



## Review of *Effectively Staffing Your Law Firm, 2nd edition*

*By Michael P. Hurley*

“Good law office staff is harder to find (and keep) than clients (and sometimes spouses).” — Jennifer J. Rose, Editor, *Effectively Staffing Your Law Firm*, 2nd edition

It's 10 a.m. on a Monday morning, and you're in court arguing a motion. The odds are that you didn't get there all by yourself. Someone else pitched in to draft and format that motion, print it out and send enough copies of that motion to all relevant parties and institutions, calendar that hearing date, make sure that all necessary data has been plugged into your time and billing program so that you'll eventually get paid for your efforts, remind you where and why you're supposed to be in court that morning and maybe even pack your briefcase. And while you're away playing courtroom warrior, someone's minding the store. That someone may have even had a hand in matching you up with the client whose case you're arguing. That someone is your office staff.

Sophisticated office technology lures many lawyers into believing that they can truly be a one-person band, serving clients without outside help. A handful can manage by doing that, but there's not a lawyer in the land who is not made more productive by engaging the talents and services of others. Time spent futzing with equipment on the fritz, juggling telephone calls, looking up stuff, filing away paper, ministering to administrative tasks and tidying up the office can often be time lost to more productive uses of a lawyer's skills.

Eight years ago, we reviewed in a previous Solo, Small Firms and General Practice News a book which has become the must-have primer for every solo and small firm practitioner: *Effectively Staffing Your Law Firm*. And, just this summer, the American Bar Association Solo, Small Firm and General Practice Division has just issued the second edition of this book, once again edited by Jennifer J. Rose.



Why do solo and small firm lawyers hire staff? According to Rose, getting the work done is only part of the equation. Lawyers hire staff to:

- Do the work they cannot or do not know how to do. Staff can supply skills lawyers do not have and do not want to cultivate;
- Do the chores lawyers do not want to do, like filing, accounting, and even straightening out that messy desk;
- Do tasks lawyers can do, but which can be more effectively done by others. A lawyer who's billing \$200 an hour can be wasting time performing tasks that could be done even better by someone at \$15 an hour;
- Do work that does not require a law license;
- Provide reality checks, security, and a buffer from the rest of the world. Every lawyer could benefit from an extra pair of eyes on every document that leaves the office. Who hasn't heard "Are you sure you really want that letter to go out the way you've written it?"; and
- Do marketing and making connections with a broader world. Each staff person comes with a constellation of friends, family and relationships, which cast out the net of potential clients even wider.

Brand new material, contributed by solo and small firm lawyers with real-life, hands-on experience in a broad range of practice specialties, from Iowa City to Long Island, from Philadelphia and Los Angeles to Florida and the Ozarks, makes up nearly a third of this second edition. Rose, who practiced law in rural Iowa for 20 years, has created the very book she wishes she had when she started out in practice.

This book's chapters address:

- The Solo Lawyer's Dilemma: Doing It All without Staff
- Suite Alternatives to Staffing
- To Rent or to Employ ... That Is the Question
- Outsourcing Work to Freelance Lawyers
- Kellie, Our Special Employee
- Support Staff: Opportunities and Challenges
- Is Your Office Ready for a Modern-Day Della Street?
- A Blueprint for Marketing with Staff
- Keys to Success: Leadership, Attorney/Staff Relations, and Simplified Action Planning
- How to Succeed with Staff
- Motivating Lawyers and Employees in the Small Law Office
- Care and Feeding of the Law Office Staff
- Keeping the Team Happy
- Delegation Dynamics
- Paralegals—You've Come a Long Way
- To Boldly Go ... Outsourcing to Virtual Paralegals
- The Ethics of Working with Legal Assistants

- Technology Policies for the Small Law Office
- Beyond the Employee Handbook: Personal Issues
- Legal Staff Evaluations: A Generational Issue as Well
- How to Handle a Problem Employee
- You're Fired
- Workplace Security for the Solo and Small Firm Staff
- Employment Law in the Solo and Small Firm

This book rethinks the concept of staff in the law office. It belongs on the bookshelves of lawyers opening their first law office, as well as seasoned and experienced lawyers looking at new approaches to staffing. And it's a necessary companion to *How to Capture and Keep Clients*, 2nd edition (<https://shop.americanbar.org/eBus/Store/ProductDetails.aspx?productId=204685537>), also edited by Jennifer J. Rose. (Disclosure: I wrote a chapter about cross-selling to clients, which alone is well worth the price of the book.)

*Effectively Staffing Your Law Firm*, 2nd edition, Jennifer J. Rose, editor. American Bar Association, <https://shop.americanbar.org/eBus/Store/ProductDetails.aspx?productId=280835801>.

\$89.95 (regular), \$71.95 (ABA Solo, Small Firm and General Practice Division members).

Quantity discounts available.

267 pages.

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

### Refocusing on your profession

The 2017 All-Ohio Legal Forum took place in Cleveland on Aug. 23-25, and provided a tremendous opportunity for networking, CLE and inspiration to refocus on individual passions and advancement of the profession. Attorney Thomas Cafferty (Toledo) was honored with the John and Ginny Elam Pro Bono Award for his contributions to the legal community throughout Northwestern Ohio and attorney Norton Webster (Columbus) was honored with the Bar Medal for his enduring leadership in the profession. Admittedly, the dedication shown by these two gentlemen seems impossible to replicate, but I invite each and every one of you to aspire on a daily, weekly or monthly basis to deliberately contribute your time and expertise to improve your community, your profession and the lives of those around you.

The OSBA is bringing diversity and inclusion to the forefront this bar year, and the Solo, Small Firm and General Practice Section is poised to lead the way for the Association. As a Section, we are comprised of attorneys from nearly every practice setting and located in big cities, small towns and communities of every socioeconomic position. Our mission for the year is to focus on inclusion, and my goal for the Section is to actively engage our membership from Edon to Hockingport, Addyston to Austinburg, Empire to Hollansburg and everywhere in between.

If you are reading this message and have ideas for this Section or the OSBA to engage local attorneys and add value to your practice and community, I would love to hear from you by phone, email, member community discussions or personal visits. Thank you for your membership, participation and contributions to our noble profession.



*By Andrew C. Clark, an attorney in Pickerington and chair of the OSBA Solo, Small Firms and General Practice Section.*