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LOOK OUT FOR THESE SYMBOLS THROUGHOUT THE BOOK. THEY’LL HIGHLIGHT THE IMPORTANT POINTS OF EACH STORY FOR QUICK RECAPS!
It takes a heroic effort to adapt to today's lightening pace of change and a heroic lawyer to not just adapt but thrive in this new environment. Of course, law firms are notorious for their glacial response to change, but that's changing, due in no small part to the efforts of tech-savvy, highly productive, healthy, socially engaged heroic lawyers.

In this E-Book, you'll find out how to leverage new technology, increase productivity, market your practice on the internet, tips on practice management, and effective social media strategies.

Join our heroes, VIC VERITAS and HADLEY BAXENDALE as they learn how to steamroll poorly run law firms, leverage the power of awesome technology, and save the day for their clients!
Heroic Lawyers possess a wide range of skills that save the day. Whether working from home or in a small, medium or large law firm, they understand the importance of listening skills, checklists, and client analysis. Learn how to mind hack your law office management, automate your legal document creation and stay clear of “Punchbowling.”
Effective listening is crucial to establishing rapport with clients, witnesses, and anyone, really. But effective listening also contributes to lawyers’ analysis, strategy, and future workload in several concrete ways:

1. **LISTENING CONTRIBUTES TO CASE ANALYSIS AND STRATEGY**

   Listening is a complex act that entails simultaneous hearing, processing, decision-making about whether and when to speak, memory, prioritization, and reiterations of all of the above. The act of listening is deeply intertwined with thinking and learning. Is someone a “quick study?” That’s a great compliment, and a major factor in being a “quick study” is effective listening.

   A lawyer who is able to listen effectively and consistently during long meetings and lengthy testimony will have a head start on case analysis. Identifying potential issues, categorizing relevant knowns and unknowns, prioritizing next steps: all of these analytical and strategic tasks are greatly aided by effective listening.

2. **LISTENING HELPS AVOID NASTY SURPRISES LATER**

   Surprises are unavoidable in law practice. What is so frustrating is when—after a witness has flailed on the stand, or a client has suddenly found documents that should have been produced earlier—the lawyer recalls something that was said, foreshadowing the exact event now happening.
Effective listening is spontaneous listening, not robotically tied to an outline or checklist.

And spontaneous listening allows the lawyer to make adjustments and veer off script when the lawyer hears something that isn’t quite right. Carefully listening for potential surprises allows the lawyer to ask better questions and listen with more focus to the specific answers. It’s a virtuous cycle that minimizes the risk of later surprise.

LISTENING CAN BE A WAY OF LETTING OTHERS DO THE WORK

Many experts extol the benefits of passive, or open-ended listening. The listener lets the speaker tell the story. Interruptions are minimal, such as “Tell me more,” or “I’d like to know more about that.”

These general cues to the speaker to keep talking signal that the listener is receptive to what the speaker has to say. The speaker is then free to share the story as he or she sees it. Thus the lawyer hears what the speaker thinks is important, and why the speaker thinks certain things happened. What comes out of a conversation like this could be a deeply satisfying narrative that goes well beyond the stock narrative the lawyer had in mind. Or, what may come out of a conversation like this is a revelation that conflicts with the story the lawyer wants to tell. Either way, listening to the unfolding narrative is often far more efficient than what happens when a lawyer over-manages the conversation, failing to learn valuable information.

LISTENING HELPS WITH SETTING PRIORITIES

Whether a lawyer is listening to a client discussing legal matters or a senior lawyer discussing an assignment, effective listening provides many cues about prioritizing work.
Listening carefully to the client is crucially important. Listening to the client's goals can, obviously, help the lawyer tailor legal services to meet those specific goals. More subtly, listening to what the client feels are important facts can help the lawyer shape the work to address the client's beliefs and needs. Marketing experts talk about addressing a target market's "pain points," or difficult and important problems. By carefully listening to a client, a lawyer can learn more about that client's pain points. These may be issues with the legal matter itself, with the client's own internal issues including paperwork challenges and authority conflicts, or with the client's overall goals in life or business.

Likewise inside the office, listening to colleagues working on the same legal matter is crucial to setting priorities. When a senior lawyer meets with a junior lawyer to delegate an assignment, that conversation contains many cues that can help the junior lawyer beyond just what is due and when. The junior lawyer may be able to glean the senior lawyer's "pain points" in working on this case or in working with other lawyers. The senior lawyer may also hint at having a preconceived notion of the answer to an assignment. The junior lawyer can then prioritize the analysis to anticipate potential resistance, if the answer turns out to be unexpected.

And when the junior lawyer returns to the senior lawyer to discuss a project, the senior lawyer can pick up valuable cues through listening as well. What additional facts need to be investigated? What issues were on the periphery of the main question? Listening to the junior lawyer, including what the junior lawyer may have hesitated to put down in writing, can assist with ongoing decisions about the case.
LISTENING GENERATES MORE WORK IN THE FUTURE... IN A GOOD WAY

Giving someone your undivided attention is a generous act—a gift, really. Offering that gift to clients builds relationships and motivates the client to return to the relationship for future work. Likewise, offering the gift of listening to another lawyer builds relationships.

Lawyers may offer effective listeners more assignments or reach out about other opportunities such as networking and speaking.

Effective listening builds relationships.

Effective listening carries the most benefit when it is approached as a long-term investment. Thus, the benefits of listening are the broadest when a lawyer listens carefully not just to lead clients within a team, or to senior lawyers who conduct professional evaluations. Listening pays off the most when it extends to a client’s entire team of employees, to peer lawyers, to legal staff, and to all others who may think well (or poorly) of that lawyer when future legal work is being allocated.

Effective listening is undoubtedly a “people skill” that is important for good first impressions. But it has many additional lasting benefits such as enhancing lawyers’ substantive understanding of their legal work, and revealing strategic options in addressing clients’ and senior lawyers’ goals. Ultimately, effective listening contributes to lawyers’ success on individual legal matters and enhances their personal effectiveness throughout their law practice.
LISTEN UP, EVERYONE! LISTENING WILL HELP YOU AVOID NASTY SURPRISES, STRATEGIZE FOR THE FUTURE AND BUILD STRONG RELATIONSHIPS WITH CLIENTS.
Good communication is at the foundation of virtually every relationship. For lawyers, the ability to communicate well is a skill that influences the outcome of just about everything that takes place during a typical day.

Delegating tasks to co-workers, persuading a judge or jury, working with opposing counsel, understanding a client’s objectives – the success of each of these is grounded in the exercise of solid communication skills.

One key aspect of good communication is attentive, focused listening.

If we’re honest, listening is an aspect of communication that can be particularly difficult for us as lawyers. Maybe it’s traceable to law school (e.g., “I’d better have something at least marginally intelligent to say when she calls on me”) or it’s just inseparable from the nature of a lot of the confrontational stuff we sometimes do, but how many times do we find ourselves formulating a response to someone before they’ve even finished what they’re trying to tell us? Sometimes we even jump in midstream, interrupting. Both of those things are flaws that I find myself constantly trying to avoid.

While there is no shortage of advice that vaguely reminds us to “be a better listener”, there really aren’t many specific, tactical suggestions offered in order to achieve that goal. Let me suggest one that I often use myself, a practice that’s pretty popular here at Rocket Matter. If you would hang out at our office for a few
days, you’d hear it used at least a handful of times. You might even hear it (and after reading this, recognize it), while speaking with one of our support folks.

A few specific suggestions for better listening:

Stay quiet. Basic, but essential. Let the other person (your client, your partner, your paralegal) finish their point without interruption.

Refrain from “thinking ahead” while someone is speaking to you. By focusing solely on exactly what the speaker is saying, to the exclusion of everything else, you will be less likely to miss anything – including important nuances or implications. Also, by consciously keeping this focus, you’ll be far less likely to fall into the trap of: (a) starting to formulating a response (which often takes the form of an objection or counterpoint) while they’re still communicating with you; or, worse yet (b) just cutting them off completely.

Wait for the speaker to explicitly note they’re finished making their point, or ask if they’re finished. Sometimes people need to pause for a second after they speak to think about what they said, gather their thoughts, and make sure they expressed it in a complete way. Things don’t always come out perfectly the first time, and that’s especially true with clients who aren’t used to speaking with lawyers. Sometimes these clients perceive speaking with you as speaking with an authority figure. As such, they can be nervous, shy, self-conscious, and so forth. Be certain that the speaker is finished making their point, and they’re happy with the way they’ve made it, before you start responding.

Explain the speaker’s point back to the speaker. One of the best ways to measure whether you really know something or not is if you can comfortably teach it to someone else. In order to make certain you’ve heard what someone has said, and that you completely understand it, politely ask the speaker: “can I explain that back to you to make sure I got it?” And then take a stab at explaining everything back,
preferably in your own words, so that you can show you’re not just memorizing something and shooting it back; rather, you’re evidencing complete understanding by taking their message and putting it in your own voice.

In addition to confirming understanding, there’s often a bonus to this step: from the speaker’s perspective, there can be a little boost of perceived respect. Whether the listener agrees or not with what the speaker is communicating, the simple act of evidencing complete receipt of the speaker’s point or perspective, can be an implied statement of respect and consideration.

I was surprised how effective these simple little rules can be. The steps are particularly useful when you’re dealing with subject matter that’s highly complex, emotionally charged, or contentious – precisely the type of stuff lawyers deal with constantly.

STAY QUIET WHILE LISTENING TO OTHERS AND REFRAIN FROM JUMPING AHEAD. FOCUSING ON WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING AND WAITING FOR THEM TO FINISH WILL ALLOW YOU TO HAVE BETTER COMMUNICATION WITH OTHERS!
Recently, "statement analysis" has become a popular topic of discussion. It’s something I’ve personally found intriguing and possibly highly useful to lawyers.

Generally, “statement analysis” refers to the practice of mining specific statements for subtle, unintentional clues concerning the underlying truth or completeness of the information being expressed. It doesn’t yield definitive or conclusory information, but it can give valuable signals.

Practitioners such as Peter Hyatt and Dr. Lillian Glass, have gained substantial notoriety providing very interesting analysis in the context of recent high-profile criminal trials, but the technique can be equally applicable in civil investigations, depositions, and trials.

The topic itself is wide-ranging and complex, but two particular segments jumped out as uniquely interesting: the process of “self-editing,” and the notion of “truth signals.” First, a little about “self-editing”:

The “self-editing process” is a description of how we ultimately decide to articulate a particular experience. “Self-editing” can provide subtle clues when a person decides to leave certain information out of an answer, or includes information in an answer that one normally wouldn’t include in describing a similar event.
For example, imagine you were asked to describe the first thing you did this morning. A simple question on its face, yet one that could theoretically be answered in dramatically different levels of detail.

One response could be:

“I awoke. I rolled to my left, I stretched. I itched my nose. I sniffled. I hit the snooze bar. I thought about my day for a second. I rolled to the right ….” And so on. The response could be potentially be pages upon pages.

A more likely response, one that’s “self-edited” in a more natural way, might be:

“I got up.”

The particular way we “self-edit” (or not) can provide major signals when investigating an event.

Peter Hyatt, a statement analysis expert who has investigated a vast amount of child abuse and neglect cases, has indicated a high correlation between victimized children and the tendency of those children to self-edit in ways that include otherwise unnecessary details of covering. For example, when asked to describe what they did late last night, one child might say: “I turned out the light and went to sleep.” An abused child might describe the exact same facts using extra “covering” detail, as follows: “I closed the door, I turned out the light, I pulled up the covers, and then I went to sleep.”

Clearly there are no “magic words” that automatically translate into any particular conclusion, but the nature of this kind of description would, Hyatt argues, justify a deeper inquiry.
“Self-editing” is an important behavioral concept to recognize and, it seems to me, an interesting new angle to add to your own investigative practices, particularly in the discovery process.

Next we'll take a look at what type of statements might point toward, or away from, truthfulness.

**Statement analysis and “self-editing” can be helpful clues when investigating an event. Event descriptions that include “covering” or unnecessary details might justify deeper inquiry!**
“Self-editing” is one concept used in Statement Analysis to assess truth and to signal whether a particular subject matter may justify further, or more precise, inquiry.

Another useful concept is recognizing whether a particular statement fits into certain parameters that suggest truthfulness. Statement Analysis experts point to three characteristics that frequently tend to accompany veracity. Conversely, their absence, or alteration, may suggest deception.

These three characteristics are: Use of the pronoun “I”; Responding in the appropriate tense (often the past tense), and response specificity. These are then often supplemented with the overriding principle: if a person responding doesn’t say something, don’t say it for them. In other words, don’t “read into” something that for whatever reason (consciously or subconsciously) has not be expressly stated. Some examples here are instructive:

**USE OF THE PRONOUN "I"

Assume you ask your client: “Did you strike Mary?” It’s a simple, straightforward question. Some might even perceive an accusatory tone.

