Taking a Break Is About More Than a Change of Scenery

Jennifer Mock

For busy lawyers (is there any other kind?), work/life balance is vitally important. The mental and physical demands that go along with the practice of law necessitate breaking away from the office from time to time. But the ability to carry the office home with us in a pocket-sized electronic device can mean that we are never really taking a much-needed break.

The mobile technology that was designed to make life easier for working professionals, including lawyers, has in fact had the opposite effect when it comes to getting away from the office for a relaxing evening, a weekend excursion or, especially, a summer vacation.

It is hard to disconnect these days. The innate desire to keep up with what is going on with our clients and at our firms can result in a 24/7/365 approach to reading emails and checking voicemails as soon as they arrive on our phones—a terribly bad habit when we should be getting some quality rest and relaxation with our family, friends or in solitude. I have found that disabling my phone’s email auto-sync helps me. I can only see my email if I manually sync, which at least reduces the temptation to reply immediately.

However, there is still an expectation by clients and other lawyers that you will continue to check your emails and take calls, even on vacation. I am sure we have all experienced a time when a panicked client or opposing counsel has tracked us down on vacation. I think that it is important for young attorneys to not only take time off, but to also respect other attorneys’ vacations, leaves of absence, etc. We all need a break.

According to recent news reports, more employees, employers and even one national government have begun to see the value in taking complete breaks from work—and work-related communications. An article published in The Washington Post earlier this year reported on the imposition of no-email vacation policies as a way some employers are dealing with the stress of the technology-boosted modern workplace.

The Association of Corporate Counsel, based in Washington, D.C., is one such workplace. When an employee takes a vacation, the national organization for corporate in-house lawyers takes the extra step of suspending the employee’s work email account. The policy earned the association the “When Work Works” award, presented by the Society for Human Resource Management.

Also honored were Creative Plan Designs, a retirement consulting firm based in East Meadow, N.Y., which automatically forwards emails directed toward a staff member on vacation to one of his or her colleagues; and San Francisco-based technology company Olark, which gives a $1,000 bonus to employees who take at least five days of vacation without checking in online and share vacation photos when they return.

And then there is the government of France, which in January enacted a new law giving employees nationwide “the right to disconnect.” Companies with 50 or more employees are required to devise a policy that prevents office emails from encroaching on leisure time. It is too soon to gauge the results of the new law or determine how stringently it is being enforced, but it is another sign of how the world is dealing with issues related to work/life balance, or the lack thereof.

The Post also cited a University of British Columbia study that found higher levels of stress and tension among people who frequently check email throughout the day, thus constantly shifting their attention between tasks and rearranging priorities.

When employees cut their inboxes’ lifeline to them while on leave from the office, it is a win-win for them and their com-
Why I Broke Up With My Smartwatch

I will be the first one to admit—I love gadgets and technology. In addition to loving technology, I always wear a watch; even in the water if they are waterproof. So a couple of years ago, when I found out that my favorite computer company was coming out with a smartwatch, I was ecstatic. I bided my time (get it? it’s a watch joke...), thinking it over and gauging how other people liked theirs. Then the holidays came and the smartwatch I wanted was on sale at a large electronics store. That day I found the one I wanted, in stock but 45 minutes out of my way. I drove to get it in a thunderstorm; I was so excited to try it out. I wanted to open it right away, but through shear will, waited until Christmas morning. When the day finally arrived, I played with my new smartwatch all day, like, well, a kid on Christmas. I changed the face, added pictures and downloaded all of the apps.

I wore my smartwatch for almost a year and a half, and at first it made me very happy. I could play my favorite trivia game on it. I could see text messages when I was in a meeting and answer them if it was something important that I had to answer right away. I could get my emails and see what needed to be answered. I found it very convenient and thought we would be together forever. I would “dress up” my smart watch with snazzy bands instead of just using the plain band that the watch arrived “wearing.” I put cute photos on the watch face so I could see my dogs, my daughter and/or my husband anytime I wanted to.

A few months ago, I started to notice something different. Every time my watch would buzz I would jump a little bit. I realized that I was starting to feel anxious every time it did, even if it was just a reminder for me to drink more water, breathe or walk around. I thought it would be neat to have reminders to do those things more often, but when those reminders came, I found myself suddenly getting aggrevated with my beautiful wrist candy. As time went on (another watch joke...), I had added more and more notifications without even realizing it.

