



## Practice Resource

# Getting Started: *Opening Your Law Office*

This article was prepared by Felicia S. Folk

**Note:** This article is not current and should be reviewed in light of the BC Code coming into force, Law Society Rule changes and relevant Ethics Committee opinions. For more current information on Lawyers Sharing Space [click here](#). For law firm names see the [annotations to Code rule 4.2-5](#) and especially the Ethics Committee April 2007 opinion regarding names that are improper for a sole practitioner.

Updated: September, 2004

The Law Society of British Columbia

Copyright © 2002-2004 by the Law Society of British Columbia

The Law Society of British Columbia  
8th Floor, 845 Cambie Street  
Vancouver, BC V6B 4Z9  
Telephone: (604) 669-2533  
Fax: (604) 669-5232  
TTY: (604) 443-5700  
[www.lawsociety.bc.ca](http://www.lawsociety.bc.ca)

# OPENING YOUR LAW OFFICE

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>General</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>A. Decisions to Make Before Opening Your Own Law Office</b> .....	<b>2</b>
1. What will opening your office cost? .....	2
2. Where are you going, or where will your practice be located? .....	3
3. With whom will you practise? .....	4
4. How will you earn your income? .....	10
<b>B. Steps to Take Before Opening</b> .....	<b>11</b>
1. Plan a budget. ....	11
2. Write a business plan. ....	11
3. Find space. ....	12
4. Find an accountant. ....	14
5. Choose your firm's name. ....	15
6. Obtain financing. ....	16
7. Secure space. ....	16
8. Consider the Rules of Conduct. ....	17
9. Arrange telephone and other communication services. ....	18
10. Obtain Internet Service. ....	19
11. Notify the Law Society. ....	19
12. Obtain insurance. ....	20
13. Comply with local business requirements. ....	20
14. Open bank accounts. ....	21
15. Make your purchases. ....	22
16. Decide on staff. ....	25
17. Start to market your services. ....	26
<b>C. Organise Your Office Before Opening the Doors</b> .....	<b>26</b>
1. Set up your systems. ....	26
2. Create letterhead. ....	27
3. Comply with provincial government requirements. ....	28

4. Comply with federal government requirements.....	28
5. Train your staff.....	29
<b>D. Where to Find Help .....</b>	<b>29</b>
Suggested reading list.....	30
Online Resources .....	30

# OPENING YOUR LAW OFFICE<sup>1</sup>

## General

Success in running your own practice requires not only a tolerance for risk and pressure, but also rainmaking ability, self-confidence, leadership, organisational skills and an entrepreneurial personality. You should be one who can take initiative, organise and manage resources, accept uncertain monetary profit, and innovate.

A small firm begins with many uncertainties, including uneven work demands, unsteady cash flow, possibility of illness and lack of a large client base. You will be faced with many demands on your time and a multitude of administrative details:

Anyone, lawyer or non-lawyer, who owns his or her own service business, must have a high tolerance for pressure. The owner-lawyer will be faced with multiple client demands, constant time limitations, conflicting court appearances, non-client professional demands, and personal needs, all of which create pressure. Work will not be placed on the lawyer's tray in well-reasoned and measured tidbits. You must look at yourself and measure your level of tolerance for such pressures. How flexible are you? Can you deal with long and irregular hours? Are you willing to make a commitment for which you bear ultimate responsibility?<sup>2</sup>

In order to be successful, you must assess your own personal and professional situations, define the desired focus and direction of your practice, and have the commitment and desire to succeed on your own. Implementing a continuing strategic plan and following a clearly defined competitive strategy are essential. Developing practice management skills is crucial.<sup>3</sup>

Starting your own firm is also an adventure that is exciting, challenging and rewarding. You will have variety, flexibility, control of your work and a tremendous feeling of pride in your new firm's every success.

This paper is not about whether you *should* "hang out your shingle." It is assumed that you have carefully considered your options and have decided that you want to open your own office. This is about the steps to be followed and the decisions to be made along the way.