Contrast the following potential responses:
“Me? Hit someone? Really?”
“Hitting is not something in my nature.
“No, I didn’t hit her. I wasn’t even in town.”

Of these responses, the last provides the highest suggestion of truth. It doesn’t mean it’s true, but a direct, specific denial that incorporates the use of the pronoun “I” is generally suggestive of truth. “I” is very personal, we tend to use it often in our day-to-day language, and it’s a completely natural description to use in response to a question that points directly to us as the subject matter.

Note the first two statements: neither uses “I”, neither expressly denies the act, and recall the general principle: If the person responding doesn’t deny something expressly, don’t supply the express denial for them. Very simply, neither the first nor second response directly denied anything.

Does this mean the responses are lies? Of course not. However, it probably does mean the question should be asked again, or followed-up on, or rephrased in order to elicit more detail.

**USE OF THE APPROPRIATE (OFTEN THE PAST) TENSE**

Also note the tense used in the first two responses. Neither response is appropriately matched to the tense of the question. The question is asking about a past event, which ought to elicit a similarly tensed response. “Did you do it?” “No, I didn’t.”

Reliable denials don’t tend to be speculative or theoretical. Reliable denials are often straight to the point, sometimes emphatically stated (and repeated), and matched to the correct tense of the question.
SPECIFICITY IN THE RESPONSE

A third indicator of reliability is the specificity of the response – it’s obvious that the person being asked the question knows exactly what’s being asked of him/her and their response is intended to directly respond to it. There is no changing the adjectives used in the question, there’s no attempt to heighten (or downplay) the content of the question, there’s no attempt to change the subject.

Imagine a case of a simple theft. We ask: “Did you steal $5 from the register on Monday?”

Consider these potential responses:

“That missing money isn’t my fault.”

“Look, drawers are constantly short, this sort of thing happens all the time.”

“No, I didn’t steal anything.”

Note that in the first two responses, a few subtleties are at play. First, the nature of “stealing” that is included in the question is altered in the response: it’s not “stolen”, it’s either “missing money” or the drawer is “short”. Also, of the three responses only the last one directly confronts the question – a question itself that could be seen as an accusation. Note also that the first two responses are de-personalized (absence of “I”). On their face, the first two denials (or denial-like statements) just don’t appear as reliable as the third.

Statement analysis experts often say that it is virtually impossible for a guilty person, in the course of ordinary conversation, to come right out and definitively state: “I didn’t do it.” Perhaps we humans are hard-wired or socialized to find lying unpleasant so we subconsciously avoid it in our language. Whatever the reason, it’s a behavior pattern worth recognizing.
Of course, Statement Analysis is far from 100%. None of it is definitive and, in the case of sophisticated deceivers, it can be manipulated. However, for lawyers who are looking for additional ways to help them better reach the truth (from their own client) or discover the truth (from opposing litigant), Statement Analysis can be a useful tool to add to the process.

**DURING STATEMENT ANALYSIS, LISTEN FOR DIRECT ANSWERS THAT ARE MATCHED TO THE TENSE OF THE ORIGINAL QUESTION. GUILTY PARTIES WILL FIND IT HARD TO OUTRIGHT SAY "I DIDN’T DO IT."**
My first exposure to daily standups, the Agile method used by software developers, was two years ago when I joined Rocket Matter. How I wish I had known about this back when I was heading up law firm library and continuing legal education departments.

Here’s how it works:

Team members hold daily face-to-face meetings, usually in the same location and the same time, and ideally, in the morning. Meetings are limited to a maximum of 15 minutes, so teams shouldn’t involve too many people. For instance, if the law library is staffed by more than 6-8 people, have separate stand-ups for groups based on speciality, like “reference,” or “technology.” Or, have project-specific, cross-department stand-ups; like a group consisting of members from the marketing, library, records, and IT departments working on a competitive intelligence or knowledge management initiative.

The objective of daily stand-ups is not to solve problems or resolve issues, but to provide a status and progress update to the team.

Team members report to each other by answering three questions only:

What did I accomplish yesterday?
What are my tasks for today?
What’s in my way? – If a particular task is dependent on another person or event.
When I started doing this, I tried to wing it. Bad idea. It leads to rambling answers. Write it down. Leave the iPad on your desk; a moleskin or Muji notebook works best.

Have team members working from home or in other remote areas? No problem. Fire up Skype or GoToMeeting and beam them in. As a mostly work-from-home guy, daily GoToMeeting, Brady-Bunch type stand-ups, are particularly meaningful to me: I get to see and interact with my team every day. It gets this night owl up in the morning in time to participate, and keeps me focused and in the loop.

Daily stand-ups also hold each team member accountable. No one wants to slack off on the list of tasks they identified the previous day since it is shared the next day as being completed. And, Avoid these Seven Common Mistakes with the Daily Stand-up Meeting.

Oh, everyone of course, stands up to keep the meeting snappy and on point.

**DAILY STAND-UPS ALLOW TEAMS TO COMMUNICATE STATUS AND PROGRESS UPDATES WHILE HOLDING THEM ACCOUNTABLE FOR COMPLETING THEIR WORK. JUST REMEMBER TO KEEP THEM SHORT AND SWEET!**
You’re an intelligent person. You’re educated, well-read, and a successful professional. You’re impervious to mental manipulation and advertising trickeries, right?

Wrong. Your mind gets hacked all the time. If you don’t believe me, let’s start with a simple question to prove a point: What do the following heroes have in common?

Answer: They’re all orphans. Technically, Luke’s father is still alive (for a while), but he was raised thinking his father was dead. And the only people who aren’t hacked by these conventions are the ones who can spot the rules.
Is it coincidence that some of the most celebrated and profitable stories share this common element? Or does growing up without parents resonate deeply within us? It appears that the orphan backstory serves as a perfect canvas to paint a myth on. Your mind has been hacked for storytelling's sake, and this is just one of many examples that we'll explore in this series.

As it turns out, our minds work in very specific ways. Our brains have a specific architecture composed of 100 billion specialized cells called neurons, each is connected to 1000 others through what are called synaptic connections. People are all individuals, but we share biology, an evolutionary history, and cultural norms that are thrust upon us from our earliest ability to observe the world around us.

Mind hacking is kind of a personal journey for me. Once I learned how eminently hackable I was, I started consuming books on psychology and behavioral economics in an effort to learn more. This series is a digest of some of the more striking ideas I've come across that can be used to improve your professional life. It turns out that you can improve your memory, willpower, arithmetic ability, decision-making, and happiness by learning just a little bit more about the grey matter in your skull, and how it operates.

As a result, your law office management gets easier, your mind will get hacked less, and you might just do a little healthy hacking of your own.

**DISCOVER A LITTLE BIT ABOUT PSYCHOLOGY AND BEHAVIORAL ECONOMICS. UNDERSTANDING HOW YOUR MIND OPERATES MAY HELP IMPROVE MEMORY, WILLPOWER, DECISION-MAKING AND HAPPINESS!**
Here's a fun trick to play on your friends. Ask them two questions, making sure no one hears anyone else’s responses (a sound-proof booth comes in handy):

“Was Gandhi’s age greater or less than 144 when he died?”

Get your response, which, if your friends are remotely intelligent should be “younger”. Then follow up with this:

“How old was Ghandi when he died?”

Repeat the experiment with a different group of friends, but instead, change Ghandi’s age:

“Was Gandhi’s age greater or less than 42 when he died? How old was Ghandi when he died?”

What you’ll find is a demonstration of the principle of a phenomenon called “Anchoring.” The friends who fielded the 144 question will, on average, give you a higher answer to Ghandi’s age than those faced with the 42 question.

People are affected by the number they had to mentally process via a phenomenon called “Anchoring.” The Ghandi experiment is a quick way to observe anchoring in action. We tested it with a group of people at MILOFest 2012 and it proved out. You can read about the studies and science behind Anchoring in legendary behavioral economist Daniel Kahneman’s, Thinking Fast and Slow.
We all fall victim to Anchoring, which is closely related to the “Contrast Principle”, that is a frighteningly weird and powerful short circuit in human perception. Once you’re aware of the Contrast Principle, you’ll be aware how often your mind has been hacked.

The Contrast Principle is a highly studied human perception issue where we magnify the differences between two things when they’re compared in succession. If you lift a light weight, then a heavy one, the second weight you lifted will appear heavier to you than if you lifted it on its own. Bob Cialdini explores the Contrast Principle in, Influence: Science and Practice.

The Contrast Principle is used all the time in sales to guide you to a desired purchase. An example Cialdini gives is that when you go to a department store to buy a sweater and a suit, you will be shown the expensive Armani suit first before you are shown anything else. In comparison, the price of the sweater seems minimal.

It’s the reason one of the items on a dinner menu is much more expensive than any other items: the other choices seem more reasonable by comparison. When you order wine with your friends, do you pick the most expensive one? The cheapest one? Or the one in the middle? More subtly, when you buy a house or a car, it explains why additional options, even if they’re in the thousands of dollars, seem perfectly rational. The price of the major purchase makes the other very expensive purchases seem minuscule by comparison.

So the next time you find yourself in settlement talks or negotiations, or in a department store for that matter, consider human vulnerability to Anchoring and Contrast perception, and use that awareness to your advantage.
"ANCHORING" AND THE CONTRAST PRINCIPLE CAN BE USED TO ACHIEVE A DESIRED OUTCOME IN NEGOTIATIONS BY MAKING CERTAIN OPTIONS SEEM REASONABLE BY COMPARISON!
There is an old, two-way adage that you can use to better focus your new client acquisition strategy. Translated to legal, it’s the simple rule that 20% percent of your clients probably take up about 80% of your time.

On the other hand, 80% of your firm’s revenues may very well come from 20% of your clients. This seems like a natural and sensible assumption at first. So what’s the problem? Every business has their “go to” customers and maybe it’s those clients who are most deserving of the bulk of your time.

Here is the problem: It’s most likely that those 20% who take up 80% of your time are not the same 20% of those who make up 80% of your revenue. In fact, they’re probably the opposite.

What exactly does this mean to you as an attorney? It means that those two very different 20% groupings represent a chasm in your client profile.

Here are a few practices that will help you bridge that chasm and focus your client acquisition strategy:

**RUN REPORTS** – Find out what each of your clients is paying and how much of your time and resources they are taking up.
Make a spreadsheet – Put all your client snapshot data into spreadsheet format. This will make it easier to crunch the numbers. Track what you've actually been paid, along with what your firm has put into the relationship.

Do the math – It won't take long before a pattern emerges. You'll now be able to quickly identify your A clients and your D clients.

Analyze – Separate the two categories as distinctly as you can. You will most likely have substantially more D clients than A clients. Find out what each category is worth to you, and how much time you spend on those clients. The numbers will most likely steer you automatically to the A’s.

Shed – In this tough economy, no one wants to lose valuable clients. Especially to the competition. But, ask yourself the following question: are you better off spending time acquiring more A clients or toiling endlessly with a larger pile of D clients? The answer for many is the former.

Move your target – Change how you target and acquire new customers. Model the acquisition strategy on targeting those potential clients that most closely resemble your A clients.

Focus on your client acquisition strategy by crunching numbers. This way you can determine how to target and acquire new customers! Your time is valuable!
Lately everyone seems to be discussing Atul Gawande's book, The Checklist Manifesto (see this Facebook discussion and this blog post). So I decided to take a look and see what all the fuss was about.

The buzz is right. Listen up folks, this checklist stuff is important. Practicing law, like flying a passenger jet or performing open heart surgery, is one of those areas where you just can’t screw up.

Checklists have been responsible for reducing infections in intensive care units by 66%. They took an aircraft type, which initially crashed on a demonstration flight, to operating over 1.8 million miles without incident. They rescue drowning victims, keep skyscrapers standing up, and are responsible for saving countless lives.

So how can, as Mr. Gawande puts it, "a stupid little checklist" be so powerful, especially when the people using them are very smart, educated, and come loaded with experience (i.e. doctors and lawyers)? The short answer is they reduce complexity:

Four generations after the first aviation checklists went into use, a lesson is emerging: checklists seem able to defend anyone, even the experienced, against failure in many more tasks than we realized. They provide a kind of cognitive net. They catch mental flaws inherent in all of us — flaws of memory and attention and thoroughness. And because they do, they raise wide, unexpected possibilities.
But a good checklist is like good wine: it has be cultivated with great care, and have certain characteristics in order not to be immediately worthless. So mind the following:

- Checklists should be brief. Usually just a few lines on a single page.
- Never include anything vague or imprecise.
- Do not spell out every single step. Provide reminders of only the most critical and important steps.
- Shoot for efficiency and ease of use, even in the most difficult of situations.
- Shoot for between 5 and 9 items.
- Make sure language is crystal clear. Avoid colors or distractions on the page, and employ a large sans-serif font.
- Checklists should be tested by those using them in real-world situations.