I noticed that I felt bad when I could not answer an email that I saw come through. Are you still struggling with the idea of completely disconnecting from work? If so, take a moment to read “Good Lawyers Deserve a Good Summer Vacation” on page 6. Co-Editor ShaMiracle Johnson provides practice pointers regarding balancing your work responsibilities prior to, during and after your vacation. You will greatly benefit from taking a break, and so will your firm and your clients. YLD

Summer is amongst us. Take a moment to stop and smell the roses—literally and figuratively. Far too often, as lawyers we find ourselves getting caught up in the same routine tasks, day-in and day-out. We wake up, get ready for work, drive to work, have spirited “conversations with co-counsel” at work, drive home from work, eat, sleep and then hit repeat. Does this sound like your average work week? If so, dare to step out of your potentially mundane routine and try something new! What better time of year to remix your routine than summer time?

Georgia summers are particularly special because there is always something to do. Instead of heading home right after work, consider attending a unique CLE. During the summertime, many bar organizations offer CLEs that are “outside” the proverbial box. With a simple search, you can find CLEs that are hosted at local breweries, museums and parks. While you are learning about a new area of law, you can do so while sampling a local brew or cooling down with a flavorful popsicle. Who knew CLEs could be so cool?
Starting Your Own Practice and Breaking Away From a Big Law Firm

Every now and then I will be out with a colleague who is curious about the process of starting their own practice. For me, building a practice has been difficult, incredibly exciting, anxiety inducing and one of the most rewarding things I have had the chance to do in my life so far. Hands down, I could not have done any of it without the support of a select few people that I have been lucky enough to have around me. With that in mind, I have compiled a few tips for those who may be interested in striking out on their own.

Identify Your Area of Practice
Figuring out your practice area and niche early will save a lot of hassle on the back end. It is incredibly hard to do estate planning, personal injury, divorce and business law (or any combination of practice areas) all at once. It is hard because there is simply too much to learn and it makes networking really difficult. If you do a little of everything under the sun, most people will not remember you the same way as when you say, for example, that you handle motor vehicle collisions involving ride share companies. When I started out, I spent a good bit of time narrowing down my practice area: personal injury law. Even now it feels weird to turn potential clients away, but I know in the long run it is a much better strategy. With that said, I like getting calls for things I do not necessarily specialize in. It allows me the opportunity to reach out to other attorneys and to also send some business their way. Of course, the aim here is to establish a reciprocal relationship. By focusing on my practice area, I can let other attorneys know the type of cases to refer.

Focus on the Client
No two clients are the same. Every client has different needs, goals and preferences. My assessment of each client begins at first contact. Based on this, decide the client’s communication preferences. This may mean always meeting in person at a location convenient to your client. Or maybe you are representing a startup that prefers communicating almost exclusively via email. Be attentive to each individual client and be flexible. It is also very important that you maintain channels of communication with your clients. Being clear about client expectations and goals allows you to provide the best service possible.

Of course, there is no rule book for getting your own practice up and running. A little creativity, ingenuity and never being afraid to ask for help can go a long way to helping you break away.
Planning for the Ultimate Vacation: Retirement

Leila Shaver

In today’s world there is a great deal of uncertainty. Millennials face higher levels of student loan debt, poverty and unemployment, and lower levels of wealth and personal income than the two most immediately preceding generations. According to a survey from the Pew Research Center, a whopping 90 percent of Millennials believe they will get no or reduced Social Security benefits. Between dealing with a lagging economy, cohabiting with parents after college and paying into a social service that Millennials do not believe they will see a dime of, the idea of saving for retirement seems far-fetched and unimportant.

In fact, the most important thing that Millennials can do is to save for retirement. Millennials can stretch their dollar and make the most out of the money they do put away by following the tips.

1. **Take advantage of employer matches.**
   Many employers who offer a 401(k) plan will match your contributions up to a certain percentage of your salary. Check with your human resources representative to find out what your company offers. Try to contribute at least the same percentage your employer is willing to match to your 401(k). It is kind of like having your own money tree.

2. **Consider opening a Roth IRA.**
   A Roth IRA works well for when you are starting your career and not making a lot of money, yet. Your contributions to your Roth IRA are taxed, but your withdrawals after retirement are not taxed. If you are at a higher tax bracket when you do retire, you will ultimately save a lot in income taxes.

3. **You are young, live a little.**
   Now is the time to invest in more volatile investments. With greater risk comes greater reward. You have some time before you reach retirement age, so you have time to recoup a loss if your gamble does not work out. If it does work out, you will see higher returns than more conservative investments.

