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LAW OFFICE MANAGEMENT *

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This is an attempt to impress upon you a few basic concepts about law office management. These broad concepts are the really important things. The details can always be studied from the many books in this field. A list is printed at the end of this article.

You all need and want to learn how to make your law offices more efficient. Most lawyers are aware that we have not kept pace economically and recognize a need to do something about it. The world about us has changed much more than our offices or methods, or even our willingness to accept new fields of practice. New legal problems and new fields of law come into being each year. We face a problem like the grocer—quoting what one grocer said at a recent national convention:

“At last count we had 27 different brands of dog food on hand,” he exclaims. “A few years ago all the dog food you had to have was a few meat scraps.”

“And bird seed,” he continues. “You’ve got to have eating seed, song seed, cuttle bones and gravel. That’s just for a canary. You got to have something different for a parakeet and something else again for love birds. Ten years ago you had just one kind of bird seed that made all the birds happy.”

Law, too, is complicated today, and it is going to get more so. But that is not our problem here. The improvement and updating of your professional competency is something that you and your bar association and your law schools are constantly working on. What you want to learn is how to do the best—or make the most—with your present practice.

These categories are important in discussing law office management:

1. The form of organization
2. The office system
3. The time concept
4. Client relationships.

We should counsel ourselves on each of these problems in the same impartial way we would counsel a client. And please don’t be like the judge who cut off further argument, saying, “I’ve got my mind made up now, and I don’t want to be confused by the facts.”

The facts are, *too many lawyers are running their offices like popcorn stands!*

Let’s consider the facts about the basic concepts. Remember, space prevents going into detail, but we’ll consider a few important points.

One fact should be quite obvious, if you reflect on it a moment: Any lawyer of reasonable intelligence can, with reasonable effort, make a comfortable living practicing law today with a general practice. He doesn’t have to have clients like General Motors or Standard Oil. You should be interested in how you can do better with the practice you have. If by better office organization and management you can boost your net income ten to twenty per cent, the effort would be extremely worthwhile. That can be accomplished in many instances.

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Your law office is different from all the rest. In a sense, each office has its own "personality," just as much as does each lawyer. Thus there can be no standard pattern or plan of organization and operation that can be handed to you as a cure-all, with a guarantee that you will make more money. But there are numerous plans, techniques, systems and methods that have been tried and proved, and which are adaptable, in part at least, to every law office whether it is that of one lawyer alone or twenty lawyers. You are the loser if you don't look about you and take advantage of what you see.

As lawyers, we pride ourselves in being members of a profession, and not tradesmen or businessmen. Nevertheless, we can learn much from the successful methods businessmen are using in the organization and operation of their offices.

There is nothing particularly original in what I am trying to tell you. After looking over a great deal of material on the subject, I have tried to emphasize those points that will produce the greatest results if you heed them. Experts in the field such as Arch Cantrall and Paul Carrington (from whom I have borrowed heavily) have suggested many of the following ideas.

FORM OF ORGANIZATION

The first important concept is the form of organization for the practice of law. Whether you are a sole practitioner or a member of a partnership will very likely have a considerable influence on the amount of money you earn. The facts and figures are rather amazing. As you might suspect, more than one-half of the lawyers practice alone. Yet according to surveys by the United States Department of Commerce and the Survey of the Legal Profession by the American Bar Association, the earnings of lawyers increase sharply after they organize into firms. Lawyers having one partner made over one-third more than lawyers practicing alone. Lawyers with two partners made more than twice as much as sole practitioners. Lawyers with three partners averaged almost three times as much as the lone practitioner; and lawyers in firms of between four and seven partners earned nearly four times as much.

Now don't think if you run out and get yourself six partners your financial problems are solved. The point is that *the figures do conclusively show that lawyers, in general, do better financially with a partner than without one.* There are a number of sound reasons for this. Moreover, partnership income is almost always more stable than that of any one of its partners.

There are advantages other than financial in having at least one partner. The ability to handle legal matters for clients more promptly and in a more orderly fashion is very important. If you have two cases in court, they are apt to be set on the same day in different courts. If you have a number of things to do in the office and have a case in court, the office work has to wait. Work can proceed more effectively during the absence of one of the partners for vacations, illness, attendance at bar meetings, and many other things.

More important is the advantage of being able to discuss the problems as they arise day to day with another man who is already interested in the proper solution of every problem. Two heads are better than one. Team work is always inspiring to the best efforts. The background

of varying experiences and different attitudes and different approaches to the same problem time and again demonstrates that.