**CHECKLISTS DELIVER RESULTS BY REDUCING COMPLEXITY. MAKE SURE YOUR CHECKLISTS ARE BRIEF, SPECIFIC, AND USE CLEAR LANGUAGE. TRY TO LIMIT THEM TO 5-9 ITEMS. CHECK IT!**
We have many acronyms in the software business, but my favorite relates to a process, not a techno-flavor of the month. It’s the DRY principal, and it stands for Don’t Repeat Yourself.

Legal form creation is one area that’s completely ripe for the DRY principal, and until now, there hasn’t been a good option for firms on a limited tech budget, Macintosh using attorneys, or those favoring cloud software. However, Rocket Matter, the sponsor of this book, has rolled out Document Assembly as part of their 2.0 release.

Consequently, document assembly technology, typically affordable only to firms with large budgets and/or Windows-based systems, is now available to the rest of the world. The long, cruel nightmare is over.

Embracing automatic document generation has many advantages, but here are the top five:

**DOCUMENT ASSEMBLY SAVES YOU TIME**

Time savings is the big winner with document assembly. It’s much quicker to click a button and produce a document than it is to find a similar document, open it in Word®, save a copy to the right location, and copy the information you need into that document.
Document Assembly programs allow you to link to a CRM or database program and spit out copies of your legal documents, instantly merging them with the information you store in your database. So if, say, you’re already storing the docket number, address, and beneficiary information of your client, you can instantly create a new form with all of that data inserted in the right place.

2 DOCUMENT ASSEMBLY REDUCES MISTAKES

One of the biggest problems in software, as well as in legal services, is the consequence of error. So we go to great lengths not to screw up. That’s the main reason why you want to embrace the DRY principal.

When you have multiple copies and versions of something, you create a situation in which you can easily propagate errors. Making matters worse, you might find an error and fix it in one location, but not another.

In addition, when you’re not automating document creation but copying fields from a database to a document manually, you run the risk of introducing human error and screwing up your new doc. When this manual step is removed in favor of a computer-driven merge process, risk for error is eliminated in the data transfer stage.

3 DOCUMENT ASSEMBLY MAKES LIFE SIMPLE

If you’re not using document assembly, most likely you’re digging through similar or sample files to locate something you can use for your new doc. That takes energy and can be a royal pain. Not to mention if you believe the recent science behind decision fatigue, you’re really whittling away your will power by constantly searching for sample documents and data to stuff into them.
Instead of constantly locating documents, generating new legal forms based on your defined templates, eliminates the painful process of finding these samples and the information needed for them. It's a one step process, not a multi-step process, and gives your neurons and synapses a rest.

**DOCUMENT ASSEMBLY MAKES TRAINING NEW ASSOCIATES AND NEW HIRES EASY**

Anytime you standardize a repeatable process, you make it easier to bring on new hires. The worst position you want to find yourself in is with administrative staff holding proprietary knowledge over a business process.

Everything, from client intake to invoice creation, should be scriptable. And the creation of legal documents is a major part of that. When you embrace document generation with a tool like Rocket Matter, it’s clear how to create the subpoena, pleading, or notice of hearing. You can teach a new hire how to make one in an afternoon.

**DOCUMENT ASSEMBLY FITS INTO A LARGER PHILOSOPHY OF EFFICIENT WORKFLOW**

Stepping back to a 50,000 foot view for a second, if you’re an attorney committed to a paperless office, mobile computing, and other top-echelons of efficiency and business techniques, document assembly is part of that fabric and philosophy.

For those that have squeezed the last ounce of productivity from their law firms, but have NOT yet embraced document assembly, a big, brave frontier awaits exploration. It’s an area ripe for opportunities to save time and ultimately increase profits.
TRY TO LIMIT YOUR DAILY ACTIVITIES TO THREE BIG THINGS AND TWO SMALL THINGS. PRIORITIZING THE DAY BEFORE CAN ALSO HELP YOU STAY ON TRACK. DON'T FORGET TO TAKE BREAKS ALONG THE WAY!
There is nothing quite like receiving a bill from a lawyer for less than an hour of billable work. Never has a lawyer successfully communicated so many messages by using so few words.

To clarify a bit, I’m not referring to a lawyer passing me a bill from a third-party court reporter, or for reimbursement for an out-of-pocket expense incurred on my behalf. I mean a straight up bill for legal services rendered. A bill that looks something like this:

Telecon w/Client; follow-up email." 0.25 $75.00
TOTAL FOR SERVICES RENDERED: $75.00

From my perspective, that of a consumer of legal services, here’s a few things this bill accomplishes:

First, it earns my lawyer a cool $75.00. Gratz.

It also manages to establish the point that every time we interact, or that any time you interact with my matter – regardless of how significant the interaction – the meter is running at full speed. And it doesn’t exactly require Dr. Phil to predict the psychological impact that type of behavior is likely to cause. Nothing says “please stop calling me” quite like receiving a peanut-sized bill for the chat. A quick call for
some advice, for an opinion, or an insight causes an almost audible ringing of an invisible cash register.

So you might be thinking: wait a minute, that “insight” is my business. The time it takes me to deliver it: that’s my inventory, mixed in with years of education and experience. That’s precisely what the client should be paying me for. And yes, you’re right – sort of.

In my own experience as a consumer of legal services, I’ve come to realize several things: First, one of the things I truly appreciate – and certainly one of the things I miss most from practicing law – is the ability to bounce a quick idea off a respected colleague. Not just someone smart, but someone smart who can appreciate the subtle legal nuances and implications of a particular fact pattern. Better yet – someone who knows an answer to a discrete legal question right off the top of their head that would otherwise take me hours to research on my own. The best lawyers I’ve worked with are happy to take those kind of calls “off the meter”, in fact they encourage it. They play what some call “the long game”.

They know: (1) my modus operandi is not a dude looking for a consistent stream of free legal work – I don’t call everyday, I don’t try to invite them to dinner and turn the dinner into a game of legal Jeopardy!; and (2) that when I need help on a major project, it’s very likely that they are the lawyer I’ll call. And perhaps an even bigger understanding: if there is a potential project brewing that could require legal services, there’s a good chance I’ll call to ask about it – thereby creating an opportunity for them to identify (and even recommend and define) the actual work that ought be done – rather than having me independently cut it off at the knees by never surfacing it at all. Gosh only knows how much actual great, interesting legal work exists that never sees the light of day solely because of short-sighted billing practices.
After over 15+ years of working closely with entrepreneurs, many who have become good friends, I can say that the biggest complaint they have about lawyers is the “nickel and diming.” It’s not the billable hour system per se, though that’s clearly not popular, but rather, when the billable hour system is applied in a rigid, mechanical way.

These entrepreneurs, who can be machines for generating interesting legal work, usually don’t complain much about rates (they are often themselves intelligent, educated, and understand that professional services justifiably command a reasonable rate), they don’t gripe much about work quality. Instead, to a person, each has had many good things to say about their own lawyer’s intellect, strategic thinking capacity, and advice. However, they admit that they clearly have had situations in which they haven’t involved their lawyer, and otherwise would’ve, but for fear of the “talk fast – you’re on the clock” mentality. Today, when competition for quality legal services is extreme, and alternatives – regardless of how prudent they are – are plenty, there is still a huge amount of quality legal work available to lawyers who avoid nickel/dime billing and instead “invest” in relationship building.

In almost any business it’s usually easier, and more cost-effective, to get more business from existing clients than it is to try and get new clients to walk in the door. It can be the same for legal work. The lawyer who is looking to generate incremental business is the lawyer who encourages clients to call, and who reduces the points of friction in doing so. And that kind of lawyer? You can be certain their name travels fast in those entrepreneurial circles I mentioned.

When I’m thinking about the specific $25,000 legal project I have to outsource, or perhaps more to the point, thinking about something that might evolve into a $25,000 legal project, who is going to get the first call? We know who isn’t.
BE MINDFUL WHILE BILLING YOUR CLIENTS. MANY DO NOT APPRECIATE THE "TALK FAST, YOU'RE ON THE CLOCK" MENTALITY. INSTEAD, INVEST IN BUILDING SOLID RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR CLIENTS.
In *5 Bad Habits of Business Lawyers* we listed some ways that business lawyers can actually destroy value in business transactions. One of those ways – a personal favorite – was what we colloquially labeled as “putting a turd in the punch bowl”; that is, inventing difficult issues or giving (likely) trivial issues the same weight as key business terms.

Last night I was treated to an example that confirms “punchbowling” is, sadly, still alive and well.

A close friend of mine, someone who provides consulting services to entrepreneurs (read: a terrific business development contact for a lawyer), called me in a mild panic. He was pitching a new prospective client, a larger client than usual – big enough to employ in-house counsel – and was floored when his basic client engagement letter was returned to him almost unrecognizable. What started as a simple, fair, customary 2-page engagement letter was turned into an 8 page single-spaced monstrosity. Visually it was as though a living corporate formbook had too many words to drink, got sick, and barfed all over this document. Complex, 20+ line indemnity clauses, sneaky technical terms that we business lawyers know can be very tricky (“best efforts”, “time is of the essence”, “reasonably likely to impair”, etc.). It was the kind of stuff which might be appropriate if my friend were in, say, the business of juggling chainsaws at corporate family picnics instead of consulting.
By the way, the few terms I might’ve expected some reasonable push back on (key, operational business terms – the stuff that is likely to actually matter) passed by without much comment at all. Sure, it’s possible the in-house lawyer was told to lay off the business terms, but in my experience that’s not how it probably went down. To the contrary, I’ve found that the business lawyers who tend to obsess over the minutiae are usually the same lawyers who miss the things that ultimately matter most. 15 absurd edits to a boilerplate “counterparts” clause, while payment triggers and substantive deliverables pass by without comment.

In the end, this in-house lawyer managed to introduce so many potential complicated (and likely irrelevant) issues that it was virtually impossible to even think them all through. As I write this, this deal – which 24 hours earlier had the makings of a win-win – is DOA.

My friend is left wondering: does his business contact simply not know how to properly manage in-house legal? Is this truly an accurate overall indication of how this company works? And that in-house lawyer whose name appeared next to all those absurd, overlawyered, blacklined comments: that’s a name that won’t easily be forgotten among my friend and his network of (literally) hundreds of entrepreneurs.

The best business lawyers understand the primary objectives of a deal, communicate and assess the relative risks and benefits, and advise in a practical, deal-friendly way. They add value by bringing perspective, balance and clarity. They prioritize helping the parties get the deal done over, showing off their intellectual superiority in constructing verbose, disproportionately lengthy linguistic prophylactics against remote, convoluted, hypotheticals (irony intended).

When I was practicing business law, one of my mentors drilled: “Any hack can kill a deal, a good lawyer offers up ways that it can work.” And that little ditty has a
cousin: “When you just need to make a quick run to the corner 7-11, a Yugo® will get you there as well as a BMW®.” Sure, some deals need a lawyer to come in and quash them, gosh knows the kind of ridiculous stuff that some clients can dream up, but most of the time the parties just need some good, practical advice to help make things happen. Sometimes the Yugo gets you there just as well; not every deal needs a hundred grand worth of precision German engineering.

So, when your client brings you a simple deal and asks you to review it, or draft it up, remember: punchbowlers ruin the party and don’t get invited back to many more. Don’t be a punchbowler.

DO YOURSELF A FAVOR AND DON’T OVERCOMPLICATE THINGS. YOUR GOAL SHOULD BE TO BRING PERSPECTIVE, BALANCE, AND CLARITY, NOT SHOW OFF YOUR INTELLECTUAL SUPERIORITY.
Be a hero at the office with these tips on how to get organized, go paperless, and save time. Singletask, don’t multitask, and find out how to get more done while working less. Working heroically is not about burning the midnight oil, but how you optimize your hours at work.
With a nod to pathological hoarders, getting rid of clutter is one of the easiest ways to get organized and increase productivity at the office. Here are a few tips.

**Dumpster Day** – Dumpster Day is exactly what you think: a day dedicated to cleaning out the office and dumping things you no longer need. Schedule a monthly Dumpster Day where everyone is encouraged to go through their desks, files, bookshelves, and purge themselves of stuff they don’t need anymore. If there’s any doubt, toss it.

**Declutter Your Phone** – Does it take ages to locate an app or access basic functions on your mobile device? Clean up your phone. Too many apps takes up precious storage space, drains the battery and wastes your time. Delete unused apps and group the rest into folders. Do the same with your computer by purging old documents, videos, images and applications or move them to the cloud.

**Declutter Your Desk** – “If a cluttered desk is a sign of a cluttered mind, of what then, is an empty desk a sign of?” – Albert Einstein’s insinuation aside, and the suggestion that we keep our office messy or neat to match our cognitive style, I’ll go out on a limb and say that most of us would prefer working (and work better) at a clutter-free desk. Four items help me keep my desk clutter-free: scanner, adequate drawer space, wastepaper bin and a bookshelf within reach.
CLEAN UP YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS – There are few things more noisy and time consuming online that a cluttered Twitter stream or Facebook wall. Unfollow Twitter accounts and unlike Facebook Pages (and people) that are no longer useful or that post too much. Create lists instead.