4. **Go skydiving, but have a plan.**
   There are a lot of great retirement calculators online. Find out how much money you need to retire at the level of comfort you desire and tweak your strategy on how you will get there. Do this calculation annually and make adjustments, as needed, to ensure that you stay on track. If you need help, you can seek the services of either a traditional financial adviser or a robo-adviser. Robo-advisers provide digital financial advice based on algorithms and utilize minimal human intervention. They are generally cheaper than using traditional financial advisers, but there are pros and cons to both types of financial services. Choose the one that best fits your individual needs.

   If you do seek the services of a financial adviser or robo-adviser, keep in mind that they are required to be registered with a state or federal regulatory agency. Online, you are able to see if they have had any client complaints, the licenses they hold and whether their registration is in good standing. You can go to BrokerCheck online at https://brokercheck.finra.org to search the history of a broker-dealer or registered representative. For registered investment advisers, go to the Investment Adviser Public Disclosure website at https://adviserinfo.sec.gov.

5. **Have a separate savings account.**
   Millennials have a lot of financial burdens, and unexpected costs happen frequently. A retirement account is great, but, unless you want to pay penalties, you cannot touch the money until you reach the retirement age. So, it is a good idea to have a traditional savings account for those unexpected expenses. If your dog gets sick or you face medical costs that are not covered by your insurance, you will be happy that you squirreled away some money.

   Saving for retirement is like preparing for the ultimate vacation. After a successful legal career, you will be glad you can continue your journey thanks to the smart financial decisions you make now.

Endnote
Good Lawyers Deserve a Good Summer Vacation

ShaMiracle Johnson

Stepping away from the practice of law to take a much needed vacation is a novel idea for many lawyers. Contrary to popular belief, it is possible to carve out some “you time” or “family time” amidst working in a busy practice, attending court appearances and managing client expectations. Not only is it possible to do so, Susan Cartier Liebel, founder and CEO of Solo Practice University, suggests that a vacation is essential to being a good lawyer:

When you are busy and exhausted all the time, you never give your brain a chance to turn off. Like a computer that is never shut down, our brains stop working properly, and take too long to load. There is cognitive decline. What results over time is insomnia, stress which can lead to depression, substance abuse and even worse.¹

Vacationing is good for your mental health, personal relationships and creativity. Regardless of your practice area, summer-time affords a number of opportunities to take a traditional vacation or a local staycation. Are you now eager to plan your next vacation? Before you finalize your plans, take a moment to review the practice pointers below regarding balancing your work responsibilities prior to, during and after your vacation.

The Countdown

With any great vacation, there is an immense amount of planning that occurs prior to arriving at your intended destination. As a lawyer, it is essential that prior to your vacation you establish and communicate with your office your plan for managing client and counsel expectations while you are out. First, clear your calendar. Prior to leaving for vacation, double check your calendar for scheduling conflicts. If a conflict is present that cannot be rescheduled, find coverage. Pro Tip: be sure to provide your coverage counsel with all the relevant information and documents that are required for the meeting, deposition or hearing. Once you clear your calendar, set communication boundaries. Advise your staff and colleagues of your availability while you are out of the office. Identify matters which may rise to a level of urgency that would warrant your vacation being interrupted. Last, similar to identifying coverage counsel for calendar conflicts, identify another attorney in your office or firm who can address urgent matters in your absence.

Relaxing in Paradise

Once you make it to paradise, you should take affirmative steps to unplug from your legal life and enjoy your vacation. A practical step to take is carving out protected time that is spent solely on enjoying your vacation. Jones Day Partner Lawrence D. Rosenberg emphasized the importance of protected time in a 2015 ABA podcast. Rosenberg noted:

[O]n vacations specifically, I think one way to do it that’s very effective is to have perhaps one or two days during your vacation that you try to stay focused as much as possible on just the vacation. You may still need to check your email or if an emergency comes up, deal with it, but try to take, again, one to two days—if say you’re taking a week vacation—where you try to avoid work as much as possible. But then on the other days, create windows of time when you can devote some time to work issues.²

Carving out protected time affords you an opportunity to focus on your vacation and the individuals you are sharing it with. It also makes the window of time that is devoted to work issues less daunting. Rosenberg recommends dedicating either the early morning before you engage in daily activities or the late evening, after you have enjoyed your day, to answering emails or making that very important phone call.

Back to Reality

Your vacation has come to an end. Hopefully, you have had an opportunity to relax, re-
They Deserve a Break: Impacting Our Veterans Through Pro Bono Representation

Kevin Patrick

Many of us have become accustomed over the years to standing for the national anthem, thanking a soldier at the airport and making donations to wounded soldier projects. Despite these gestures, we as younger lawyers oftentimes wish to connect with a veteran on an even more personal level. Pro bono service is a meaningful way to forge a deeper bond with a member of our armed forces. This article accordingly will focus on two aspects of pro bono service: personal reflections from a recent case; and, the universal nature of this type of work.