This is an age of specialization. Even in the smallest of partnerships a fair and equitable division of work often involves one man taking one type of work and the other one taking another type of work. That is all to the good, for the law is so complex and has so many fields that it is extremely difficult for one man to keep up in every field and be available to advise his clients on any subject without research applicable to that client. A partner who can handle all current problems of the same type has the advantage over someone who does not do that from the standpoint of efficiency, promptness and service to the client.

There are disadvantages, of course. There is a belief that every lawyer is his own master, and a spirit that everyone wants to be completely independent. We have inherited a tradition under which lawyers practiced law by themselves. Nevertheless, the poverty of independence is a luxury few lawyers can afford if they do justice to themselves and to their families. There is also some reluctance about having a partner because of the feeling that perhaps the other fellow must on one occasion or another get greater benefit out of the arrangement and that it will not work out evenly. That has been a very strong deterrent to the organization of partnerships. But these objections can all be minimized by a proper partnership agreement.

A division by partners is assumed by so many to be a fifty-fifty arrangement. There are many alternative arrangements. There is no reason at all why some arrangement may not be made between two men by which, at the end of the year after each has taken a fair drawing account, they can look at what has happened and divide it on a fair and equitable basis, knowing that the continuation of their arrangement depends upon the fairness of each to the other.

There are many alternative formulas available other than a division in terms of percentage of the net income of the firm as of the end of the year. You can agree what each partner shall take from a drawing account, giving each a minimum. You will then divide the excess of the income produced by the firm at the end of the year in accordance with actual performance, based on records showing who did what.

All sorts of variations of these formulas are actually in use in one form or another all over the country. Some other combination and a fair minimum for each partner can easily be worked out. The thing to emphasize is that *the advantages of partnerships are real and the disadvantages can be greatly minimized by flexibility in your partnership arrangement, carefully thought out and discussed and agreed upon to fit the needs of the two or three or four men involved.* Individualized and personalized arrangements make sense.

It is amazing how many law partnerships are operating without benefit of any written agreement. We would certainly never advise a client of ours to operate on that basis, and there is no reason why we should do so ourselves.

Another management problem which needs attention in a partnership is some method for promoting mutual assistance. Usually this takes the form of the office conference. This may include informal daily discussions and exchanging experiences. Some firms have formal firm meetings either weekly or less often or on call. You not only review the

HOW MUCH PER HOUR?

		(Compute figure for your firm)
Days in year.....	365	365
Deduct:		
Sunday	52.....	_____
Half-Saturdays	26.....	_____
Holidays	9.....	_____
Vacation	12.....	_____
Miscellaneous	12.....	_____
	<u>111</u>	<u>_____</u>
Fee earning days per year	254	_____
Average number of fee days per month	21	_____
Average number of fee hours per day**.....	6	_____
Average number of fee hours per month.....	126	_____
Average yearly business overhead, including salaries paid to those not members of firm		
(Do NOT include firm members' draws).....	\$ _____	_____
Enter total amount of income firm attorneys require for all reasonable personal and family needs (Include taxes)		
Total	\$ _____	_____
Divide total by 1512 (126 x 12).....	\$ _____	_____

Result is \$'s per hour all firm members must produce.

The above result—\$'s per hour—should be divided among the **firm members** in proportion to their share of profit from the firm.

Example: Firm A. and B.

Firm's average overhead.....	\$15,000.00
A's average draw.....	\$12,000.00
B's average draw.....	6,000.00
	<u>18,000.00</u>
	\$33,000.00
Divide \$33,000 by 1512 (hours per year).....	\$21.16 per hour
A must average per hour (2/3).....	14.11
B must average per hour (1/3).....	7.05

**National surveys made among attorneys indicate that the attorney's average fee earning day is only five to six hours. He spends the balance of his day reading mail, advance sheets, conferring with office personnel, club, church and public service work, charity and other miscellaneous activities.

pending cases, but receive special research reports and a general discussion on specific problems or current difficulties. Such meetings mean the teaming up of personnel on important or difficult matters, and the avoidance of working at cross purposes or duplication of efforts.

THE OFFICE SYSTEM

The office system is very important. That includes your staff organization, your office quarters, your accounting system, your library, your office equipment, your personnel plan, and all the rest of the things surrounding the lawyer and which help him serve the client. Whole books—such as Dwight McCarty's new one—have been written on law office systems. You should read one in detail. Here only a few points can be emphasized.