---

<sup>1</sup> Felicia S. Folk, was a Practice Advisor at the Law Society of BC at the time of writing.

<sup>2</sup> Demetrios Dimitriou, "Deciding Whether to Be an Owner-Lawyer," in *The Lawyer's Handbook*, 3rd ed., Institute of Continuing Legal Education, Michigan, 1992, pp.12-13.

<sup>3</sup> Paul G. Ulrich, "Some Thoughts on Breaking Away," in *Flying Solo—a Survival Guide for the Solo Lawyer*, ed. Joel P. Bennett, 2nd ed. (Section of Law Practice Management, American Bar Association, 1994), p.27, [www.abanet.org](http://www.abanet.org).

You will find some of the points very simple, but they are included because sometimes the simplest tasks are overlooked in a new venture. Whether you are newly called or a lawyer with many years of experience in a large firm, consider this paper a checklist to be used as you go through the process of opening your office.

## **A. Decisions to Make Before Opening Your Own Law Office**

### **1. What will opening your office cost?**

Consider Start-up Costs separately from Expenses as you make your plans. “Start-up Costs” are defined as initial, one-time costs and “Expenses” are defined as the cost of running your practice once you have begun. Another term that may be used for Expenses is “Overhead.”

It is suggested that you set aside — or make arrangements to have credit for — a sufficient amount of money for start-up costs, to pay expenses and to live on for at least the first six months, until you have a cash flow.

#### **a. Start-up costs**

You will require a capital sum before you begin, to pay for the following purchases:

- equipment
- office supplies
- accounting system
- furniture
- renovation of space
- miscellaneous set-up costs, and
- opening announcements.

#### **b. Expenses**

Your ongoing expenses may include the following:

- rent
- equipment leases
- interest on bank loans
- Law Society fees and insurance
- accountants’ fees
- salaries
- staff benefits

- telephone bills
- marketing
- stationery
- postage
- office supplies
- equipment maintenance
- taxes
- Continuing Legal Education
- insurance, and
- disbursements incurred on behalf of clients.

## **2. Where are you going, or where will your practice be located?**

If you do not already have a practice, or you are willing to re-establish yourself elsewhere, considerations include type of community, lifestyle, other lawyers, potential clients and type of practice.

### **a. Community**

About half of all lawyers in British Columbia work in the Lower Mainland. Even there, however, small firm practices vary greatly depending on whether the practice is downtown or in the suburbs. Practice in a small town or a rural area is also quite different.

Wherever you decide to work, consider your life outside the office. Where will you find activities that suit your interests? Will your family be happy? Will your spouse be able to find work? Do you want to live near your office? Are you prepared to commute?

### **b. Lawyers in the community**

How many lawyers are there already? In the year 2000 there were 8700 practising members of the Law Society of British Columbia. Of these, 6700 were insured, which means they were in private practice. The Law Society's website, [www.lawsociety.bc.ca](http://www.lawsociety.bc.ca), includes statistics on membership by district. The BC Lawyers Directory, published annually by the BC Branch of the Canadian Bar Association, [www.bccba.org](http://www.bccba.org), also includes a geographic section which lists all the lawyers practising in locations around the province, with their year of call. You may wish to call one or two lawyers practising in locations of interest to you to get some idea what practice is like in their area. You may also call the local Benchers for information and advice.

**c. Type of practice**

Which type of practice interests you? There are many demands for expertise throughout the province—but will you be able to build a specialised practice in any area? Some locations may not be suitable choices for the kind of law that most interests you. On the other hand, you may find great opportunities to build a niche for your area of expertise outside the major population centres.

**d. Potential clients**

Where are the clients? Do you know anyone in the area? Do you have family or friends in the town, who can introduce you to potential clients? If you are thinking of moving into a farming community, do you have interests in common with your potential clients? If you open in the middle of a city, do you have a source of clients who will be able to pick you out of the crowd?

