ABA BEST PRACTICES GUIDE: WRITING A BOOK

So you have agreed to serve as Editor-in-Chief and organize a book for the ABA. The ABA publications staff thanks you for this endeavor. However, here are some helpful hints to assist you along the way:

1. Be thoughtful in your selection of the authors for the book. When asking people to participate, be sure to identify responsibilities, time frames, expectations and stress that their commitment to the project and adherence to deadlines impacts the success of the entire project.

2. As you set the authors to drafting, be sure to identify any formatting goals that you might have, such as chapter, length, general style, anything unique you would like authors to include in preparing the chapter (do you want lists, appendices, forms etc.). The clearer you are on the structure of the chapters, the better authors will produce a workable result.

3. Consider setting up your own chart to manage deadlines, responses from authors, status of drafts and other key information so that you have a one stop resource to identify who is on track and who needs to be nudged along.

4. Group emails keep everyone in the loop as to general information and make it easy to communicate with all key people.

5. Stay on top of everyone with reminders and status information. Too long of a time in between reminders, leads people to put pens down and perhaps attend to other things that come up. There is a careful balance that you need to strike, but a long lapse in communication can be problematic. Even letting folks know the overall status of the chapters as they come in from other authors can help to keep others on track.

6. Be sure that when you read the book, you do so several times, one for the integrity and accuracy of each chapter, once for overall consistency of format and voice and finally, to catch any nits that you might have missed. Note that the ABA publication staff is fabulous at catching things, but as the Editor-in-Chief, the initial burden rests on you.

7. Be sure to catch all of the people you wish to thank in your forward.

8. Good luck, it is a daunting task, but when it is done—you will be glad that you took this project on!