First, *have an orderly system of some sort*. Don't make it too complicated, and let it be the means to an end, not the end itself. In other words, don't be a slave to the system.

Second, remember that *any really good system is based upon the principle of intelligent laziness*. This principle tells us to *do a thing once, to do it completely, and then not bother about it any more*.

Lawyers have fallen far behind other professions and businessmen in providing modern, clean, comfortable and efficient appearing offices. Your client's first impression of you is gained from your office. It is not essential that you have a fancy office, but it should be clean, dignified and give the appearance of good management.

There is an increasing trend for lawyers to construct their own office buildings. The experience of those who have done so in Wisconsin indicates that it is an extremely worthwhile undertaking.

Lawyers are increasingly conscious of the size of their law libraries, of the number of new law books urged upon them, and of the expense of maintaining the library and space to house it. It seems obvious that we are going to have to give more attention to joint libraries, perhaps to some form of lending libraries, and to the modern systems of photographic or visual reproduction of law library materials. Probably you have all seen demonstrations of Micro-film, Micro-card or Micro-lex. These are ways of reducing photographically the contents of a law book and making it available on film or cards that can be stored in a very small space. Through the use of a magnifying reader, any page of a book can be found in a hurry. These systems are new, but their use is growing and I urge you to consider where such a system may profitably be used in your office. Of course, I do not pretend to suggest that they will supplant the printed law book.

Every law office should have an adequate accounting system. This is especially true because of the trust accounts that a lawyer handles, and the necessity of keeping accurate records for both the client's purposes and the lawyer's own purposes. Yet you would be surprised to see the inadequate systems, which are in most instances home-made systems, in use by many lawyers. The accounting system should tie in with the other office record system, and need be neither complicated nor time consuming. Rather than try to set up your own system, retain the services of a certified public accountant in establishing the proper system for your particular office. A small investment for his advice will be money well spent. It will pay big dividends to you in prompt collections and more

adequate records for your income tax purposes. Furthermore, it will show whether or not you are operating efficiently.

Even the office with only one stenographer should have a definite personnel policy. Both the lawyers and the employees should know where they stand. Have a definite schedule of office hours and a definite work week. Establish a pay plan so that your employees will know what to look forward to. Decide how you are going to handle overtime and bonuses. You and your help should both have a definite understanding as to vacations and holidays. Adopt a reasonable plan of payment for time lost from illness. It is desirable to offer some sort of hospitalization and surgical care, such as Blue Cross. Perhaps you should offer other group insurance, such as a small group life policy. In the larger offices, have someone work up an office manual so that the various employees know what their duties are. You can't buck the tide, so permit a coffee break.

In all of this, you are competing with the business world and with employers who will provide these inducements if you don't.

The sales manager of a large manufacturer of office machinery said recently that automation is going to hit the office before it hits the factory. We are going to have to adapt the law offices to it, in whatever form it appears. Meanwhile, we should make the most of the mechanical devices available. For example, lawyers who have electric dictation equipment say that the equipment is the equivalent of an extra girl in the office. Yet how many lawyers have refused to consider installing such equipment? The electric typewriter is no longer a novelty. The postage meter is a great convenience. It is almost unthinkable that any efficient office would operate today without a copying machine of some sort such as Thermofax or Verifax. All of these things are merely signs of the times, and greatly increase the efficiency of your office. When you consider the high cost of office help today, you cannot afford to operate without the most modern and completely equipped office that you can provide. Machines are cheaper than girls.

Space does not permit touching on filing systems at all. The books are full of suggestions and that is a subject in itself.

Remember, what we are talking about is efficiency in the office. It means better service to your clients. Better service to your clients is what brings them back to you and brings in more clients, and makes them willing to pay for your services.

To give better service to your clients, you have to have an efficient office. And if you and your office are efficiently organized, you will not only serve your clients better, but you will reduce your overhead and make the most of every minute of your time.

THE TIME CONCEPT

One of the most important concepts is the time concept.

Time is the lawyer's capital. To make the most of your capital, you must make the most of every hour and every minute.

We can't buy any more than the number of hours we are allotted each day or the number of days of our years. Yet we have individual choice in the matter of how we use our time—a choice that guides the outcome of our lives. Business and industry have long known that the secret of success lies in taking advantage of each unvarying minute.

One thing you can do is to make your office as efficient as possible.