BC STATS<sup>4</sup>, [www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca](http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca), is the central statistical agency of the BC Government and maintains information both for and about small business. You can obtain financial profiles on over 500 BC industries, as well as census tabulations providing detailed demographic profiles for all areas of the province. The business register details the number of business establishments by employment size and industry for each regional district.

**3. With whom will you practise?**

You may choose to become a sole practitioner or form a partnership. Either solely or as a partnership, you may choose to share space with other lawyers. These options are briefly discussed below.

**a. Sole practice**

A sole practitioner should be self-reliant, able to market herself or himself to potential clients and prepared to handle administrative details. If you despise administrative matters, you may not be happy as a sole practitioner. For a useful self-assessment guide, see *Have You Got What It Takes?*, Douglas A. Gray, Self-Counsel Press, 1993, North Vancouver, BC, [www.self-counsel.com](http://www.self-counsel.com).

There are myriad decisions to be made as a sole practitioner, not only when you first open your office, but daily. Who will you use as a process server? Should you hire a new staff member? What do you do if the photocopier breaks down? How do you train the receptionist? What system do you put in place to track GST requirements and

---

<sup>4</sup> BC Stats, Ministry of Management Services, 553 Superior Street, 1st Floor, P.O. Box 9410 Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, BC V8W 9V1; Tel: (250) 387-0327, Fax: (250) 387-0329.



payments? Are you adequately supervising the bookkeeper? How will you arrange coverage for your practice for those times when you are away from the office?

Among the advantages of becoming a sole practitioner:

- direct control of decision-making
- all profits to you
- work where and when you want
- more client contact
- no partners meetings, and
- flexibility.

Among the disadvantages:

- all administrative details are your responsibility
- lack of financial security
- no income-balancing with partners
- no one in your office to handle emergencies when you are absent
- isolation from other lawyers, and
- high overhead expense for equipment.

## **b. Partnership**

Partnership means a sharing of responsibilities, expenses and profits. Even if you have only one partner, that person may be the managing partner who will handle administrative matters and make day-to-day decisions. Partnerships should be considered as an interesting alternative to solo practice.

Do you and your partner have different friends and different interests so that you will attract different clients? Do you practise different kinds of law? Or will you both focus on one area of law and hope to become known for your skills in that area?

Will you share the profits equally? Will you divide the profits according to another formula? Do you expect to set billing quotas?

Is your proposed partner adequately financed? Presumably you are borrowing from the bank while you build your practice. Do you both have the ability to pay your share of expenses? Does your proposed partner have adequate collateral to satisfy the bank?

If you split up, who moves and who stays in the space? Who will get the phone numbers?

Personal expectations about the partnership should be discussed and communicated clearly before you make your decision. If your goal is to maintain a small firm, and

your prospective partner's goal is to have the firm grow as rapidly as possible, it will not be long before you have problems.

If you form a partnership, it is essential that a written partnership agreement be prepared with provisions that clearly state, at least, the financial terms such as payment of expenses, sharing of profits and losses, capital contributions, withdrawal, sharing of administrative duties, and payment of capital and income: see the partnership agreement in *Managing Your Law Firm*, published by the Continuing Legal Education Society of British Columbia ("CLE"), [www.cle.bc.ca/cle/publications/default.htm](http://www.cle.bc.ca/cle/publications/default.htm). You should discuss the length and timing of vacations, the type of outside activities such as politics the partners may engage in, and your personal and professional goals.

Among the advantages of partnership are:

- shared financial risk
- continuity of cash flow when you are on vacation or ill
- additional sources of capital and clients
- broader management base
- division of labour
- ability to discuss all files with your partner
- ability to provide clients with different areas of expertise, and
- sharing cost of associates and support staff.

Among the disadvantages are:

- divided authority
- hard to find suitable partners
- conflicts among partners
- liability for partners' actions, and
- less freedom to choose clients.

### **c. Space-sharing**

As a sole practitioner or as a partnership, consider the option of sharing space with other lawyers. There are tremendous benefits to space-sharing. The most obvious is the sharing of expenses: receptionist, bookkeeper, photocopier, boardroom, library, phone system and fax. When you first start out in your own practice, the overhead costs can be daunting, and sharing these expenses can mean a significant saving.