GET RID OF ONE ITEM FOR EVERY ONE THAT YOU ADD – Now that you’ve achieved decluttering nirvana, keep it so by removing one item for every one that you add. Add a new scanner? Donate the old one, or throw out the badly chipped coffee mug that you’ve been holding on to.

DECLUTTERING DOESN’T STOP AT YOUR DESK! CLEANING UP YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES CAN ALSO LEAD TO A BOOST IN PRODUCTIVITY!
This isn’t about a 4-Hour Work Week. There is no such thing. It’s about having a productive work day. Not a productive work morning-evening-night, but the 8-10 hours that we put in every day at work. And no, it’s also not about about loving or not loving what you do. Sure, it’s a nice concept and it would be great if we could all be so engaged, but in the real world, not everyone has that privilege or that opportunity right now.

I’m talking about doing only two things — ridding yourself of less-than-productive activities and responsibilities, and clocking out at a regular time every day.

**REDUCING YOUR PERIPHERAL VISION**

Too many things on your plate doesn’t slow you down, it stops you cold. When we’re overburdened, we tend to freeze up. We shut down, completely overwhelmed. If you think that certain tasks, after a period of experimentation don’t fit your strengths, have a conversation with your team about re-evaluating responsibilities.

Even more importantly, examine other responsibilities that are lingering that are not important but may be taking up time and dominating your thought process, affecting your ability to focus on the tasks at hand.

When I started at Rocket Matter, I still held on to fragments of my old CLE entrepreneurial venture. Even though I ramped down the day-to-day work of the
venture, I still offered advice to those who inquired and referred gigs to others. Was it occupying actual time during my work hours? No, but just the knowledge that I needed to respond to a growing list of inquiries gnawed at me throughout the day. After awhile, I determined that it was not related to what I was doing now, and didn't help, but hindered my productivity and progress.

It was tough to let go of something I had nurtured for years but when I did, it was like flipping a switch. A weight was lifted and my focus and productivity improved. So take a look at activities that may be keeping you back and close them out.

**CLOCKING OUT**

Think your boss is impressed with emails at 10:00 p.m.? She isn't. Instead she's probably wondering why you weren't focused enough during the work day to get the job done. And, she's concerned that you'll burn yourself out and become a less productive member of the team.

Instead, wrap up your work at a regular time each day. This is especially important for those who work from home. Shut down at six. Turn off Skype and email and leave the office, or if you're home, get out of the house, or continue reading that page-turner of a book. If you give yourself all day and night to complete your work, it'll take all day and night. But if you allot a scheduled 8-10 hours of work, you'll become more focused and efficient about how you manage your time and tasks throughout the day.

After adopting these practices and settling into a productive routine, then you can consider other productivity measures like having a dumpster day, using the Pomodoro Technique, or getting to zero email inbox. But start with focus and routine.
EXAMINE YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AND PERSONAL STRENGTHS AND PRIORITIZE ACCORDINGLY. ALSO, MAKE SURE TO WRAP UP YOUR WORK AT A REGULAR TIME EACH DAY. YOU'LL BE MORE FOCUSED AND EFFICIENT IF YOU SET LIMITS!
We all aspire to a more paperless office – it helps the environment and increases efficiency and productivity. But it requires consistent effort. Here are a few tips to get you started:

**PAPER-LESS NOT PAPER-FREE**

The world is not ready for paper-free. Sure you can buy a movie ticket online but you often have to print a copy to enter the theater. Same with many plane tickets, and classroom and continuing legal education (CLE) materials, and court documents. Acknowledging this and accepting that there are limitations will go a long way to warding off frustration and procrastination.

**NOTE-TAKING DURING CONFERENCE CALLS, MEETINGS AND CLES**

Get rid of your message pad and notebook, and fire up Evernote to take notes during meetings, calls, CLE classes, and training sessions. You’ll solve the problem of trying to recognize your handwritten scrawl later, and you can easily share the note by emailing it to colleagues. Tasks and to-do lists assigned during the meeting? No problem. Quickly create checklists in Evernote. Notes are saved as you type and are fully search-able. I have a Notebook called “Meetings and Calls” and open a new note before each Skype call, or GoToMeeting rendezvous.
SCAN AND BACKUP

Scan meeting handouts and other documents into Evernote, or Google Docs, or store them on your computer.

Don't make an extra copy of that brief, CLE materials, or receipt, then put it in a manilla folder, label it and store it in a filing cabinet. Instead, download the freemium Dropbox and sync select files to the cloud. If you scanned the documents into Evernote or Google Docs, they're already backed up online, but with Dropbox, you also have a copy on your local drive. You can also upload the documents to a cloud-based practice management software.

Then get rid of the filing cabinet and clear up some office space.

CREATE PAPERLESS HABITS

A paperless office doesn't happen overnight. It takes effort and commitment. Over time, it becomes much easier if you create habit forming work-flows. Like when you sit down to open your mail. In addition to having a shredder nearby, have your scanner ready to go for those documents that you wish to save. Same with receipts for expense reports — as you get them, snap a picture and store it on your local drive, Evernote, or online. Nothing is as discouraging as watching a pile of to-scan documents grow out of control on your desk.

As mentioned earlier, we’re attempting to minimize, not entirely get rid of paper. Though you may read most books on a tablet, laptop or smartphone, an occasional hard-copy purchase can be a delight. And I’ve yet to give up my moleskin entirely. But get the (mostly free) tools, acquire paperless habits, and see those piles of paper disappear, resulting in a more productive and efficient office.
PAPERLESS OFFICES HELP THE ENVIRONMENT AND INCREASE PROFICIENCY. USE PRODUCTS LIKE EVERNOTE FOR NOTE-TAKING AND DROPBOX FOR BACKUP. REMEMBER, IT'S ABOUT MINIMIZING YOUR PAPER USE, NOT GETTING RID OF IT ENTIRELY. THERE ARE LIMITATIONS!

Want to learn how to save the day by incorporating Evernote into your Heroic Law Office?
Take a look at our FREE e-book:

CLOUD PLANET: A LAWYER'S GUIDE TO EVERNOTE®
A recent post on Time Management, To-Do Lists, and the 3 + 2 Rule resonated broadly, suggesting that many of us continue to struggle with how to manage the 50, 60, 70 (and more) hours of work we face every week.

Summarizing the 3 + 2 Rule:

Identify only 3 big things and 2 small things to do in a day. Write down the 3 main activities you need to accomplish, each taking 2 to 3 hours, and 2 minor ones that take around 20 minutes each.

In addition to prioritizing your challenging list of tasks to a core five, or for those long days when deadline looming tasks demand a longer To-Do list, here are a few additional time savers to employ:

Plan your work-day in advance – I try to make a list of my core five tasks to complete (3 + 2) the night before. This serves as my own morning roll-call and makes a significant difference in a productive start to the day.

**Schedule Time to Check Email** – Turn off email push notifications and check it only two or three times a day. Answer your emails and organize your inbox and folders during these times and log out when you’re done.

**Don’t Multi-Task** – Switching tasks slows you down. It takes time to get back to the productive zone you were in prior to switching. Complete the task at hand...
before moving on to the next. However, multi-tasking is sometimes unavoidable. Identify those tasks and use a block of time – perhaps one or two of the 20-30 minute intervals for knocking out these tasks. Or catch them on a break between scheduled tasks. Managing multiple social media platforms throughout the day is an example of this.

**FOCUS** – We’re huge advocates of the Pomodoro Technique. Remove distractions and focus in on each task for a set number of minutes. The technique suggest 25 minute increments, but I moderate that to fit my needs, from as little as 25-30 minutes to as much as two hours, but rarely more.

**TAKE BREAKS** – Breaking up your day into quantifiable tasks is important. Taking breaks between tasks is just as important. Without breaks, laser focus is almost impossible, creativity and concentration suffers and tasks take longer to complete.

TRY TO LIMIT YOUR DAILY ACTIVITIES TO THREE BIG THINGS AND TWO SMALL THINGS. PRIORITIZING THE DAY BEFORE CAN ALSO HELP YOU STAY ON TRACK. DON’T FORGET TO TAKE BREAKS ALONG THE WAY!
With unprecedented distractions at our fingertips, the ability to focus and finish a project before moving on to the next has become a more valuable skill than multitasking.

In Dr. Gottschalk suggests that the ability to multitask is more of an illusion, than a bona fide skill. That in reality, we should be on a mission to break our multitasking obsession- since, while we have the ability to switch between tasks — we do not have the ability to attend to all of them effectively.

Instead of multitasking, focus on one task at a time. Here are a few tips.

**PLAN TO DO LESS** – There are few things more discouraging than an endless to-do list. It’s a productivity killer. Limit your daily tasks to 5: 3 big things and 2 small things. Of course, it’s wistful to assume that you’ll have only five tasks on any given day, so create a “Back Burner” list where you throw less urgent tasks or brilliant ideas as they occur. When you're done with your five tasks, then drag a few of the “Back Burner” tasks over.

This works like a charm for me: during daily “agile” stand-up morning meetings I limit the reporting of core tasks to five. I often end up completing many more tasks as priorities shift during the day. But starting out with a manageable number of tasks lessens the burden and stress and allows me to focus on each task to completion. Like researching and writing this post.
**PRODUCTIVITY TIP:** Create a “Daily Tasks” folder in Evernote and check off tasks as each is completed. This little step generates a sense of satisfaction as you progress throughout the day. You can have a very simple Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow task list but I prefer to assign a date, save them all, and periodically review and assess my assignments and productivity.

**POMODORO TECHNIQUE** – We’re big fans of the Pomodoro technique where you set a timer for 25 minutes and work on only one thing during that time. No breaks or interruptions. Take a break for 5 minutes and then start up again. I play around with the 25 minutes intervals depending on the task at hand but try not to go too long before taking a 5 minute break.

**REMOVE DISTRACTIONS** – The first thing you should do is turn off all notifications. In fact, you should always have them turned off on your work device– computer or tablet. I only get notifications on my phone and it’s almost always on vibrate. Notification of comments to yesterday’s post on Facebook should never be allowed to become a distraction. Email can wait until your current task is completed.

As a remote worker, I have Skype messaging on all day to keep in touch with the mother ship, but put it on “do not disturb” when focusing on a project. I also open a new browser window with open tabs related to my current project only.

**CHANGE LOCATION** – If you can, go to Starbucks or the public library for a couple hours to focus on a particular project. Change of scenery can also boost your creativity. I’m at Argo Tea writing this post and the 2-hour WiFi limit acts as my Pomodoro timer. If you’re stuck at the office, work in a conference room for an hour or two every day.
All tasks may not require such deep focus, but for those that do, try these tips and adjust them to your unique situation.

**MULTITASKING IS AN ILLUSION! LIMIT YOUR DAILY TASKS USING THE 3 + 2 RULE AND REMOVE DISTRACTIONS. A CHANGE OF SCENERY CAN ALSO HELP BOOST PRODUCTIVITY AND CREATIVITY.**
Instead of re-evaluating a task yet again, saving too many articles to read later, or staring down an email for the fifth time, act the first time you encounter them and move on.

Touch it once. Act on it.

I’ve been trying this for the past few weeks with a marked improvement in productivity and peace of mind. It works with office functions, client communication, even putting away laundry, washing dishes and cleaning up a mess. The list is endless.

Let’s take a look at a few common culprits:

Inbox – When you get a new message, reply, delete, forward, or if project based, send to Evernote or your practice management system and move on to the next message.

Check your inbox only when you have time to act on the emails.

Bills – Just received a text or email notification that your phone, cable, or other bill is due? When you view the messages, take care of it right away or else you’ll end up looking at it four or five times or over the next few days or getting additional time-wasting notifications.
Trackers – I’m not one for tracking things like weight, calories, even finances, but it can be useful when trying to achieve a certain goal. I’ve checked out apps like LoseIt, MyFitnessPal and Toshl Finance. The only time these work for me is when I enter trackable items as they occur. If I scribble it on a piece of paper somewhere for later in the evening – at least two touches – I generally fail to record it and eventually quit entering and tracking.

Saving articles to read later – The articles saved to my Pocket read-it-later account is up to 98 and climbing. I’ve mass-deleted saved articles in the past and will probably never get to this new batch. Instead, quickly scan articles as you come across them, move to Evernote if saving for a blog post or presentation, or save to an Open Tabs folder to read at the end of the day. Delete – ruthlessly – if you can’t get to them.

The trick to limiting touches, I’ve discovered, is to create a process for handling each type of task and engineering work and home space to quickly handle situations as they occur.

For example, if you live in a small urban apartment – without a tool shed or a garage – then you need a toolbox to put away screwdrivers and other tools. The toolbox has to be accessible – not stuck under the table behind a stack of old books. (Trust me on this one.) Otherwise, tools will appear all around the apartment and every time you look at them, think about them, or chastise yourself for not putting them away, is a “touch.” Multiple touches expend energy and weigh you down without resolving the issue.