COST OF OPERATION OF LAW OFFICE

Period _____

Occupancy Expense

Rent	\$ _____
Heat	_____
Light	_____
Janitor and services	_____
Property taxes on own bldg.	_____
Depreciation " " "	_____
Repairs " " "	_____
Interest on investment "	_____ \$ _____

Operating Expense

Salaries and bonuses	\$ _____
Stenographic and clerical	_____
Legal (other than partners).....	_____
Telephone and telegraph	_____
Postage and delivery	_____
Printing, paper and forms	_____
Office supplies	_____
Office equipment depreciation	_____
Office furniture depreciation	_____
Law library depreciation	_____
Law periodicals and services	_____
Dues and donations	_____
Interest on office personal property investment	_____
Insurance	_____
Taxes on personalty	_____
Soc. Sec. and Unemployment tax..	_____
Bad debts (if accrual system).....	_____
Other	_____ \$ _____
Total Expense	\$ _____
Gross income for period	\$ _____
Less, total expenses	_____
Total available to partners or self	\$ _____
% of expenses to gross income	_____ %

That means that you organize your staff to work for you. When I say that I mean every one of you, whether your staff consists of one part-time stenographer or a whole group of lawyers and secretaries. The lawyer in a one-man office with only one stenographer faces the same time problem as the lawyer in the large office. Each has only twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and fifty-two weeks a year.

The basic rule of law office efficiency is very simple. It is this:

You cannot afford to do yourself anything that you can hire a girl to do for you. That extends to bookkeeping, indexing files, keeping time records, opening mail, filing, buying office supplies, answering the telephone and a lot of other things. Even an eighteen year old high school graduate will do a better job than you can of keeping your books and your time records. She can concentrate on that work while you can't.

These things are fully as important for the lawyer who practices by himself as for the firm of two or three or more lawyers. One way of looking at it is this: The sole practitioner cannot afford to keep his own books, and he can't afford not to have good records. If he will have these things done by his secretary, he will have more time to practice law, and to keep up with his reading.

After all, he is a lawyer, not a bookkeeper or a file clerk. If he tries to keep all these things in his head, he is taking a good bit of his attention away from the more important work of representing his clients.

If the one-man office is going to grow to be a two or three or four man office, there is all the more need to start a good system as early as possible, so that when the others come along, they will have the great advantage of complete indexes, well-organized files, good records, and the pleased clients that are attracted to the efficient office.

But remember, you have to have a system for the girl to follow. If she has to come to you all the time for instructions you not only save no time, but you waste more of it. So you must establish a system, and you must stick to it yourself.

The greatest waste is the failure to keep accurate time records of what you do and for whom, day to day. If you make that mistake, you are throwing away the hours that should be reflected in statements to your clients.

Your system must recognize the fact that very few lawyers can in a year work more than fifteen or sixteen hundred productive hours that can be billed to clients. To keep your office open, to take care of your family, and possibly to lay something aside for your last years and for your family after you are gone, you have to make the most you can out of those hours.

Keep daily time sheets, even if they are as simple as having a three by five pad on your desk on which you jot down telephone calls and conferences and put the slips in the client's folder. Try to get as much detail as possible on the daily time sheets. The nature of the work done is quite important. When a statement is to be made, or the fee justified to the client, it is helpful to have a time record detailing the work done each day, the questions discussed with the client or opposing counsel, the instruments prepared, the persons you talked to, the questions on which research work was done, and the other details.

When you start to keep an accurate record of the way you spend your time, the results will surprise you. The monthly and yearly totals will be a shock, unless you are an unusually hard worker.

One advantage of this time recording system is this: At the end of a day you may think you have worked all day on one matter, but your daily time sheet will show that you spent a lot of time on various matters, and actually you only worked three hours on the big job you thought you were working on.

The daily time sheet works both ways. It picks up the few minutes on this job, and the few minutes on the other job, that you would overlook if you did not keep an accurate record. And at the same time it charges no more than the actual time worked to any matter. It is accurate.

The greatest value comes at the end of a long continued matter, the kind that runs several years, or at the end of an emergency matter on which everyone in the office pitches in to get it done on time. If you do not have an accurate time record, you are sure to overlook a lot when statement time comes.

The lawyer practicing solo or in partnership, who does not keep such a record, simply is missing one of the largest factors of public relations with reference to demonstrating to his clients the reason for his charges. A client who believes that you picked the fee that you charged him out of the air is, by and large, an unhappy client. Of course, there are lots of exceptions. Let me emphasize I am not advocating that you go on a flat time basis and charge so much a minute or so much an hour, or any other standard applicable to every situation. But I am advocating that there be a record of how many hours or parts of hours were devoted to the service on what days, so that the lawyer who fixes the fee will know what he is talking about when he decides what fee shall be fixed. Then he can demonstrate to the client what the service was from the standpoint of that which the lawyer has chiefly to sell—time.