Like so many veterans, Officer Motes made countless sacrifices to our country, but he felt that he received a fair amount of seemingly hollow gestures after returning home. We initially met under challenging circumstances in early July of 2016. He was hurt in an automobile collision. By serving Officer Motes in a pro bono capacity in his case, I witnessed first-hand his inherent qualities, such as courage, loyalty and respect. Most importantly, I learned the true meaning of the naval motto: Non sibi, sed patriae, which means not for self, but country. Officer Motes always had and still would put his country above himself.

The representation of Officer Motes teaches by extension all of us an important lesson. Pro bono service transcends all practice areas. Officer Motes explained that soldiers deployed to combat zones have questions about their wills; therefore, trust and estates attorneys would be a welcomed asset before their actual deployment. When these soldiers return home, they may decide to start a nonprofit company for a military case so a corporate attorney would be able to provide the necessary guidance. He also described the importance of compassionate family lawyers given the stressful nature of military service.

We have the unique ability to use our respective talents to give back to those individuals that are willing to sacrifice their own lives to protect our Constitution. Veterans are not mere statistics, but rather they are very real people with legal needs. The words of Atticus Finch in “To Kill A Mockingbird,” “You can’t understand someone until you’ve walked a mile in their shoes,” captures the essence of pro bono representation. On behalf of all lawyers, we salute you, Officer Motes, and all of your fellow men and women in the armed services.

Honor to the soldier and sailor everywhere, who bravely bears his country’s cause. Honor, also, to the citizen who cares for his brother in the field and serves, as he best can, the same cause.

—Abraham Lincoln

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Good Marketing Does Not Take a Vacation

Heather Riggs

A newsletter article about newsletter articles? So meta! Seriously though, the right newsletter can be a powerful way to connect with your existing and prospective clients. So what do you do if you have a boring newsletter on your hands? We here at The YLD Review cannot relate, but I wanted to offer a few pointers nonetheless.

They Have to Read to Succeed
Getting your clients to open your newsletter is the first step to a successful campaign, but it will fail to produce results if they are not engaged with its content.

The following will help you identify the difference between a boring newsletter and one that can generate greater visibility and revenue for your law firm.

Newsletters are being used effectively by many businesses in today’s marketplace. Many law firms, however, deliver marketing messages that are irrelevant or fail to engage their recipients.

Poor list segmentation, a lack of understanding of their target audiences and other factors result in boring newsletters that can negatively impact your bottom line.

Some law firms publish newsletters that focus on information that is of little or no interest to their audiences. This occurs when those practices focus on themselves more than on the specific needs of their prospective clients. Your newsletter should be useful, unique and have a sense of urgency that is addressed directly to the legal concerns of your target audience.

It Is a Marathon, Not a Sprint
Law firms must focus on the long-term rewards of publishing a newsletter. A consistent newsletter helps your audience develop the habit of receiving, opening and reading your content. A newsletter should help your law firm achieve its branding, marketing and outreach goals, too. Over time, your newsletter positions your firm as an industry leader while giving it a brand “voice” that becomes recognizable to your audience.

Effective newsletters keep your audience up-to-date on industry changes, promotions within your practice and special events. These goals may not translate into immediate sales, but they pave the way for the relationships that result in new clients.

Your newsletter must be focused on the client’s needs. Understanding your target audience gives you the insight to determine what questions need to be answered in order to provide the solutions that your audience is looking for. You can also provide information that is indirectly related to your legal services. The more you know your target audience, the easier it is to create compelling content that builds trust and credibility while enhancing its engagement.

Set Expectations
A consistent publishing schedule helps recipients know when to expect to receive your newsletter. It keeps your law firm “top of mind” and helps with its brand recognition. You need to have a strategy in place to market your newsletter. Clients and prospects may be unaware that you have a newsletter if you do not invite them to subscribe to your mailing list, if you decide to send your newsletter through traditional mediums. Your website design should include an option to sign-up for your newsletter while giving site visitors information letting them know what to expect when they receive it if you are going in an electronic distribution direction. This is an effective way to generate new leads for your legal practice.

The right newsletter keeps your audience engaged while distinguishing your practice from its competitors. Giving your audience information that is relevant and useful is essential to your newsletter’s success.

To Mail or to Email
Your firm’s newsletter can be one of the best tools in your marketing toolbox. Newsletters serve many functions including lead generation, client education and the promotion of your legal services. A totally-not-boring-at-all newsletter can set your law firm apart from its competitors and position you as an industry leader. So how should you deliver your newsletter to your audi-
ence? Next, I will help you determine the benefits and drawbacks of print and email newsletters so that you make the best choice for your law firm’s marketing strategy.

