

LEGAL

Opportunity in crisis for lawyers

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The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us many things about how lawyers in the United States have traditionally practiced law.

While we all had a strong sense that much of the daily practice of law was more antiquated than it needed to be, leave it to a global pandemic to really bring this into focus.

Counsel

The crisis has tested everything from how or if lawyers used technology, the nuts and bolts of how you ran your practice, how you interacted with clients and your own legal and support teams, to how realistic and current your risk management plans were.

It is clear that along with this crisis has come net new opportunities for lawyers and their law practices.

While that may seem counterintuitive, finding new opportunities in a pandemic is just a natural extension of good practice planning and management.

If you are always poised for growth and exploration of new opportunities, then your mindset as someone who runs and manages a practice will be divided between doing the things you need to do to ensure that your practice remains on solid footing throughout the crisis and actively seeking new opportunities, of which there are many.

The first is that COVID-19 has shown us that geography is less of a barrier than we always imagined it was.

Pre-crisis, we would have many conversations with solos and small practices who would say that it was very difficult and often not worth the effort for them to compete in areas in their state with higher concentration of the general population and of law firms.

Today, everyone is more open to doing business through Zoom consultations, other remote meetings, and using tools such as DocuSign allowed by the jurisdiction that make remote client work easier for both parties.

This means that it is easier to go after new business from areas within your jurisdiction that you might have hesitated to go after before the crisis.

Especially for lawyers who practice in more specialized or esoteric areas of the law, being a little remote or in a small town is far less of a disadvantage today when it comes to going after new clients in major population centers.

Courting others

Social media was among the first geography-busting tools for lawyers. Using social media to communicate your message to prospective clients helped negate any perceived disadvantage you had based on the physical location of your practice.

By working with a highly-skilled and experienced legal marketing company, you can communicate and leverage your firm's experience and areas of expertise and communicate directly to a highly-targeted audience anywhere in your jurisdiction.

Of course, to be ready for new business, you have to make sure that your practice is always functioning the best it can.

As the COVID-19 crisis has no set end date and the most competent experts predict that it could impact businesses including law practices for at least the next year, the threshold question to ask is how much you have learned from the crisis to date and how well-positioned you are to apply what you have learned to the year ahead.

To help, Bloomberg Law put together a superb Coronavirus Toolkit, which is extremely practical and highly recommended for any lawyer. It covers topics such as risk assessment, contract management, the legal and regulatory environment, professional perspectives, returning to the physical worksite, communicating with employees, and terminations not for cause as a result of the crisis.

LexisNexis also has a Lexis Practice Advisor Coronavirus Resource Kit, an excellent resource featuring select content addressing emerging issues related to coronavirus across a variety of practice areas.

The American Bar Association has also put together a truly massive and impressive resource list for lawyers.

The ABA COVID-19 hub can help with practice tools and your ongoing preparedness for remote work and it has a number of resource kits, including an excellent online resource center to help address and answer legal questions about COVID-19, including actions business may or must take to address to protect employees and business operations.

The association also lists a resource that many lawyers have been using throughout the crisis, the [Fastcase COVID-19 resource hub](#), which is constantly updated and includes relevant COVID-19 case law with the free Fastcase public links.

IT IS FAR too easy in times of crisis to become anchored to the way we have always done things and see change as something to either fear or avoid because it takes too much effort.

But COVID-19 presents the same two opportunities for every lawyer and law practice: to do the necessary internal work to make sure that you are on solid footing moving forward and to be creative and open to bringing in the new clients who may have always been looking for you but didn't know where or how to find you.

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