A further advantage of an adequate time and record system is that it moves matters along. A successful lawyer insists on bringing matters to a conclusion. It is one of the things most difficult to drill into the younger lawyer. If you have a case, bring it on for trial and get rid of it. If you are handling an estate close it as quickly as you know how. The longer things wait the harder to finish they become. Until you can write your client—"Dear Sir: Enclosed are the final papers which conclude this matter, together with my statement for services"—the file is still open and you are still unpaid. The unsuccessful lawyer's estates are always unsettled, his cases drift along, with unheard motions for new trial pending or unsettled appeals delaying completion. Your own self-interest should teach you, although it has failed to teach a large number of practitioners, that until a matter is concluded you will not be paid for your services.

And don't forget that principle of intelligent laziness: Do it once, do it right, and don't bother about it any more.

A final word about time and efficiency. Consider your personal efficiency as a reader. Much attention is being given today to training people to read better. Lawyers work with printed materials probably more than any other profession. Yet unless you are the exception, you undoubtedly believe you are a much better reader than you actually are. Upon taking a test you will be shocked to see how many bad reading habits you have acquired.

A great deal is being done to help improve our reading ability.

Watch for them, and most of you will have an opportunity to enroll in a re-training course in reading through your school system. Certainly if the average lawyer can double his reading speed and greatly improve his comprehension, he will substantially increase his efficiency. That much improvement is not at all out of reach for most of us.

HOW TO SATISFY CLIENTS

The last concept is how to satisfy clients. Perhaps we should call it the psychological angle. Probably more otherwise intelligent lawyers are economic failures because of a lack of understanding of psychology than for any other single reason. It is the crux of good lawyer-client relationship. Because most lawyers never had training in this field, it may be helpful to paraphrase for you something that appeared some time ago in *Business Week*, which points up the problems of handling clients properly.

People—including your clients—do not act logically; they act psychologically. Thus to understand clients we must understand some of the basic human motivation problems encountered by lawyers.

Lawyers will find it advantageous in attracting and keeping clients to find out why people act or think the way they do. Only by finding this out first can they take appropriate action. The difficulty is that you will get the wrong answers by asking people directly.

We all know some lawyer who has lost an important case, but whose client still thinks he is the greatest lawyer in the world. And we know the other lawyer who wins the case, but whose client won't return. Why is this? There is obviously "something else" at work besides ability and personality.

This is not true of lawyers alone. It is true with doctors and merchants as well. Ask women why they go to one store instead of the other and you almost always get the same answer—price and quality of merchandise. Yet in the same town there may be three or four stores that have almost exactly the same prices and kinds of quality merchandise. But one store will attract fifty per cent more shoppers.

The point is, lawyers can do a better job by paying more attention to what their clients are really thinking and what the true motivating factors are. That is where psychology comes in. Consider a conference with a client in your office. Here is where your client forms his opinion, and where the "something else" is or isn't shown. We lawyers have to learn to understand the client and what he is trying to say.

Here are some tips on how to hold a conference, as suggested by a psychologist:

Your secretary ushers a client into your office. A conversation—that is, a conference—begins. How do you proceed to make the most of it for your client and yourself?

Here are some essential points on getting the most out of an office conference.

1. The fellow who comes into your office comes for help. He is usually stumped or he wouldn't be coming in to see you.
2. He wants expert advice. Never forget that, to him, you are the expert. Act like one, even if you are stumped for the moment.
3. Don't stare at him. He is asking for help; don't make him uneasy.

TYPE AND PROFITABLENESS OF YOUR PRACTICE

Based on the information produced by your calculations, analyze your practice for a definite period (year or quarter) and classify it into the following four categories, based on the hourly return on the time expended:

- CHARITY WORK—legal work done for clients who cannot pay or for charitable organizations; undertaken on this basis as an obligation and duty of the profession _____%
- UNPROFITABLE WORK—work for which the charge does not equal the cost on an hourly basis; work which pays part or most of the time cost chargeable against it, but which is unprofitable..... _____%
- BREAK-EVEN WORK—work for which the charge meets the cost of doing the work; pays its way, with no or a modest profit _____%
- PROFITABLE WORK—work which much more than pays its way, based on time or hourly charge basis; the "cream" or exceptional case where charge is based largely on results obtained..... _____%

100%

Are the above percentages out of balance?

