lawyers](#) in August.

Kaitlin won the [vLex Award](#).

We are contributing to the Bar's blog at [Duly Noted](#).

If you are interested in a practice management assessment, [click here](#).

– Kaitlin & Dan

In other news . . .

For the recent results of the groundbreaking study on attorney mental health and well-being, [click here](#).

For more information on PMAS programs, [click here](#).

CLE, Communities Events & Pro Bono:

Continuing Legal Education programs are [here](#).

Communities Events are [here](#).

Pro Bono Center training programs are scheduled [here](#).

As we return to D.C. Bar headquarters for meetings and events, everyone entering the building will need to comply with the [COVID Guidelines](#).

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Practice Management Advisors have a free and confidential relationship with D.C. Bar members pursuant to Rule 1.6(j) of the D.C. Rules of Professional Conduct.

District of Columbia Practice Manual

Every D.C. Lawyer's Must-Have Resource



This two-volume title, typically priced at \$495, is being offered to subscribers of this newsletter at a discounted rate of \$450. To obtain the discount code, please reach out to communitiesregistration@dcbar.org.



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