The Power of Print
Despite living in a digital world, print newsletters still carry a lot of weight for law firms looking to market their services. Print newsletters have historically been shown to achieve higher response rates when compared to digital newsletters sent via email or other distribution channels. A well-crafted, relevant and useful print newsletter can give your practice anywhere between a 3 to 5 percent response rate. That sounds low, but for this medium it is excellent.

In addition, print newsletters give recipients a physical product, which inherently has a greater perceived value. They can be transported and held onto over time, which increases the likelihood that your audience will actually read your content.

The biggest drawback of print newsletters is their cost. Printing and mailing newsletters adds to your marketing budget, so you will have to weigh the higher cost against the potential for higher response rates.

The Ease of Electronic
Email newsletters have almost become the norm in online marketing. Most law firms offer some way for existing and prospective clients to receive ongoing correspondence related to the services they provide. Email newsletters are an easier and more inexpensive way to nurture prospects and provide greater value to your target market. This allows law firms to send newsletters frequently without any significant increases in cost.

Email newsletters can also be sent according to your audience segmentation. This means that your newsletter can be customized to each recipient based on a number of factors including: legal needs, purchase history, occupation or industry, and location. This results in content that is tailored to the recipient, which increases conversion rates and engagement with your brand.

The design of your electronic newsletter can be updated easily, which lets you optimize its look and usability over time. It can be integrated into other online assets including your website and social media pages.

Although there are many benefits, electronic emails can be easier to ignore. The public is often inundated with emails from friends, family, work and businesses trying to get their attention. Deleting or unsubscribing from your email newsletter can be done with a simple click. This is the biggest drawback of electronic emails, and your law firm must keep this in mind when creating and distributing a digital newsletter.

Using Print and Digital Together
When it comes to print and electronic newsletters, the good news is that you do not have to choose just one. Both can be used to target a specific group within your target market based on your insight into their needs and preferences. Integrating both print and electronic newsletters into your marketing strategy leads to better results, improves brand recognition and makes marketing spending more efficient.

Done correctly, print and electronic newsletters can each supplement the other, creating a more integrated experience for your target audience. Your law firm can offer exclusive content within each format in order to compel electronic newsletter recipients to sign up for your print newsletter and vice versa.

If you choose to just use one format, you will need to consider your budget along with the resources required to produce each. Designers, printers, copywriters and other key team members will be needed at different levels with both print and digital newsletters.

You can always find The YLD Review in both printed and electronic form. And do not forget about our brand new blog, www.theyldreview.com, which you can use to catch up in between issues.
right away. I would be distracted in meetings because a text message would come through that I felt I needed to answer. I was stressed when I would get a notification from my watch while I was driving and I could not look to see who it was from; I would feel bad because I could not get back to that person right then and there.

That is when I decided to do a little experiment. I decided not to wear my smartwatch for a few days, just to see how I felt. Every morning my smartwatch would be sitting there, just waiting for me to put it on, but instead, I would reach for my good ole’ analog watch. I have to say it was weird at first because I still felt little phantom haptic vibrations, even though they were not happening. It was almost as if my brain had become addicted to them, and I found that even when they were not actually happening, it would make me anxious and stressed.

A few weeks after I started my experiment, I was talking with a friend and fellow technology enthusiast who sheepishly confessed that she was going to sell her own smartwatch. She felt too connected, too anxious and too guilty when she could not answer an alert right away. That is when I decided I had to break up with my smartwatch. It was a decision I never dreamed I would have to make, but for my health and sanity, it had to be done.

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I have been without my formerly beloved, beautiful watch for almost a month, and my stress and anxiety levels are definitely lower. I feel freer and I do not have the guilt of not answering an alert right away anymore. With today’s technology, it is easy to rely too much on devices like smartwatches. That was true for me, which is why I broke up with mine. We were once very happy together, but alas I realized it was a bad relationship that was not good for me.

Endnotes

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Orientation Schedule
(All times are tentative and subject to change)

**Tuesday, Aug. 8**
3:10 - 5:35 p.m. | Georgia State University College of Law

**Friday, Aug. 11**
1:30 - 3:30 p.m. | Mercer University School of Law
2:20 - 5 p.m. | University of Georgia School of Law

**Saturday, Aug. 12**
9:40 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. | Atlanta’s John Marshall Law School
10:15 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. | Savannah Law School

**Thursday, Aug. 17**
1 - 4 p.m. | Emory University School of Law*
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