And don’t get me started on putting away laundry right away. It’s probably because you hate to fold.

To be sure, in the real world you will come across tasks that require a few touches. When this happens, challenge yourself to find a process that will limit touches to
only one. The key is to be aware of the things that bog you down with multiple touches and try to create a habit – because that’s what it is, a habit, a good one – of touching them only once.

INSTEAD OF CONSTANTLY RE-EVALUATING TASKS, TRY YOUR BEST TO HANDLE SITUATIONS AS THEY OCCUR BY MAKING A PROCESS FOR YOURSELF. YOUR NEW MANTRA: TOUCH IT ONCE. ACT ON IT!
Would it be nice if we all could wake up insanely early, like four in the morning or earlier for a focused and unhurried time, leading to a productive day?

Sure, but most of us probably can’t, or won’t. But all is not lost. Spending just 30 minutes to an hour the night before, organizing and planning, can make a world of difference in how we start our day and how productive and creative we are during the day.

The “night before” can be either late at night when everything’s quieted down, or at the end of the day after you’ve completed that day’s work and before leaving the office. Use this time to checklist the tasks completed today and create a new checklist for the next day. If you’re on the Agile system, this is especially useful, so you’re prepared for the morning’s “standup” without scrambling when you get into work.

You can go one step further and start a project that requires a no-interruption block of time which is generally difficult to get during the regular work day. For me, it’s writing. When I take the time to choose a topic, do a bit of research and create an outline, completing a post or other writing project the next day, even with inevitable interruptions, doesn’t stretch into hours on end.

So, if you’re not a natural early riser, productivity doesn’t have to suffer. Just get a head start the night before.
WHY WAKE UP INSANELY EARLY? INSTEAD, SPEND 30 MINUTES TO 1 HOUR THE NIGHT BEFORE ORGANIZING AND PLANNING FOR THE FOLLOWING DAY. YOU'LL BE AMAZED AT HOW PRODUCTIVE YOU'LL BE!
The other day the good folks at my local Apple store unloaded the bad news that my ailing hard drive needed to be replaced and advised me to backup first. Aside from a few images and non-essential documents, I was good to go. Here's how I manage my hard drive to be crash proof and how you can too.

I'm using a Mac as my example in this post but the same principles apply to PCs. I'm also eliminating the hassle of backing up to an external hard drive, including Mac's Time Machine option. This is all about effortless cloud based backup and sync.

**CLOUD STORAGE ACCOUNTS**

Here's all you'll need to get started: Dropbox and Evernote accounts- If you don't want to spring for a paid Dropbox account, you'll need more than the 2 GB, so get a Box.com account where you'll get 10 GB free with promotions that could net you upwards of 40 GB. (I have a free 50 GB Box account.)

After creating accounts and installing the applications, it's time to set up your folders. On my larger cloud drive, Box.com, I setup the usual array of folders and subfolder found on a hard drive: Documents, Pictures, Videos, Music, and so on. This folder structure and the files housed there, are now available on your hard drive and synced to Box or Dropbox.
APPLICATIONS

You don’t need to backup your installed apps. In fact, you probably have more than a few unused apps clogging up your hard drive. Getting a new hard drive or moving to a new computer is a great opportunity to start with a clean slate and install only the apps that you use.

Applications ordered through the Mac store are available to install on any hard drive, but for a full list, go to Finder and click on Applications. Copy and paste into a “Mac Backup” notebook in Evernote. Remember to perform an “unformatted” paste (command+shift+v) or else Evernote will attempt to paste zip files of all the applications. You don’t want that.

SERIAL NUMBERS

The second note in your Evernote “Mac Backup” notebook should contain a list of all serial numbers so you can reinstall the applications that you purchased online. After my hard drive was replaced, I was able to go online and quickly download my MS Office for a Mac suite of programs, Adobe Acrobat Pro, and other applications. Even if you choose other backup processes, this is a list you should maintain in Evernote.

PASSWORDS

I’m not a fan of saving passwords to multiple browsers. It allows anyone using my computer to access my login credentials. Use a password manager instead. I use 1Password. It’s not inexpensive, but neither is your security, convenience, and peace of mind. Configure 1Password to automatically backup your passwords to a Dropbox or iCloud account – all encrypted, of course.
MUSIC

I don’t like iTunes. Never have. My 5000+ tracks are housed in Google Music for safekeeping. I also use my old iPod as a music hard drive backup. Treasured tracks I backup to my Box.com account. Like many, the way I listen to music has changed over the years – to Spotify, Pandora, last.fm, and other online music streaming services, so backing up music has become less critical for me.

HARD DRIVE

I set up three folders that reside only on my hard drive:

To Be Filed – when I’m in a hurry and want to quickly save a file. These files are reviewed and sorted monthly.

To Be Deleted – temp files like screenshots to be used in blog posts. These files are reviewed and moved to the trash bin monthly.

Meh – files that are nice to have but not concerned about losing.

I also use Google Docs for many of my docs and spreadsheets and Evernote to store all of my notes and much, much more. After I upload a photo to Facebook or Flickr, it’s deleted from my hard drive. To be safe, I occasionally backup Facebook to Dropbox or Box.

That’s it! Once you set up your cloud accounts and hard drive, it’s easy to maintain a crash-proof computer.
HARD DRIVES DON'T LAST FOREVER. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF CLOUD SERVICES AND BACKUP PROGRAMS LIKE DROPBOX AND EVERNOTE. DON'T FORGET TO ALSO BACK UP INFORMATION LIKE SERIAL NUMBERS AND PASSWORDS!
Lawyers and law firms have removed their head from the sand and discovered the value of marketing their practice. Today, it's all about internet marketing, blogging, social media, the list goes on and on. It can get quite overwhelming. Here you'll find tips and strategies along with lessons we've learned over the years. Heroic lawyers, grab your masks and capes and get ready to conquer the internet.
Let’s get one thing straight. No matter what you’re hearing, you’re not going to get a ton of business via social media alone. Or through just SEO, for that matter. Or even with a killer website. Sound strange coming from an Internet marketing agency?

Our experience is like this: marketing needs to function like an orchestra. The elements need to work together, directed by a conductor, and some are more important than others.

In order to express the relationship of Internet marketing activities to our Rocket X1 clients, we developed a conceptual framework in the shape of a pyramid. Our objective is to communicate where each marketing endeavor fits in the grand scheme of things.
FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS

Your entire Internet marketing strategy needs to start somewhere – in the Rocket X1 methodology it rests upon the foundational elements of Keywords, Search Engine Optimization, and Content Strategy. Everything we build rises from these fundamental building blocks.

KEYWORDS

Keywords are words or phrases that are going to be prevalent throughout your marketing materials. Your keywords need to be thought out carefully, as some have a decent search traffic volume and others don’t. You also need to understand which keywords are more competitive than others. If you’re like most professionals, you’re probably going after the wrong keywords, fighting over expensive scraps, even though your intentions are right.

We are not big believers in chasing hundreds of keywords. One time for Rocket Matter, our legal practice management software company, we engaged an SEO agency who gave us a list of 600 keywords to look through. We vowed never to do this to one of our clients. Instead, we focus on top 25 keywords.

We believe, even if search is not one of the primary drivers of your search traffic, that understanding your most critical search terms is important for consistent messaging across your brand. Developing talking points is important for any organization, and keywords are a big part of that.

SEO OR SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

Believe it or not, SEO is not the end-all-be-all of Internet marketing. While we are not going to pooh-pooh a top Google ranking, we do question the wisdom of
spending time and money optimizing for keywords that may only have 100 searches per month.

That said, SEO can't be ignored. It needs to be incorporated into every Internet marketing strategy, but its importance can vary based on a variety of factors.

We also believe that search engine optimization should not be something that is “tacked on” after a website is built. Rather, it should be baked into the architecture of the site as it’s being constructed. It needs to be considered while the scaffolding goes up, and you must make sure that every possible optimization element is in place.

**CONTENT STRATEGY**

If you want to have a presence on the Internet, you’re going to need content. You’ll need blog posts, which get gobbled up greedily by Google and are shared on the social networks, spreading your reach. You’re going to need newsletters which keep people returning back to your website. You’ll be ahead of your competition by offering great free materials, such as e-books, webinars, and video to generate awareness about your services and become a trusted individual and differentiate yourself from your competition.

These efforts cannot be scattered. They need to be thematically related. You may also want to consider a content strategy that isn't based on your core keywords. For example, you might try to cast a wider net to a larger audience with more general content, and choose to funnel more leads as opposed to fewer. The strategy and direction of your content will affect every activity you do as you market online.
CORE STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS

Now that we’ve built our foundation, we can start putting the scaffolding in place. The core structural elements are those that will manifest your foundational elements and serve as a support structure for the top-of-the-pyramid reach building elements.

BRANDING

Fair or not, people will judge you in a split second based on the look of your logo. If it’s polished and elegant, people will instantly have a sense of confidence about you. But if you’ve chosen a sloppy design and poor colors, watch out. People will view you as an amateur.

Your branding needs to be adaptable; it has to look good on business cards, stationary, social media accounts, and your website. Your branding, in concert with your copy, should create a sense of consistency and continuity across all of your marketing efforts, Internet-based or not.

WEBSITE

Once you’ve identified your keywords, content, and SEO strategies, we can now build a website optimized for your objectives. When we construct a site, we build something with a look and feel that goes way beyond what most professionals are conditioned to expect. You should not settle for mediocrity. Your website is your headquarters on the Internet and it has to be excellent.

Your website needs to cleave with your overall Internet marketing strategies. It should be designed with maximum lead conversion in mind. It should be elegant, professional, and modern. Your website should respect your brand and colors and convey your talking points and messaging clearly. And in today’s modern age of
iPhones® and Droids®, it must be “responsive”, meaning your site should render differently on a smartphone than it does on a computer.

**COPY WRITING**

Together with branding, your copy (aka the text that markets your service) is going to tell the story of your product or service. The writing needs to be persuasive. It has to have a certain number of words. It has to invoke action. And it also needs to incorporate your keywords. Getting proper Internet marketing copy right is a painful, trial-and-error process.

Here’s another fact we’ve learned over the years: some word combinations are better than others when it comes to persuading people to use your service. There are people in the sales world who insist that every product or service has a single most effective selling sentence. What we do with our clients is try to cultivate the correct voice for their copy and identify key talking points to use throughout their messaging.

In part 2 we’ll explore the top half of the pyramid, including Blogging, Reach elements and Lead Generation techniques.

Don’t let the so-called-experts fool you. No single initiative will make the difference. Rather, it’s the combination of elements that allows your efforts to bear fruit. It’s seeing the larger Internet marketing picture and identifying how the pieces work together. It’s measuring each and every thing you do and embracing best practices that makes the difference.
MARKETING ELEMENTS NEED TO FUNCTION TOGETHER. MAKE SURE TO SPEND TIME RESEARCHING KEYWORDS AND SEO. OFFERING A TON OF CONTENT IS IMPORTANT FOR WEB PRESENCE AS WELL.

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As we discussed previously, all of the Internet marketing elements like blogging, SEO, social media, and newsletters need to be working in harmony to have full effect.

In Part One of our Pyramid series, we explored the Foundation elements of Keywords, SEO, and Content Strategy. We also looked briefly at the Core Structural layer, including Branding, Website, and Copy Writing. In Part two, we’re focusing on the top-of-the-pyramid areas that build on the foundation and involve building reach, driving in leads, and nurturing them into clients.
**REACH ELEMENTS**

Your entire Internet marketing strategy needs to start somewhere – in the Rocket X1 methodology it rests upon the foundational elements of Keywords, Search Engine Optimization, and Content Strategy. Everything we build rises from these fundamental building blocks.

Websites aren't like the baseball diamond in Field of Dreams. If you build it, they definitely won’t come. Unless you lead people to it, that is. What drives people to your website is your reach. And the more people you get to your website, if it's constructed properly, the more leads you will collect.

**BLOG POSTS**

Blogging is super-important and gets a whole level to itself in our pyramid. Blog posts are the infantry of the Internet marketing world. Blogging is of critical importance and links the foundation and core structural to the reach elements.

When done correctly, publishing well structured, 200-600 word blog posts on a regular basis feeds Google and the social networks, which are insatiable beasts. They both love and reward new content. And when SEO and social media work in tandem, feeding on the meat of blog posts, then they become a lot more powerful than they do in isolation.

Your blog posts will manifest the keyword and content strategies developed in your core and foundation work. You’re essentially cultivating Lego®-like pieces that you’ll reuse and reassemble. They’ll feed your Twitter and Facebook accounts, serve as the chapters in your e-books, and form the basis of your newsletters.
NEWSLETTERS

Guess what? All that Social Media hype you’ve been hearing? We’re wondering why people talk more about those channels than the traditional, monthly electronic newsletter. That old standard will drive more people to your site than Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn probably ever will.

