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Perspectives

FROM THE CHAIR OF THE LAW PRACTICE MANAGEMENT SECTION

LIKE MANY ATTORNEYS WHO'VE WORKED PRIMARILY ON THE DEFENSE SIDE,

I receive constant inquiries regarding my ethics practice from clients looking to sue their lawyers for claims revolving around malpractice of some way, shape or form. While I respectfully decline representation, I try to point them in the right direction for an appropriate referral.

Listening to their stories, though, as well as reading daily about some attorney misstep or another, is always a reminder that not understanding malpractice is, well, akin to malpractice. In some cases, the lawyer can look in a mirror and appropriately place blame for misconduct. However, I have had friends who unintentionally have committed a variety of infractions—and in some cases, it has meant the end of a legal career. Ignorance is simply not a defense. And, even while the consequences might not involve losing the right to practice, the financial hits can be equally devastating. Being prepared and understanding this critical area of practice management is certainly worthy of a dedicated issue of this magazine.



Passing the mantle. This issue marks my final column as LPM Section Chair, with my successor, Andrea Hartley, assuming the mantle in September. I'll note, though, that while some kiddingly refer to an Immediate Past Chair's year as the "vacation term," that rarely proves to be true. There is always work to be done and volunteers are always needed. However, Andrea and I, along with my predecessor, Walt Karnstein, have worked in unison to avoid the "one-year wonder" syndrome that often accompanies aspects of ABA Section leadership. Together we have attacked tough issues and made difficult decisions with the best long-term interests of LPM in mind. And, at a time when the ABA and our Section have faced difficult organizational decisions and tough financial realities, I am proud that we've not only maintained LPM member benefits, but continued to expand them. We've had to do more with less, and taken it upon us to deliver resources that continue to be the lifeblood of any law practice—the ability to run the business side of the office. With the strong addition this year of Section Director Pam McDevitt and the continuing support of staff and volunteers, LPM keeps motoring onward and upward.

The experience has been truly rewarding. But I'm looking forward to returning to a more controlled active status, gaining much-needed time for clients and my family. At the same time, I want to convey many thanks to LPM's army of active members who've made sure that we remain both current and forward-thinking, through the growth of our high-end programming opportunities, our prolific book publishing unit, and the timely guidance provided in our *Law Practice Today* webzine and this magazine. I'm proud to have had the opportunity to interact with so many people interested in the betterment of law practice. My hope is that this year's initiatives continue to pay dividends well into the future. LP

Micah Buchdahl (micah@htmlawyers.com), Chair of the ABA Law Practice Management Section, is an attorney and President of HTMLawyers, dedicated to guiding law firms through business development strategies and implementation.