

# PARALEGAL COMPASS

Volume 10 · September 2022



## WORDS OF WISDOM

*"Find a note-taking solution that works best for you. It took me a little time to accept that handwritten notes were better for my learning style than typed notes, but once I fully embraced this note-taking method, the amount of information I processed drastically increased."*

*"Learn by understanding and applying, not by memorizing. Solutions to legal problems are arrived at by applying the law, not by defining it. Always make sure you understand legal concepts well enough to be able to explain them to someone else. As Albert Einstein said: If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough!"*

*"Ask questions. The teachers are extremely knowledgeable and will explain the answer. If you don't ask now, you may regret it later."*



## 7 WAYS TO ZAP STRESS AND BE PRODUCTIVE

- 1. Prioritize and re-prioritize:** Use lists and notes to relieve memory stress, prioritize, and mark down ideas. Tasks seem less overwhelming on paper than when they're competing for mental space.
- 2. Choose one task and finish it:** Select one item from your list and focus until you complete it, even if you have to break one large item down into smaller, more achievable steps. Seeing progress will motivate you to continue being productive.
- 3. Nurture yourself:** Stretch frequently, breath deeply, drink enough water, and eat healthy snacks. Go for a walk to get fresh air at lunch, and listen to some music or a podcast while you work. Remember that life is good.
- 4. Curate your workspace:** Clear desk, clear mind. The next time you are struggling to focus, step away from the screen and devote some time to de-cluttering. Cultivate a minimalist workspace, with lots of open desk space, bright lighting, and as few stacks of paper as possible.

*[Continue on page 2]*



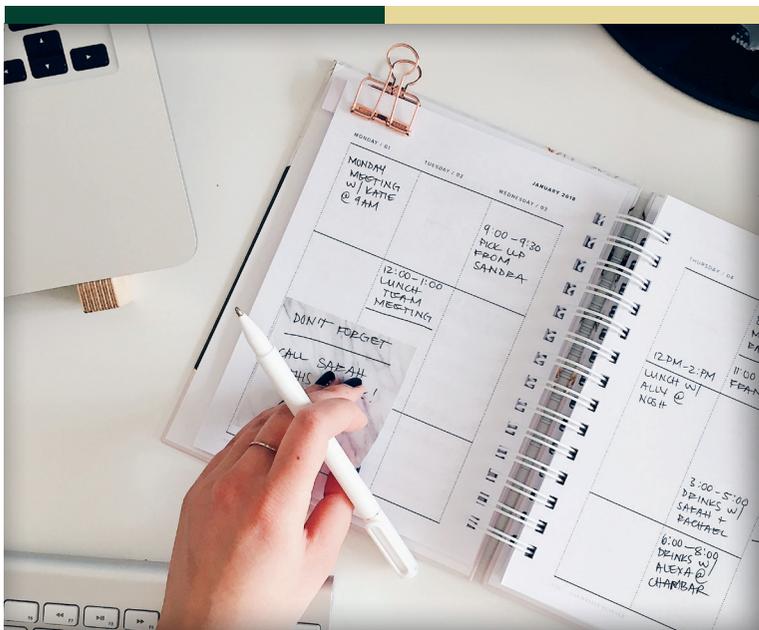
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## 7 WAYS TO ZAP STRESS AND BE PRODUCTIVE

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- 5. Establish routines and systems:** Create a schedule for each day (or week) to establish consistency. Schedule certain types of tasks at the same time each day or on the same day each week.
- 6. Leave work at work:** It is important to draw lines between your time at work and your personal time. Taking time to mentally refresh yourself and do things you enjoy will actually help you function better at work.
- 7. Take a step back:** Remember that you will get through this. You've felt stressed and overwhelmed before in your life, but you've always pulled through. You'll get through it now. Use positive self-talk to reaffirm this.



## ONLINE RESOURCES FOR PARALEGAL STUDENTS

### PARALEGAL NEWS AND GUIDANCE

u.emond.ca/exam-prep  
 Iso.ca/becoming-licensed/paralegal-licensing-process  
 opaonline.ca  
 online-paralegal-programs.com

### GOVERNMENT RESOURCES

CanLII: canlii.org  
 e-Laws: ontario.ca/laws

### PARALEGAL FACEBOOK GROUPS

facebook.com/groups/ParalegalsConnect  
 facebook.com/groups/ParalegalCorner  
 facebook.com/OPNparalegals/

### LINKEDIN GROUPS

Paralegal Student Network: goo.gl/fDROOa  
 Ontario Paralegal Association: goo.gl/Ke6sBJ  
 The Paralegal Group: goo.gl/yLxTYA

## FREE LEGAL GLOSSARY

**Book of Authority:** A book containing a copy of each case and statutory provision relied on for a trial or hearing.

**Hearsay:** A statement, originally made out of court, that is repeated in court for the truth of its contents.

**Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB):** An independent, quasi-judicial tribunal whose mission is "to make well-reasoned decisions on immigration and refugee matters—efficiently, fairly and in accordance with the law."