With a solid base underneath you of blog posts and a stable of articles to choose from, putting together a monthly newsletter becomes a simple task. You’ll find it will become the most important marketing day of the month for you. We’ll work with you to come up with optimized subject lines for maximum open rates and teach you what metrics to track so that you’re maximizing your efforts.

SOCIAL MEDIA

As much as it’s fun to mock the hype surrounding social media channels like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and especially Google+, they definitely need to be part of a comprehensive Internet marketing effort.

First of all, if you don’t reserve your identity on social media someone else might do it in your place. When that happens, at best you have a brand confusion issue and at worst, a possible attack on your reputation. So do this immediately: establish a thorough online identity.

Once you have accounts set up, we guide you in how to best utilize them. We teach you which ones should be used for which purposes and at what times. And we supply you with tools so that you don’t spend all day distracted by the Twitter channels. The fact of the matter is that they can draw traffic to your site and spur relationships. There is value there, but as is the case with SEO, the importance of social media is often overstated.
**E-BOOK**

An e-book is really just a PDF designed like a book. It has a cover, clickable chapters, and looks great on a smartphone, tablet, or computer. For marketing purposes, they are a dream come true. People download them in droves. Our highly successful e-book The Law Firm of Tomorrow has been downloaded by thousands of different people, all of whom supplied their contact data in exchange for it.

The great thing about e-books is that you don't have to do much work to have an insanely awesome lead generation engine. As part of the Rocket X1 program, we take your blog posts, polish them up, and assemble them into a beautiful package. We also provide a landing page to maximize downloads of the e-book and capture their information in easy-to-use forms.

**PRESS RELEASE**

The final element of reach elements is the press release. A well-written release can help your firm receive attention from its target audience: the media. They can also be placed on wire services, which result in pickup in newspapers around the Internet. You’ll feed them into your social channels, post them on your blog and the world will know: you have some action going on at your firm.

Last but not least, press releases on your website tell visitors that you're making stuff happen. It communicates that you know what you're doing. And with a little training and our guidance at Rocket X1, you'll learn tips and tricks to writing a great release.
LEAD GENERATION ELEMENTS

So now we're at the top of the pyramid. We're missing the final, most critical piece, which is what marketing is all about: collecting leads.

LEADS

Your entire Internet marketing strategy from the ground up should focus on one thing: generating leads. If you’re not generating leads, you’re not doing marketing correctly. But if you have a clearly thought-out strategy, and develop it from the ground up like we do with the Rocket X1 pyramid, you’ll have a plan, a website, and a consistent branding and messaging effort. You’ll have bait to attract leads and a system to collect them.

Once marketing has generated leads, it’s the role of your rainmakers to close the deal. Many organizations have sales teams; most professional service firms usually have partners that bring home the bacon. However, with Rocket X1, we take your marketing a step further: we take those raw leads and cultivate them through lead nurturing.

LEAD NURTURING

Once someone comes to your website and enters their personal details to receive information, download an e-book, or gets spurred to fill out a form, they become a lead. At that point, they are a tiny flicker of hope that could one day become a paying client. In order to increase your chances that they’ll travel from lead to client, you need to nurture these fledgling little nuggets of interest.

Lead nurturing involves drawing your lead back to your website. Essentially, you reach out to them in an automated fashion with enticing emails focusing on more of your reach elements. Rocket X1 provides this infrastructure, so that when
someone fills out one of your forms, they become part of an automated lead nurturing campaign that can augment any manual sales effort you’re doing at your firm.

In part three, we'll cover the last thing that ties everything together: measurement. If you don't measure what you're doing, you're not marketing.

GENERATE LEADS BY CONSTANTLY PUTTING OUT NEW CONTENT. BLOGGING IS ESSENTIAL! YOUR POSTS WILL SERVE AS BUILDING BLOCKS FOR YOUR NEWSLETTER, EBOOKS, AND SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS.

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In part one of our Internet marketing Pyramid series, we discussed our foundational and core structural elements. We then covered building reach and lead generation in part 2. But none of those techniques work if you’re not analyzing what you’re doing.
MEASUREMENT

There’s a reason we have the word “MEASUREMENT” on the outside of the Rocket X1 Marketing Pyramid: it’s a discipline that cuts across all levels and efforts. No matter what part of the pyramid you’re in, or what lead generation tactic you’re pursuing, there’s a way to determine if you’re being successful or not.

Numbers are cold, hard facts that eliminate guess-work from your strategy. They inform your choices and help you plot a course. With the analytics tools at our disposal for Internet-based marketing, your efforts resemble those of a scientist: you come up with a hypothesis, test it out, and measure the results. Then you improve and repeat.

When Rocket X1 account managers analyze your keywords, we make decisions based on traffic volume and number of monthly searches. We look at your competitors and analyze how they’re ranking for specific search terms.

When we build out your website, we make sure that Google Analytics and AdWords conversion codes are in place to see what content is most popular, how your site is performing, and which campaigns convert leads and which do not. The data from Google Analytics is rich with meaningful information that can drive your marketing insights. But only if you study it regularly over time.

Measurement is critical not just after the fact but as you prepare the text for your marketing efforts. When you write web copy, are you using your keywords in the places they need to be? Are they in the meta description, in the image alt attributes, and do you even have the right amount of words on the page?

As we move up the pyramid, we start to analyze the success of your reach and lead generation efforts. We can determine which blog posts are most popular. We can discover, for example, which of them gets the most opens in the newsletter.
and 'likes' on social media. What topics are trending on the channels and how can we incorporate them into our material? What days statistically are the best to send our newsletter and what will result in maximum open rates?

On and on it goes. There's no excuse in this day in age not to know which ads of yours perform better than others. Or which landing pages convert more leads. Or which inbound links to your website are the most successful.

We are living in a golden age for marketers where we can operate like scientists, when we have more data at our fingertips than ever before. The trick is knowing which numbers become your Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and figuring out how you can infer direction from these cold, hard facts.

MEASUREMENT IS CRITICAL FOR INTERNET MARKETING. YOUR NUMBERS WILL INFORM YOUR CHOICES AND HELP YOU PLOT A COURSE. TEST, IMPROVE, AND REPEAT!

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During the 2013 ABA Techshow, I was deeply privileged to talk shop with a few law bloggers that I follow and admire. Then a friend and fellow blogger approached me and introduced a colleague about to take the plunge, and asked what advice I could offer. Only after following up with an email, did I realize that this month makes five years since I started blogging in the legal space.

I started blogging about continuing legal education related issues – first on Google’s Blogger, flirting with Joomla, then finding true love with WordPress – then moved on to cover other topics including technology and productivity. Looking back, my early writing was a bit shoddy, and it’s still not where I’d like it to be, but the only way to get better is to write, write, write. I have a long way to go and I’m still learning lots and still honing my voice. A life long journey, I suppose.

Here are 10 lessons I’ve learned along the way:

1. Don’t take yourself and your writings so darn seriously. I can get a bit earnest and it took me awhile to loosen up. I still occasionally struggle with it. Do remember, that in the process of trying to find your voice, don’t try to be someone else’s.

2. Don’t try to cover everything about a given subject in one post. My librarian background hurt me early on as I researched everything to death and took forever to complete a post that went nowhere, or more accurately, everywhere. Questions that you don’t answer can be posed in the comment section by your readers, giving you an opportunity to engage and build community.
If you're lucky enough to blog every day, try to get your post out before noon, or prior to your other primary responsibilities. Otherwise you get stuck in the quagmire of multi-tasking, and blogging becomes a stressful and less-than-enjoyable experience.

Active voice is almost always better than passive. Grammar Girl, one of my favorite resources, gives the following example using the title of a Marvin Gaye classic: Active voice: “I Heard It through the Grapevine.” Passive voice: “It was heard by me through the grapevine.” Point made.

It’s OK to go back and make editorial adjustments to a post. It’s not the New York Times. And even they make editorial edits. Bloggers recommend that you write the day before, give it 24 hours, then review and edit; but many of us write daily and have a ton of other responsibilities. It’s ideal, but not necessary.

Subscribe to writing and blogging sites for tips on how to improve. Other writers and bloggers share their follies and triumphs and offer helpful tips. Digital mentorship, if you will [See: Top 10 Legal Writing Blogs].

Learn about search engine optimization (SEO), headline writing, keywords, etc., to maximize post reach and traffic. Use Google Keyword Tool. Install Yoast SEO WordPress plugin. SEO is not evil...if you don’t let it be. Write good, useful content first, then optimize. Used correctly, SEO practices actually help to tighten your copy.

Read more than you write. This is easy since for every post we write, we probably read at least a dozen. But try longer form reading, even books. You’ll now notice how writers construct sentences, grammar, and style as you hone your blogging voice.
9 Keep an Evernote folder with blog post ideas. I have rolling 100+ ideas with links, voice memos, text or pics ready to explore. This is the single most productive practice for getting a blog post out every day. It’s how I got this post started: I emailed my new ABA Techshow friend, copied the email into Evernote when I realized it could become a post, and fleshed it out a day later, allowing me to complete a typical two-hour (or more) post in half the time.

10 Take a writing course. Don’t go crazy here. Be selective. I’ve wasted dollars and time on lame courses. Identify exactly what you need help with – grammar, creative, SEO, etc., and look for courses that cover only that topic.

WHEN IT COMES TO BLOGGING, DON’T GO OVERBOARD! AVOID PASSIVE VOICE IN YOUR WRITING AND DON’T BE AFRAID TO GO BACK AND MAKE ADJUSTMENTS. LEARN FROM OTHER WRITERS AND MAKE SURE TO MAXIMIZE REACH WITH SEO!
Anyone can blog, but not everyone devotes the time and effort it takes to create and run a useful, successful blog. Some write just to unburden themselves – blogging as therapy, if you will – others, because they have something unique to share. The latter, niche blogging, is usually the more successful effort.

For lawyers who want to blog, it’s easy to identify a niche: an area of practice, like tax law, family law, or, more narrowly, corporate tax, or divorce. This allows lawyers to establish themselves as experts, gain trust, and be discovered by potential clients, other lawyers, even the press. This is often referred to as an element of content marketing.

Here are a seven content generating tips for the niche blogging lawyer:

1. **ANSWER CLIENT QUESTIONS** – Let the myriad questions during meetings and email correspondence work for you. Each question (and answer) is a potential blog post.

2. **GO DEEP ON TOPICS FROM QUESTION AND ANSWER SITES LIKE AVVO AND QUORA** – Discover a treasure trove of topics to write about on Q&A sites.

3. **SOCIAL MEDIA** – Join relevant LinkedIn groups. Ask question, provide answers to others. Start or join a Twitter conversation. Engage on Facebook Pages. Add to the conversation, then expand in a blog post.
4 **REPURPOSE PRESENTATIONS** – It takes forever to create materials – a 20 page paper + PowerPoint slides – for a presentation. Break the presentation down into manageable parts for a series of blog posts.

5 **TECHNOLOGY AND TOOLS** – Share tips on the tools you use to run your successful practice. This is more about sharing and helping than marketing, though it can get you speaking gigs.

6 **SUBSCRIBE TO OTHER BLOGS** – Google Reader may be deserting us, but use alternatives to subscribe to blogs – legal and non-legal – and news sites that cover your topic. Write about current events involving your practice area and issues affecting your potential clients.

7 **LEVERAGE GOOGLE ANALYTICS** – Every blog should have the free and powerful Google Analytics installed. Under the “Traffic Sources” tab, check out the keywords that your visitors searched to land on your site. Add the keywords and phrases to your blog post ideas file.

As Kevin O'Keefe notes in “Niches lead to riches in legal blogosphere,” it’s a lot easier for a lawyer to establish a word of mouth reputation as an authority by marketing to a niche than marketing as a generalist. And, inspiration for your niche content can come from many sources, including these seven.

**NICHE BLOGGING ALLOWS YOU TO ESTABLISH CREDIBILITY IN YOUR FIELD AND HELP CLIENTS DISCOVER YOU. DON'T FORGET TO TRACK YOUR ANALYTICS!**
Infographics are a great way for you to drive traffic to your business website and increase social media marketing results. They can also establish credibility and authority in your particular area.

For those of you who are still out of the loop, an infographic is a visual representation of data, information, or knowledge. This “data viz” (short for “data visualization”), is presented in a unique way where information is seen rather than read. People are much more likely to look at pictures to comprehend data than reading a long, boring article.

According to Graphs.net, research shows that the search volume for infographics has increased by an astounding 800% between 2010 and 2012. Companies large and small are using infographics to build their brands, educate their audience, and optimize their search engine ranking through link building.

Infographic design, however, is critical to getting your data off the ground. Want to have some infographic success? Follow these tips:

**KEEP IT SHORT**

Many infographics are far too long to handle. They take too long to read, and your readers may become frustrated and stop midway through. Try to edit your infographic down to its essential message. Jamming in a ton of information won’t
do anything but lose the interest of your audience. It's all about trying to take complex ideas and make them easy to understand, not the opposite!
In this situation (like some others in life), size does matter. If someone's index finger gets tired from excessive scrolling on their mouse while viewing your infographic, try shortening it up.