There are other, less obvious advantages to sharing space. You may share the burdens of administration with others — dealing with equipment suppliers, for example.

Do not underestimate the value of regular opportunities for discussion with colleagues. When there is a lawyer next door, you will have the benefit of another point of view on difficult points of law or practice.

You should have coverage of your practice during your absences, and the other lawyers may be a good source of work, as you each develop your separate client bases.

- What are the ethical and liability considerations that lawyers should have in mind when contemplating entering into a space-sharing arrangement with other lawyers?

Rules 6.1 and 6.2 of the *Professional Conduct Handbook*, passed in May, 1996, [www.lawsociety.bc.ca/library/frame\\_resource\\_handbook.html](http://www.lawsociety.bc.ca/library/frame_resource_handbook.html), say:

- 6.1 In Rules 6.1 to 6.3 and 7.1, “**sharing space**” means sharing office space with one or more other lawyers, but not practising or being held out to be practising in partnership or association with the other lawyer or lawyers.<sup>5</sup>
- 6.2 Unless all lawyers sharing space together agree that they will not act for clients adverse in interest to the client of any of the others,<sup>6</sup> each lawyer who is sharing space must disclose in writing to all of the lawyer's clients:
- (a) that an arrangement for sharing space exists,
  - (b) the identity of the lawyers who make up the firm acting for the client, and
  - (c) that lawyers sharing space with the firm are free to act for other clients who are adverse in interest to the client.<sup>7</sup>

Lawyers thus have the opportunity to demonstrate that they are functioning as separate law firms and to act for clients adverse in interest, first, by putting measures in place to

---

<sup>5</sup> Different rules apply when lawyers are held out as practising in partnership or association. See Chapter 13, Rule 6.

<sup>6</sup> Like other lawyers, those who share space must take all reasonable measures to ensure client confidentiality. Lawyers who do not wish to act for clients adverse in interest to clients of lawyers with whom they share space should establish an adequate conflicts check system.

In order both to ensure confidentiality and to avoid conflicts, a lawyer must have the consent of each client before disclosing any information about the client for the purpose of conflicts checks. Consent may be implied in some cases but, if there is any doubt, the best course is to obtain express consent.

<sup>7</sup> While disclosure is required of all lawyers sharing space who reserve the right to act for clients adverse in interest, disclosure is recommended for all lawyers sharing space, including those who agree not to act for clients adverse in interest to the clients of the lawyers with whom they share space.

ensure that confidential client information is not available to other lawyers in the shared office space, and, second, by alerting clients with respect to the office arrangements and the implications of those arrangements.

- Are there liability issues?

The *Professional Conduct Handbook*, Chapter 13, Rule 6, requires members in apparent partnerships to behave as if they were actual partners:

Any lawyer held out as practising in partnership or association with one or more lawyers shall be deemed to have the same professional responsibilities to the general public, other lawyers and to the Law Society, for the actions of any lawyer or lawyers with whom he or she is practising in an apparent partnership or association, as the lawyer would have if carrying on practice with such lawyer or lawyers in a partnership.

The *Partnership Act*, RSBC 1996 c.348, defines apparent partnership in this way:

s.16(1) A person who, by words spoken or written, or by conduct, represents himself or herself, or who knowingly allows himself or herself to be represented, as a partner in a particular firm is liable as a partner to anyone who has, on the faith of any such representation, given credit to the firm.

(2) Subsection (1) applies whether the representation has or has not been made or communicated to the person so giving credit by or with the knowledge of the apparent partner making the representation or allowing it to be made.

Some practice arrangements might lead to the practice being deemed an apparent partnership, even though the space-sharers intended otherwise. For example, the advertising material may connect individual practitioners together. As far as the clients are concerned, the arrangement does not pass a “reasonably informed person” test.