**Prima Facie:** On the face of it.

**Stay of Proceedings:** The temporary or permanent suspension of proceedings before a court or tribunal by order of that court or tribunal or of a higher court.

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## THE “FOUR RS” OF TRAUMA-INFORMED INTERVIEWING

In your work, it is likely you will be called on to interview a client who is in the grip of a trauma reaction. Following a trauma-informed approach to interviewing is a compassionate and effective way of gathering information from clients who have experienced trauma. A trauma-informed interview incorporates the “Four Rs”: Realize, Recognize, Respond, and Resist. Understanding the Four Rs is the first step in developing a trauma-informed interview process.

**Realize:** Be trauma aware. Realize that trauma can result from a wide variety of experiences, and that trauma impacts us all differently and to varying degrees. Know that trauma will play into your work. Know that it can impact you as an interviewer. Know that you may have biases that you bring to the table.

**Recognize:** Know the signs of trauma in the short term. Learn to spot delayed reactions. Know how trauma might show up in your work and create challenges to the interview process. Recognize the signs of vicarious trauma.

**Respond:** Use elements of the trauma-informed approach to respond to trauma reactions that arise in your work. Understand the five important principles that underpin an effective trauma-informed approach: safety, choice, collaborations, transparency, and empowerment.

**Resist:** Use person-centred practice. Resist methods and systems that are repeated out of habit and may not work for a particular client. Ask yourself why you are following an established practice, and if it is flexible, change it to accommodate the needs of a client who is traumatized.

By applying the trauma-informed approach to your interviews, you can create a psychologically safe process for yourself and your clients while at the same time getting better interview results. In the best-case scenario, clients may even experience an increased sense of justice and/or healing, regardless of the legal outcomes.

*Excerpted from Interviewing Skills for Legal Professionals, 3rd Edition.*

COMING SOON

### JOURNAL OF PARALEGAL ACCESS TO JUSTICE, 2021 EDITION

The *Journal of Paralegal Access to Justice* provides a forum for licensed paralegals and paralegal educators to critically examine the paralegal scope of practice and the role of paralegals in advancing access to justice. Its in-depth articles, practice guidance, legislative updates, and case comments offer practical insights into current and future professional trends.



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**Digital flashcards** that covers all subject areas to help memorize key concepts



# DEVELOPING A BUSINESS PLAN FOR YOUR PARALEGAL PRACTICE

**A BUSINESS PLAN CONTAINS A SUMMARY OF A BUSINESS'S OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL OBJECTIVES, WITH DETAILED PLANS AND BUDGETS THAT EXPLAIN HOW THE OBJECTIVES WILL BE ACHIEVED. THINK OF IT AS THE ARCHITECTURE BEHIND YOUR BUSINESS: IT MUST BE EXPERTLY ENGINEERED.**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Summarize the key elements of your business plan.

## CLIENT AND MARKET PROFILES

They can help you understand who your clients will likely be, how to find them, and how to motivate them to purchase your services. Gather data relating to the demographics of your potential clients, such as geographic location, age, income level, gender, ethnicity, and education level. This will help you assess the needs of your target market and identify areas of opportunity in the market.

## MARKETING PLAN

Set out specific milestones, objectives and action plans that will help your business accomplish its mission and fill the needs that you identified in your profiles. For example, an objective could be to serve new immigrants in the community, and the action plan could be to advertise in different ethnic newspapers, hire bilingual staff, and offer free information at newcomers' organizations.

## MANAGEMENT PLAN

This document outlines how the business is structured, and describes the responsibilities and skills of various individuals or roles (e.g. marketing, sales, administration, and business development).

## MARKET ANALYSIS

Consider the following factors in your analysis: growth rate, size, profitability, and trends. Analyze these factors in the planning stages of your business and on an ongoing basis to help you determine the opportunities and risks of a particular market and how these may affect your business's success.

## BUDGET AND FINANCIAL PLAN

A critical component in a strong business plan, the financial plan tracks money coming into and going out of the business. It evaluates how much money is required to operate the business, and where that money comes from. The budget should list anticipated income and expenses for a defined future period (typically one year). It predicts and records cash flow, which is a challenge that many paralegal businesses struggle with. You may consider consulting an accountant or bookkeeper.

## OPERATING PLAN

Provide a detailed description of your business location, facilities, and equipment. For example, you may discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the selected location and may be linked to issues such as accessibility of the office by public transit, as well as by clients who have impaired mobility.

## MISSION STATEMENT

Articulate the main goals of your business.

*Adapted from Michelle Roy McSpurren, Rosemary Bocska, Practice Management for Paralegals, 2nd Edition (Toronto: Emond Publishing, 2022)*

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## INSPIRATION

"There is no magic to achievement. It's really about hard work, choices, and persistence."  
—Michelle Obama

"Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day-in and day-out."  
—Robert Collier

—Robert Collier