**SHOW, DON'T TELL**

Remember that adage “a picture is worth a thousand words?”. That applies here. It's called an “infographic”, not an “infothousandwordessay”.

A successful infographic will use images to represent data rather than lengthy descriptions. This means you can't just drop in an excel chart and call it a day. You've got to think outside the box.

Aesthetics play a part in infographics, so avoid any visuals that look like they belong in a high school math textbook.

With that being said, don't forget about type all together. It does have its uses. For example, if your infographic is on a boring topic, try to jazz it up with a fun and eye-catching font. Headers can also help break up your infographic, making the data easier to take in. Just make sure your typography doesn't distract from the main objective: getting people to understand and give a darn about your information.
3 MAKE YOUR INFOGRAPHIC EASILY SHAREABLE

Did you know that according to MediaBistro.com, Twitter infographics are retweeted 832% more often than images or articles? That's NUTS.

Pinterest is also blowing up with all kinds of infographics. Try to make sharing easy with social sharing buttons and create embed codes (Hubspot has a great tutorial on how to do this here). This will enable publishers to post your infographic to their website for more exposure. Also make sure that you have a compelling social media-friendly thumbnail image to post, because many sites will crop your image in their feed.

4 CITE YOUR SOURCES

Credibility can make or break your infographic. Did you get your information from the Wall Street Journal or overhear it at a weekend soirée? By nature, infographics are based on data sets, facts, and numbers. No one wants to take the time to look at and share an infographic that lacks the proper citations. Make sure that all your info is legit, or people might start to question the legitimacy of your business.

5 MIND YOUR VISUAL AESTHETICS

You can have a great set of data and cutey little icons, but if they look like they’ve been regurgitated haphazardly on the screen, your infographic will #FAIL. Your layout, color, spacing, sizing, and other design elements will help your infographic stand out in a crowd, and that's the point when it comes to marketing.

Start by making a storyline so that your viewers have a path to follow. This will help the flow of your infographic. As far as colors go, try to avoid white as a background whenever possible. Infographics are often shared on websites and blogs that have white backgrounds, so it’s important to make sure viewers can tell
when your infographic begins and ends. Also, try not to choose a color palette that completely overwhelms. You don’t want to scare away potential clients with an infographic that is too hard to read or burns their retinas.

While these are some important things to consider when designing an infographic, nothing is set in stone. The important thing is that your design must convey your message easily and in a way that appeals to your audience. Keep these tips handy and hopefully, you’ll be able to integrate successful infographics into your marketing soon!

INFOGRAPHICS ARE ON THE RISE FOR INTERNET MARKETING. KEEP THEM SHORT AND CONCISE, AND DON’T FORGET TO CITE YOUR SOURCES. PEOPLE LOVE TO SHARE GREAT INFOGRAPHICS ON SOCIAL MEDIA, SO DON’T SKIMP ON THE VISUALS!
As we blogged about previously, at this point in time, 23.8% of all website traffic comes from mobile devices, not computers. Knowing this, it’s apparent that mobile websites for business are now critical.

What does your business website look like on a smartphone? Nearly a quarter of all of your traffic is going to see it that way. Chances are, your website looks no different than it does on a computer, which creates some problems:

1) Your website is hard to read, requiring the visitor to pinch and zoom to get the gist of what you’re doing.

2) Your website is difficult to use, because the links and buttons were designed for a mouse, not a fat finger or thumb.

These kind of mobile usability problems tend to cause the visitor to “bounce”, or leave your site immediately. A full quarter of your hard-fought traffic disappearing into the ether, which is especially painful if you’re paying for clicks. Poof. Sayonara.

What’s a business to do for their mobile website?

Fortunately, we have some great news. First of all, if you get on the ball now, you’re going to be ahead of the curve. Not many professional service firms have mobile websites, so you’re most likely going to stomp all over your competition.
In addition, making a site mobile can often be done without too much difficulty. For us web folk that is, not for the layperson. I hate to wax technical, but there's something called "responsive web design" which allows websites to automatically resize based on the device and screen size. This means you can have a website that looks great on a computer, tablet, or iPhone.

Most likely, if you've worked with a web designer, or are into sites like Smashing, you've heard all about responsive design, as it was one of those annoyingly overused buzz-phrases in 2012.

REDUCE YOUR BOUNCE RATE BY MAKING SURE THAT MOBILE USERS CAN ACCESS YOUR SITE. WITHOUT A MOBILE SITE, YOU RUN THE RISK OF LOSING UP TO A QUARTER OF YOUR TRAFFIC!
As a web designer, I’ve been forced to accept the steady barrage of new terminologies and techniques that are constantly popping up out of nowhere.

More often than not, all the hype surrounding these supposedly earth-shattering developments subsides just as quickly as it emerged. It’s usually good practice to let the dust settle before incorporating a new technique, or approach into your workflow or recommend it to your clients.

However, one relatively new approach to web design and user experience that can be embraced with confidence and accepted as gospel, is responsive design.

**WHAT IS RESPONSIVE DESIGN?**

Responsive design, in a nutshell, allows a website to detect your device’s screen width and feature set, and in turn use this information to display an optimized look and feel to the browser.

In other words, a responsively designed website done correctly will show up looking great on an iPhone, tablet, or a laptop.

In the days of ubiquitous smartphones and mobile devices, responsive design is something every website needs to incorporate. If you ignore, or avoid its inclusion in your web site, the ramifications will eventually catch up with you.
WHY SHOULD I CARE IF I HAVE A RESPONSIVE SITE OR NOT?

There’s a good chance that someone checking out your website on a mobile device has an urgent need.

Consider this: immediacy and real-time need are important factors that drive users to surf the web while on the go or away from the comfort of their desktop computers. The implication is that you could very well have not just a lead on your hands, but a hot one.

A user who initiates interaction with the browser in a more impulsive, demanding, or urgent state, is likely a visitor who is more willing to act. The ability to provide these users with a fast-loading, well-formatted experience can be the difference between landing a new customer or not.

With the proliferation of smartphones and tablets, you can’t be sure what kind of device those viewing your website are using. It’s best to be certain they are all engaged with a pleasant experience.

When a site is responsive, it just feels right. Without it, the end user is left pinching, zooming, and scrolling around to find what they need. It’s hard to convert a visitor to a lead when you’re making them frustrated.

IT’S NEVER TOO LATE

As more and more websites embrace responsive design, user expectations are increasing. This new reality means the tolerance for sites that don’t look good on a smartphone is dwindling faster than food rations in a Walking Dead survivor camp.
If you already have a site and it’s not responsive, don't panic. Websites can be adapted to be responsive without having to start from the ground up. If you're using WordPress, there are also plugins available that can display your site more appropriately on mobile devices, although this approach is a bit more of a quick fix than a total solution.

WITH SO MANY PEOPLE REACHING FOR THEIR MOBILE DEVICES TO SURF THE WEB, IT'S IMPORTANT THAT YOUR WEBSITE ADAPT TO DIFFERENT SIZED SCREENS. GIVE YOUR VIEWERS A PLEASANT EXPERIENCES BY MAKING SURE THEY WON'T NEED TO PINCH AND ZOOM.
It’s safe to assume that if your logo utilizes the font “Comic Sans”, you’re probably not going to be taken seriously. This font faux pas is just one of many that one learns as a designer, especially when it comes to logo considerations and branding direction.

A logo can make or break your business, so it’s best not to get caught in the, “I’ll make my logo in Microsoft Word Art and call it a day” frame of mind. In this article, we break down some fundamentals when it comes to establishing your logo and branding design.

1. **RESEARCH YOUR BRAND AND YOUR AUDIENCE**

Who ARE you?

No, really. Make sure you understand your brand and your target audience. This is going to dictate the direction of your branding and everything that comes along with it: Your design, your color, your typography. Everything. It’s best to spend the extra time to really brainstorm this so you’re not kicking yourself later for attracting the wrong crowd (or no crowd at all).
2 IMAGE IS (ALMOST) EVERYTHING

When designing the image for your logo, it's important to remember that a good logo doesn't always have to convey what a company does. Think Starbucks, Target, and Apple. Starbucks isn't a fishing company that sells mermaids. Target won't help your aim and Apple is certainly not a fruit stand. It's about designing something that can be adapted to whatever direction the company takes.

Creating a flat design is key for logos. If you use elements like gradients or drop shadows, they tend to look wacky when made really small, or really large. Make sure you can scale your logo; it's got to look just as good on a billboard as it does on a business card.

3 COLOR: CHOOSE WISELY

The color of your logo should be a secondary thought. Just make sure it reads well against light and dark backgrounds. In most cases, logo designs start off as black and white anyway. Colors can always be changed later on, but it's the form of your logo that will always remain the same.

Having said that, color can have a large impact on your logo and branding. Try to limit the amount of colors in your logo to three or less. In 2011, 95% of the world’s top brands had logos that were only one or two colors. The “keep it simple, stupid” rule holds true here. Logos with less colors can also help save money on printing costs as well. Cha ching.
And what about your choice of color? Red? Blue? Lavender? Chartreuse? (It’s not just a drink, people). Color has its own language when it comes to design, and it differs from culture to culture (research your audience!). For example, don’t use blue if you’re designing for a food company (the color blue is an appetite suppressant and it’s rarely found naturally in foods). Using the color red for a bridal shop? Unheard of, unless you’re in China, where brides wear red and it is considered the color of good luck. See? it’s important to know your audience and brush up on your color psychology.

**NEVER USE COMIC SANS**

Typography plays a crucial role in brand identity. Make sure you choose your typography wisely, or your image won’t mean squat. If you’re trying to convey precision and professionalism, don’t choose Comic Sans. Trying to attract a hip, modern crowd? Don’t choose Comic Sans.

In all seriousness, a poor choice of typography can turn a decent logo into a pile of dreck.

**MAKE IT UNIQUE**

When all is said and done, your logo should be able to hold its own against those in the same market space. This could mean choosing a color scheme that others in your field haven’t tried yet (think Starbucks), or using an image with a visual double entendre (Amazon, anyone?).

These are just a few guidelines to follow when developing your logo and overall branding. Make sure you allow yourself time to brainstorm and doodle, don’t forget to do your research, and remember this above all: friends don’t let friends use comic sans.
YOUR LOGO IS USUALLY THE FIRST IMPRESSION PEOPLE WILL GET OF YOUR FIRM. MAKE SURE IT RELATES TO YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE WITHOUT BEING TOO FLASHY. THIS APPLIES TO YOUR IMAGERY AND TYPOGRAPHY!
A healthy, fit, lawyer is a productive lawyer. Finding ways to balance a productive work life with a vibrant personal life makes for a heroic lawyer. Find out how to create healthy habits, structure your day, lower stress and balance (or blend) your time at work, at play and at home.
Sitting at your desk for prolonged periods is not healthy. You are putting yourself at increased risk of obesity, diabetes, heart disease, a variety of cancers, and a larger waist. So we’re advised to take frequent breaks, to stand up and stretch, or walk around for a few minutes.

Of course, there’s always the option of getting a treadmill desk or a standing desk. But if working while jogging sounds a bit much or you don’t want to chuck your chair altogether, here are a few exercises that you can do while seated at your desk. Although these are not terribly strenuous activities, it’s usually a good idea to check with your doctor before starting any exercise routine.

**SHOULDER STRETCH** – Many of us work in front of a screen all day long. Then we continue on Facebook and Twitter when we go home. Our shoulders suffer. My favorite and most rewarding exercises involves stretching the shoulders and neck.

Sitting straight up, place your fingers on your shoulders, elbows out to the side. Gently rotate your elbows as far back as you can. Then bring your elbows to the front until they touch. Repeat a few times.

**ROTATE YOUR NECK** – Staring at a computer screen for hours on end is not good for the neck either. While seated at your desk, tilt your neck gently back and forward, and then rotate from side to side, never forcing your neck with your hand. Do this regularly throughout the day. It works!
3 **WRIST STRETCH** – For this exercise, you’ll have to stand up, but it’s well worth the effort. Standing, with arms straight, place your knuckles on the desk with your fingers toward you. Slowly lower your body, bending at the knee. Don’t go too far, you’ll feel the stretch quickly. Hold for a few seconds and repeat throughout the day.

4 **SWAP YOUR CHAIR FOR AN EXERCISE BALL** – This requires a bit of commitment, even if for an hour or two per day. The benefits of using an exercise ball as a chair are numerous. They include improving your circulation and balance, burning calories, and working your core.

I gave this a test run during my law firm days, and would often use the ball as a guest chair during the times I wasn’t using it. The practice received mixed reactions. But many people swear by this for taking care of neck and shoulder stress related pain, but ease into it as other muscles, especially in your back, will need time to adjust.

