GETTING INVOLVED

Getting involved is a great way to develop meaningful relationships that lead to good friends and reliable business referrals. It’s also a great way to give back and pay it forward. Whatever you choose to get involved with, have it be something you love and are passionate about and not simply something your firm told you to do.

Getting Involved with a Voluntary Bar Association

☐ Speak with the leadership and executive director about their needs.
☐ Volunteer to do the work no one else wants to do or is often ignored.
☐ If you give your word to do something, do it well and on time.
☐ Along the way, get to know those with whom you are volunteering.
☐ Find out what big projects the organization is struggling with and help them get those projects off the ground.
☐ Understand that to move up in the organization, you have to do the more menial and low-level tasks and do them well and with a positive attitude in order to then be assigned greater responsibilities and a larger role in the organization.
☐ Have a plan about how to succeed and advance in the organization but don’t push ahead of others in line.

Getting Involved with a Nonprofit

☐ Do your due diligence and know what you’re getting into.
☐ Understand the organization’s mission, goals, and values and make sure you share them.
☐ Ensure the nonprofit is aboveboard and that the board operates honestly and properly.
☐ Confirm the nonprofit has the necessary checks and balances in place to prevent theft, embezzlement, and other issues that can end the organization overnight.
☐ Join a nonprofit whose cause you are passionate about.
☐ Expect that as the only attorney or one of a few attorneys in the organization, you will be doing pro bono legal work for them.
☐ Fundraising is crucial for nonprofits. If you hate fundraising, seriously think through the commitment before getting involved.
☐ Nonprofits are businesses that have the same issues and problems other businesses have. You’ll have to deal with them at some level if you get involved.
Getting Involved with a Charity

- The lifeblood of any charity is fundraising. That involves asking others for money, often a lot of it. Know this going in.
- In addition to others' money, you'll be expected to give your share. Again, before getting involved, appreciate the financial commitment.
- Asking for money is a two-way street. If you hit up your friends for money and they contribute, one day they will hit you up for money for one of their charities and you will have to do the same.
- By all this, I'm not trying to dissuade you from getting involved with a charity. I'm just saying you need to get involved with your eyes open.

Getting Involved on Social Media

- Find your voice.
- Keep your posts short, direct, and to the point. Use the active voice, use fewer phrases and words, get to the heart of what you're saying, and then wrap it up.
- Have a general theme for your posts and stick to your theme.
- Don't be personal or antagonistic.
- Like your parents said, avoid politics and religion and think twice before dipping your toe into a controversial topic. Yes, you'll get views, but at what cost?
- Don't engage with trolls. Remove and block them.
- Don't post clickbait.
- Don't post for the clicks. Post because you have something to say.
- Make sure you have something to say and that it adds value among all the noise in social media.

Raising Money

- Whether you’re raising money for a charity, a politician, a judicial candidate, an event, a scholarship, or something else, understand that anyone you ask money from will expect you have skin in the game. Don’t ask for money unless you have contributed first and have done so generously.
- If you ask others for money, eventually they will ask you for money.
- Being a strong fundraiser is a great way to become an influencer, but it’s also an expensive way since you have to give your own monies too. It also requires strong interpersonal and people skills.
Putting On a Conference

- Search for a reasonably priced venue in a convenient location with the amenities your members want and need. Be cognizant of the costs associated with doing a conference during “season,” and consider doing it during off times of the year.
- Book a venue well in advance.
- Before signing a contract with the venue, read the contract carefully. There are often minimums for hotel rooms, food, and beverages you have to meet.
- Closely review the food and beverage prices. You don’t have to schedule all the food-related events at the hotel or convention center. Local restaurants for a reception or dinner can be cheaper.
- Coffee, bottled water, and soda are outrageously expensive. Keep that in mind.
- Costs for IT assistance, for audiovisual and video equipment, and in fact everything, are exorbitant. Keep a close eye on those costs and avoid them when you can.
- Put together the program and line up the speakers well in advance.
- Send out a save the date well in advance and have your e-brochure and paper brochure completed and sent out well in advance.
- Make sure to keep a detailed calendar of all the deadlines and meet them. If you’re providing CLE, for example, when do the papers and PowerPoints have to be in? How long do you have the room block rate? When does early registration end? Keep track of all the dates and check them off as you complete the tasks.
- Keep track of your speakers and make sure they are working on their papers, PowerPoints, and presentations.
- Ensure that your emcee is a vibrant, engaging, and memorable speaker.

Putting On a Webinar

- Pick a relevant, timely topic with good speakers who know the topic well and have spoken on it before.
- Choose the right price point for the webinar and secure CLE credit for it.
- Advertise the webinar through social media and get others to do the same.
- Secure the PowerPoint, paper, and other materials well in advance of the webinar.
- Do a dry run with the speakers so they’re familiar with the technology and they have the necessary technology in their offices.
- Make sure you’re using a reliable provider that provides quality webinar services at a reasonable price.
- Send out a survey to the attendees afterward so you can improve future programming.
Putting Out a Publication

- Most organizations have a regular magazine or newsletter they send in hard copy or e-mail to their members. Your organization should too.
- Consider whether to have a print version or only an electronic version. E-versions are cheaper and easier to produce.
- Put a conscientious, good writer in place as editor.
- Put together a committee to secure authors and articles and to edit pieces.
- Have an editorial calendar where specific topics or practice areas are addressed in each issue.
- Have regular columns and regular columnists writing them. Some ideas for columns could include ones on better writing, advice for young lawyers, trial tips, case law updates, and the like.
- Secure advertisers to stave off the expense of the publication and raise money for the organization.
- Include practice pointer articles, work-life balance articles, and other types of articles that go beyond the traditional research-based, law-review-like pieces.

Leading a Membership Drive

- Firms are having fewer of their attorneys join voluntary bar associations and other organizations. Understand and take into consideration this trend when recruiting new members.
- Firms are looking for value for their members. What services and resources come with becoming a member? What CLE, training, networking, and business development opportunities come with being a member? Have a generous membership package and market it.
- Consider bundling, where if a new member signs up, she receives a free webinar or CLE, or a reduced rate at an upcoming conference.
- Get your leadership involved and assign them and others new member goals (for example, ask each of them to recruit five new members).
- Create incentives for those who recruit new members.