

Transitioning In and Out of Government Service

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Entering Government Service

What Can I Expect?

- Steady and endless work
- Independence in day-to-day activities
- Opportunities to learn more about other parts of the law

Winding Down a Private Practice

“Considerations When Closing Your Law Practice”

- February 2013 Bar Journal
- No new work
- Conclude representation
- Pay yourself earned fees and distribute unearned fees.
- Final bills.
- Handle files
- Complete substitutions.

Winding Down Your Practice

What to do???

- DON'T REINVENT THE WHEEL

- There are always people that have done what you are doing now.
- Find them and talk to them!!
- Dodging landmines and pitfalls

- Clients

- Remember that they come first and they chose you!

Winding Down Your Practice

What to do???

- Unforeseen Happenings
 - THEY WILL COME.
 - Leave some money in your office account to handle any business expenses that come after your close.
 - Keep your mailbox open.
- YOU HAVEN'T THOUGHT OF EVERYTHING

Transitioning Out of Government Service

Joining an Established Law Firm/Office

- Transition will be simpler than it will be to a sole practitioner's office.
- People will be there to help you with that transition.
- The Billable Hour System

Transitioning Out of Government Service

What to Expect?

- Your work ratios are different.
- ADA – 85% Attorney, 10% Politician, 5% Social Worker
- Sole Practitioner – 20% Attorney, 25% Politician, 25% Social Worker, 20% Office Manager, 10% Marketer

Transitioning Out of Government Service

What to Expect?

Chaos

- Any given day, you will be:
 - In court
 - Evaluating new cases
 - Meeting with clients
 - Processing all your paperwork
 - Keeping up your accounting
- You have to change your mindset.

Transitioning Out of Government Service

What to Expect?

- You will not know how much income you will bring home at the end of the month.
- You will not know exactly how much your expenses will be at the end of the month.
- Budgeting and planning will not just be important. It will be absolutely necessary.

Transitioning Out of Government Service

What to Expect?

- It will be all you (at the beginning).
- You will be tasked with not only keeping your clients serviced, but also with keeping your business maintained.
- You will also have to choose exactly what kind of law you want to practice, and where you want to practice it.

Transitioning Out of Government Service

What to Expect?

- It's also very exciting!
- Always something new to handle or address.
- While you don't know how much you'll make, the potential for earning will always be higher in the public sector.
- Again, it's all you! (But in a good way)

Transitioning Out of Government Service

Things to Do If You're Starting Your Own Office

- Find a Mentor
 - Find several.
 - No single mentor will have all the answers.
 - However, they all will have done this before.
 - DON'T REINVENT THE WHEEL
- Get Involved in Local Groups

Transitioning Out of Government Service

Things to Do If You're Starting Your Own Office

- Purchase your own equipment
- Market the law firm
- Make payroll
- Decide on office space
 - Do you need it?
 - How much do you need?

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Things to Do If You're Starting Your Own Office

- Use the Law Practice Management Program
 - www.texaslawpracticemanagement.com
- Ten Minute Mentor
 - www.texasbarcle.com/CLE/TYLA/Home.asp
- Office in a Flash
 - www.tyla.org/tyla/assets/Flash/officeinaflash.html

Transitioning Out of Government Service

Remember – You're Now a Businessman!!

- There are arguments you can't make.
 - Client won't pay for them
 - Client wants to take another avenue.
- You are limited on how long you can take on a project.
- You are **ALWAYS** on display.

Questions???

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