Taking advantage of bar resources

When was the last time you visited the Resource Section of the American Bar Association (ABA) website? Let me rephrase that. Have you ever visited the Resource Section of the ABA website? What about assistance offered by your state bar association? Are you taking advantage of those benefits? If not, you could be missing out on some extremely useful resources.

When it comes to your legal practice, you likely wear numerous hats – lawyer, manager, rainmaker. This list goes on and on. Recognizing the significant weight of these various responsibilities, many state bars and bar associations provide their members with benefits and resources to make these tasks more manageable. Below are some of the benefits you may find when you make an effort to learn what your bar association has to offer.

Law Practice Management

Your state bar, as well as the ABA, provides law practice management tools to assist with the day-to-day responsibilities of running a law firm. Some associations offer meeting spaces for virtual attorneys who may not have a physical office space. You may also find student loan assistance information or discounts on various products and services. The ABA regularly presents webinars on such management topics as legal technology, ethical issues, and law practice growth.

Specialty Sections

Each state bar association has specialty sections, which are designed to support attorneys within the same areas of practice, those who share similar interests, or members of specific demographic groups. For example, almost every state in the nation has a Women's Bar Association, dedicated

to addressing the unique challenges of female lawyers. You are also likely to find groups, such as a Family Law Section and a Solo Practitioner Section. These smaller sections not only provide practice assistance, but they also offer camaraderie, networking opportunities, and support from other lawyers.

Educational Materials

From handbooks and printable guides to practice templates and comprehensive course materials, the bar is a great source for legal educational materials. Most associations make CLE materials available through their websites, so you can keep abreast of changes and trends within your practice area. Some state bars even sell previous editions of educational materials at deep discounts, allowing even the most frugal attorney to build an extensive legal library.

Pro Bono Opportunities

Most bar associations provide maintain listings of various public service opportunities. These may include specific pro bono cases, or legal advice clinics, where you donate a set amount of time to assisting members of the public who cannot afford traditional legal services. The ABA even provides resources and guidance on establishing a pro bono program within a practice.

You probably pay some sort of membership dues or fees to your state bar on a regular basis. Why not take advantage of what they offer you in return? You might find some valuable resources to help your law practice run a little more smoothly.

About Erika Winston:

Erika Winston is a freelance writer with a passion for law. Through her business, The Legal Writing Studio, she helps legal professionals deliver effective written

messages. Erika is a regular contributor to TimeSolv and a variety of other publications.