WHAT DOES ONE HOUR OF YOUR STENO'S TIME COST?

Assuming that the average stenographer in your office actually works the equivalent of 46 productive weeks a year (allowing two weeks' vacation, two weeks' sick time and ten days for holidays), that she works a five-day, forty-hour week, and that she has only six productive hours each day worked, we find that her productive time is only 1380 hours a year. Thus if her pay is \$250 a month, her time costs \$3000 or \$2.17 per hour. This cost must be considered in billing for services. Also, do not fail to bill the client for items such as mileage, travel time, disbursements, long-distance charges, etc.

WHAT MAKES UP YOUR CHARGE FOR DRAFTING A DOCUMENT?

The client should be charged an amount sufficient to cover all the following items whenever you bill for drafting a will, deed, mortgage or other document on a fixed-fee basis:

Attorney's time (at \$ _____ per hour)

- Client interview or conference..... _____ hours or fraction thereof
- Research and study time..... _____
- Drafting time _____
- Checking final document _____
- Telephone calls or time with
- Final client conference _____
- other parties concerned \$ _____

Stenographic time (at \$ _____ per hour)

- Dictation _____ hours or fraction thereof
- Typing, rough and final _____
- Proof reading \$ _____
- Forms, paper, carbons, mailing \$ _____

(Add for complexity of work, amount involved, responsibility and results obtained)

Total \$ _____

CHECK A DOZEN STATEMENTS IN YOUR OFFICE ON ABOVE BASIS AND LEARN HOW YOUR CHARGE COMPARES WITH COSTS

Most clients are shy people, low in self-esteem and confidence. Don't aggravate that tendency toward self-depreciation.

4. Don't hurry your client. No matter how busy you are, try to convey a sense of calmness and patience.

5. Since the client is there for help, find out what *kind* of help he needs. Get advance information on the client and his problems, if that is possible, and watch how he behaves. Listen carefully to what he has to say, for most clues as to what people actually mean reach us via the ears.

6. Don't be afraid to ask for personal information, if it will get the problem squared away. The client trusts you and believes you can straighten out matters when you get what you want to know.

7. Don't be surprised if there is a fair amount of confusion in what your client tells you. Sure, he is really there for help. But all his life he has been taught not to need help, so he is guilty in his own eyes when he comes to see you. He is inclined to "cover up" by introducing a strange cast of characters that takes the burden of guilt off himself. In short, he lies—or almost so—and tells an illogical story.

8. Probe beneath the surface. Don't take all answers at face value. If the client tells you three times in a row during the course of the conference that he doesn't mind one bit that his partner has inherited a fortune and says he is glad of it, you had better note that he is jealous.

9. When your client leaves you, be sure he has benefitted. Don't let him go away frustrated. That's how he came in.

10. For maximum effectiveness, an interview should be broken down into four stages: First, you *receive* the client; then you *explore* what is in his mind; then you *talk* with him in depth; and then you *break up* the interview.

11. When a client comes into your office, tell him where to sit—otherwise he will be uncomfortable about knowing what to do. Try to put him at ease. Then start talking to him—and listening to him. Show genuine interest and understanding. Most important, pay attention. Show that you have paid attention by talking to him on the basis of what you know about his problem based on the data presented.

12. Next you probe around in what is really on the client's mind. Watch carefully for signs of apathy, sadness, elation, over-dramatic speech, hesitancy, habitual qualifying, tenseness, and fatigue. Any one of these will give you a clue as to why your client came to seek help and what he really wants—they are all signs of anxiety.

13. Clear the air if you find that the interview is getting out of hand. Don't let a misunderstanding break it up. Immediately recapitulate the situation as you see it and find out whether you and the client are still broadcasting on the same wave length. Always bear in mind that the client has an anxiety about something and that the chief handicap to communication is anxiety.

14. Part of a lawyer's skill and art lies in keeping things simple enough so that something can happen; in other words, he clears the way for favorable change, and then tries to avoid getting in the way of its development.

15. Quit when you're ahead. When you have come to the conclusion of the interview—that is, when the maximum amount of benefit has been

achieved—break off the conference cleanly. Don't drag it on, because new themes and situations will arise to complicate matters. Always call it quits when you are winning.

Simple? Yes! You've know these things all along. But do you practice them?

LAW OFFICE MANAGEMENT

A List of Useful References

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