5 **LEG, CALF AND ANKLE STRETCHES** – Extend your left leg all the way under the desk. Hold for a few seconds, then gently point the tip of your shoe towards your knee. Hold for a few seconds. Repeat with right leg.

With your leg stretched out in front of you at a 45 degree angle, rotate your ankle clockwise, then, slowly, counter-clockwise. Repeat with the other leg.

Any combination of these exercises will make your day at the desk more productive and less stressful. And remember to get up frequently, and maybe grab a cup of water, for a healthier you.
IF YOU'RE CONSTANTLY SITTING AT YOUR DESK, REMEMBER TO TAKE FREQUENT BREAKS, STAND UP AND STRETCH AND WALK AROUND. DON'T FORGET TO DRINK LOTS OF WATER!
Passion is in the air. So is purpose and process. This past week, some of my daily channels — Twitter, Facebook, Google Reader, among them — were ripe with articles on the subject.

The discussion ranged from how to find your purpose and passion, to how to let your purpose find you. And then one that said to forget about passion, it’s all about process. Here’s a roundup.

How to Find Your Purpose and Do What You Love

This piece from the always fascinating Brain Pickings, culls insights from seven thinkers who have contemplated the art-science of making your life’s calling a living. The quote from Alain de Botton is among my favorites:

A lot of the time our ideas about what it would mean to live successfully are not our own. They’re sucked in from other people. And we also suck in messages from everything from the television to advertising to marketing, etc...What I want to argue for is not that we should give up on our ideas of success, but that we should make sure that they are our own.

Not surprisingly, the seven includes a Steve Jobs quote, “Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do.”
How to Find Your Passion in Life

Life coach, Barrie Davenport tackles seven question about finding your passion. In answer to what the most common mistake is when people try to find their passion Davenport offers:

“Sometimes our passion search will take us down one path, but then an idea or situation will occur that potentially leads down another. People sometimes resist exploring this different path because they feel they must “stick to the plan.”

She goes on to offer lots of great tips and insights into finding your passion.

How to Let Your Purpose Find You

“I’ve searched high and low, looked far wide, listened long and loud, but I still can’t find anything even vaguely resembling my purpose.”

Harvard Business Review author, Umair Haque, turns the problem on its head suggesting that finding your purpose is not a phase of life — but a way of living.

I can’t find your purpose for you. You probably can’t find your purpose for you. Your purpose will — just maybe — find you. Like every kind of Big Love, it’s not in your control. It strikes, finally, suddenly, when least expected, with the full fury of a hurricane.

Forget passion, focus on process

Although a year old, this article popped up in my Twitter stream, resonating well beyond the microscopic shelf life of hours for online posts. Matt Linderman of 37signals takes a pragmatic approach for the majority of people who work at jobs like insurance or credit card processing. He offers that:
“Despite its wonders, there are also problems with passion. For one thing, most people’s passions aren’t that unique. That’s why it’s so hard to succeed: You’re competing against everyone else with that same dream... It’s about redefining passion. Instead of working with a thing you love, think about how to work in a way you love.”

Check out the articles for a more in-depth discussion of purpose, passion and process.

IN SEARCHING FOR YOUR PASSION, YOU MAY ULTIMATELY FIND THAT YOUR PASSION WILL FIND YOU. WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE, MAKE SURE YOU LOVE WHAT YOU DO!
Contrary to what some may think, working from home often results in longer hours, skipping breaks, short lunches and a variety of unhealthy, stress-inducing, unproductive habits. A simple way to solve this problem is by adopting the hours and practices of your colleagues back at the office.

**HEAD TO THE "CONFERENCE ROOM" FOR A NO-DISTRACTION PROJECT** – Most remote workers are connected to headquarters via Skype, Yammer or some other communications application. These apps are always on, and pinging someone is like stopping by a colleague's desk in the office. Sometimes it's scheduled, but often it's a spur of the moment decision. It can be a quick question or an involved discussion. Remote workers need this type of interaction, but when you need heads-down focus time on a project, the constant pinging becomes a distraction. Remove the distraction by switching your notification setting to "do not disturb." Let someone know that you're working on a project and will be available in an hour or two. This is similar to grabbing an empty conference room in the office. I've found that heading out to the local library results in a very productive, no-interruption two hours.

**GO OUT FOR LUNCH EVERY DAY** – Never compromise on this, especially if you live in an apartment. The walls can quickly close in. I rarely keep anything edible in my apartment during the week to force myself to go out to grab lunch or even a snack. These forced breaks do wonders for productivity and creativity during working hours. Make sure you set notification setting on “lunch” or “away.”
**TAKE "WATER COOLER" BREAKS** – This is necessary but tricky to navigate at home. At the office, someone will know that you went to the water cooler or bathroom and can relay that to anyone looking for you. At home, unless you keep turning the “away” notification on and off and on and off, no one will know. Remote workers never want headquarters to think they’re slacking off and immediately respond to every alert or message. Both you and folks back at the office need to come to an understanding that this is not always possible. They’re usually OK with a slightly delayed response, it’s you that need to unclench. It’s a process. If you must respond immediately, download the communications app to your phone so you can respond when away from the computer.

**LEAVE THE "OFFICE" WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES** – When five or six o’clock rolls around, sign off and leave your house or apartment, even if for a walk around the block or a trip to the store. If you plan on working late as we all do on occasion, take a break for an hour or so, run errands or grab coffee with a friend and then start back up. If possible, spend overtime hours at another location, like a coffee shop, or else your work space will intrude even further into your personal space.

**THE WEEKEND IS YOURS. CLAIM IT** – When I left an all-consuming entrepreneurial venture after three years of unhealthy working habits, I would send and reply to emails at all hours of the day and night during weekends at my new job. After a few weekends, the powers that be were like, dude, chill out on the weekends, we need you fresh and productive during the week. Grateful for the lesson, I took it to heart and only cheat a little every Sunday night, with an hour or so to prepare for the week ahead. Look, I enjoy going into the office on an occasional Saturday to knock a project off with no interruptions, but I now make that the exception, and when when I do, I make sure that any weekend “office” time is away from home.
Working at home can be both a privilege and burden. It can be more of the former if you take steps to mimic the practices of your colleagues back at the office.

**IF YOU WORK FROM HOME, ADOPT PRACTICES FROM THE OFFICE TO AVOID STRESS-PRODUCING UNPRODUCTIVE HABITS. TAKE BREAKS, GO OUT FOR LUNCH, AND LEAVE THE "OFFICE" AT QUITTING TIME. TAKE IT EASY ON WEEKENDS TOO!**
Wasting time increases productivity. Paradoxical, but true. It leads to increased creativity, too.

In a Scientific American article, Why Your Brain Needs More Downtime, that goes on for a hefty 6,000 words, the author summarizes: “research on naps, meditation, nature walks and the habits of exceptional artists and athletes reveals how mental breaks increase productivity, replenish attention, solidify memories and encourage creativity.”

Downtime replenishes the brain’s stores of attention and motivation, encourages productivity and creativity, and is essential to both achieve our highest levels of performance and simply form stable memories in everyday life. A wandering mind unsticks us in time so that we can learn from the past and plan for the future. Moments of respite may even be necessary to keep one’s moral compass in working order and maintain a sense of self.

“It’s easy to underestimate boredom,” proclaims another, in The Importance of Mind-Wandering. It leads to mind-wandering, which, in a culture obsessed with efficiency, is considered lazy: a sign of procrastination, not productivity. Examining a few studies, he concluded that mind-wandering is a talent that if properly unlocked and developed, leads to increased creativity.

The value of "wasting" time extends even to law firms.
But we’re not paying heed. In America, we have a frugal 10 vacation days on average (people in the Netherlands have 26!). Yet surveys show that in 2012 we had an average of nine unused vacation days. Even when we do get away, we’re preoccupied with work, checking emails, returning phone calls, or catching up on a project. That’s not good for productivity. It’s not good for creativity. And it’s not good for our brain.

It’s time to make a change and avoid mental fatigue by getting at least seven to eight hours of sleep every night, using your vacation days, taking naps and small breaks during the day, and practicing meditation. And, don’t feel guilty about wiling away a weekend or “wasting” your time on a video game or mobile app. Give your brain a break. Increased productivity and creativity will be your reward.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, DOWNTIME ACTUALLY ENCOURAGES PRODUCTIVITY! MAKE SURE YOU’RE GETTING THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF SLEEP AND TAKE THOSE MUCH NEEDED VACATION DAYS!
Striving for the traditional concept of work-life balance — that work is completely outside and separate from the rest of your life — is a losing proposition these days. Strive instead, for a work-life blend. Accepting that we’re always connected and the way we work has changed will go a long way in reducing stress and navigating a healthy balance blend of work and personal lives.

I’ve sheepishly replied to an email at 1am, only to receive a non-sheepish answer minutes later. Will this become a regular practice? Probably not, but acknowledging that not replying to the email would result in more time worrying about it allows me to quickly deal with it with little effort and gain peace of mind with a minimum of intrusion in my “other” life. In fact, I no longer view certain times of the day as my “other” life. If something needs to be done or if I come across a helpful tidbit that I could use at work, I make a note of it or dig in for a few minutes.

Instead of time, I view activities as separate and not available for interruption. So if I schedule time with family or friends, then work stuff is off-limits and completely out of my mind for that period. How am I able to disconnect for those periods of time? Because I don’t view non-scheduled personal time as off-limits for work and I also spend 30 minutes or so every night to wrap up loose ends and plan for the next day. I don’t view those 30 minutes as an intrusion into my personal life, but as the new normal of how business is done, or how I choose to do business.
In a Forbes article, Brent Gleeson identified 7 Ways to Blend Your Work and Life Successfully:

- Plan ahead
- Communicate
- Own each day
- Be fit
- Be organized
- Learn to say no
- Shut it down

Brent goes into detail on each point, but in a nutshell: manage stress and energy levels by living a healthy lifestyle that includes regular exercise so that you can maximize productivity at work and your enjoyment of scheduled non-work related activities; remember to add personal tasks to your daily to-do lists making sure to only schedule tasks that you can handle that day – in other words, learn to say “no.” Finally, shut down and disconnect at some point in the evening. This is especially important if you work from a home office. Even when I have a bit of work left, I shut down with the rest of the crew and take it up later that evening.

The one time I “unblend” is during vacation time as a disconnected week away results in a rejuvenated and creative engagement which is good for you and good for the firm.

If you’re having a tough time achieving work-life balance – which usually means that work is winning – give work-life blend a try.
IT'S IMPORTANT TO LEARN HOW TO SAY "NO". IT'S ALSO IMPORTANT TO SHUT DOWN AT THE END OF THE DAY AND DISCONNECT. DON'T FORGET EXERCISE! IT HELPS MAXIMIZE PRODUCTIVITY!
This E-Book is authored by Rocket Matter staff and contributors to the Legal Productivity and Rocket X1 Internet Marketing Blogs.
Rocket Matter is the leading web-based practice management and time and billing application for small to mid-sized law firms.

When we launched in February of 2008, we were the first legal technology available for running a law firm online. We were surprised at the number of attorneys who immediately joined our service, looking to manage their matters, clients, and invoicing from any computer at any time.

Since then, amazing mobile devices, such as the iPhone®, iPad®, and Droid®, have transformed attorney access to information. Rocket Matter built its own native iPhone and Android app that makes the lives of lawyers a whole lot easier.

In addition, the global economy has declined, putting new pressures on the operational efficiencies of law firms and altering the makeup of large, traditional law firms.

In that time, via the Rocket Matter product, plus our blogging, video, Rocket Academy, webinars, ebooks, and contributions to legal trade publications, we’ve helped law firms navigate these new waters.

We’ve introduced new ideas for marketing, operations, and technology to help legal professionals adapt to the ever-changing professional environment. So, please enjoy this book and become part of our cutting-edge community if you’re not already! Follow us and spread the good word!
Rocket XI™ is an Internet marketing agency that is built on a precise, proven mix of ideas, methods, and practices discovered while marketing our own software company, Rocket Matter®.

Consider this: Rocket Matter has grown from zero clients and revenue to one of the leading software solutions for legal professionals. Our website traffic has grown more than 30-fold since 2008. Our popular content blog has seen its traffic grow more than 70 times following its launch in 2009. Our company’s revenues have increased between 50% and 100% every year since inception.

Our progress isn’t fueled by millions of dollars or hordes of employees; rather, the secret is word-of-mouth and great Internet marketing. “Great Internet marketing,” we discovered, can be achieved by executing several highly specific, repeatable tactics: plan, execute, measure, refine, and perfect. Great Internet marketing, it turns out, can be figured out and repeated.

Our team can guide your professional service firm through the maze of social media, search engines, content marketing, and effective website design. We use tried-and-true methods (actively used on a daily basis by our own software company) to catalyze Internet marketing success in a way that fits into the busy schedules of professional firms, and provides a solid foundation on which to build a wide and lasting marketing presence.