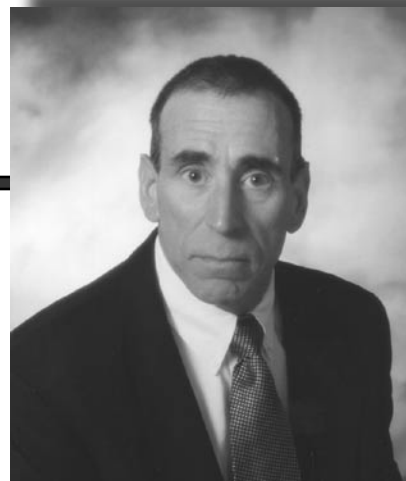


FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Earlier this year we asked you to complete a short online survey on three subjects: mentoring, law practice management (LPM), and unauthorized practice of law (UPL). Your answers will guide the VBA's Board of Managers in reviewing our operations, updating the services we offer, and addressing the issues that concern you the most. About two hundred of you took the time to answer the survey. Thank you. Here is what you told us.

It was no surprise that an overwhelming majority (86 percent) of you think the VBA should offer LPM services and programs to its members. Those services and programs could include assistance and education concerning the following: trust account compliance; how to set up an office; billing and time management; equipment purchases; advice on computer hardware and software; bookkeeping advice; and retirement plans. The list goes on—these are just a sampling of the topics that interest those of you that responded.

We received a number of comments and suggestions for additional topics. The following are just a few. You asked for training on how to select malpractice insurance, provided by someone *not* trying to sell policies. You asked for help in setting up and reconciling trust accounts. And, you had questions about potential unlicensed practice of law by your staff.

In response, Kevin Ryan has created four one-hour teleseminars addressing each issue. They are: Law Office Technology Update (May 25th); Insuring Your Law Practice (June 6th); Trust Accounts (June 12th); and, What Not To Say? Avoiding Unlicensed Practice by Staff (June 30th). More is on the way, including an update to our website to feature more LPM tips and resources. As your needs change, please stay in touch with us and let us know what we can do to help make you successful. We are here and we are listening.

As to mentoring, 85 percent of you think the VBA should offer a mentoring service of some type. We were impressed by the willingness on the part of experienced members of the bar to volunteer. Fully 82 percent

of the responders offered to volunteer as "mentors," including maintaining a relationship for one year. You told us that matching mentors and "mentees" should be based on same practice type, but you were not concerned about age group or gender.

The Membership Committee of the Board of Managers is completing work on a Mentoring Program which the Board should have approved by the time you read this. The details of the program will be announced this summer or early next fall. Stay tuned. We believe that what we are about to roll out will meet your needs.

The VBA Board has had concerns about unlicensed practice of law not only in real estate but in other practice areas as well. Surprisingly, you were split 50-50 on whether you have seen UPL in your area of practice. Of those of that have, only one-third saw it result in actual consumer harm. Most of you (69 percent) think it is time for our Legislature to adopt a definition of the practice of law. One member expressed frustration over this old, old problem and thinks others have given up on finding a solution. The VBA has met with members of the staff of the Attorney General, the office responsible for monitoring, controlling, and prosecuting unlicensed practice. I have just learned that they have been in touch with the Court Administrator and the Chair of the Advisory Committee on Civil Rules asking for some action on UPL. The VBA is prepared to do what it can to help bring some clarity to this debate and close any loopholes left open. Please continue to share your experiences and ideas on this problem so that we can effectively represent you with both the Court and the Legislature.

As we move into the post-legislative season when things slow down a bit, at least for me, we will be at work on our website, redesigning and adding resources we think you will like. Keep your eyes open for these changes, all designed to make your practice better.

Thank you for taking part in the survey and thanks for your membership and support of your association. Have a great summer!