The actual passage of information may occur by discussions among lawyers, by poor physical security or by unrestricted access to client files and information. Passage of information may be inferred from the sharing of equipment, such as fax, photocopier, and computer; sharing of precedents; sharing of support staff and use of outside word-processing.

- What name can space-sharers use?

Rule 9 of Chapter 14 of the *Professional Conduct Handbook*, the marketing rule, specifies that lawyers may not use a firm name that is either contrary to the best interests of the public or to the maintenance of a high standard of professionalism. It

## Opening Your Law Office

may be inferred from Rule 9 that lawyers may not hold themselves out to be partners when such a relationship does not exist.

While there is no specific prohibition against a group which shares office space calling the practice “A, B, C & D,” this practice is not recommended. In the event that the name or letterhead of a law firm contributes to a holding out of partnership, and where a third party has relied on that representation, lawyers may be accountable for the same liabilities as if they had been in a partnership relationship.

Lawyers may avoid creating confusion by using separate names, stationery and business cards, and by listing themselves separately in directories. If space-sharers choose to use a group name, then it is recommended that clients be advised, in writing, about the non-partnership arrangement.

- Are space-sharers covered by insurance?

A sole practitioner who shares space with a lawyer being sued for negligence generally will be covered by the LSBC’s captive insurance policy as an “apparent partner.” However, if the damages claimed are in excess of the LSBC policy, the excess insurer of the negligent lawyer may deny coverage under the excess policy to the space-sharer, if the space-sharer was not identified on the application for excess insurance.

Lawyers in a space-sharing arrangement should advise their excess insurance brokers of the arrangement so that proper excess insurance can be obtained.

Also, space-sharers may not be aware of or have any control over the business activities of other lawyers in the office. Nevertheless, all lawyers in the space-sharing arrangement may be sued as “apparent partners,” but may not have coverage under the Law Society of British Columbia’s captive insurance policy because of the business exclusion in the policy.

Staff of the Law Society Insurance Department will answer questions about insurance coverage, and it is recommended that you call prior to deciding on the form your practice arrangements will take. (The Insurance Department has received a number of reports where liability arising from office-sharing arrangements forms an integral part of the claim.)

Among the issues to be considered when forming a space-sharing group are:

- How will you ensure that your clients are aware your group is not a partnership?
- How will the telephone be answered? How will messages be taken?
- Which expenses will be shared?
- How will expenses be allocated?
- How will expenses be monitored?
- How will decisions be made about equipment and staff?

- Who will perform administrative duties?
- What is included in common amenities — e.g., does each lawyer purchase his or her own supplies, will precedents be shared?
- Will there be any requirements for guarantees on equipment leases?

Among the advantages of space-sharing are:

- sharing of overhead expenses, especially equipment
- sharing of administrative details
- collegiality
- sharing of staff
- coverage during your absences, and
- possibility of referrals.

Among the disadvantages are:

- possible uncertainty by clients about your status and potential liability for space-sharers' errors
- the potential for conflicts and non-compliance with Law Society Rules
- instability
- lack of control over other tenants or associates, and
- lack of control over the receptionist, the decoration, and the upkeep of the shared spaces.

#### **4. How will you earn your income?**

Of course you have no crystal ball. You cannot know whether you will be able to build a practice that will pay its way, or when. But you should have a plan — you should map out potential sources of work and set goals for yourself.

Two traditional ways of obtaining work are through legal aid referrals and the Canadian Bar Association's Lawyer Referral roster. If you intend to do the kind of work for which such referrals are available, make some enquiry about whether that work is available in your location.

These can be significant sources of clients in some practice areas and some locations, but it would be unwise to rely on them too heavily.



**3. Find space.**

**a. How much space?**

The nature of your practice affects your space requirements. For example, a real estate practice, which requires more support staff and generates more paper than criminal practice, will require more space. A rule of thumb you might follow when looking at space is that, on average, you will need 400 to 600 square feet per lawyer, which includes 150 square feet for the lawyer, 150 to 200 square feet for a secretary, and 100 to 200 square feet for reception, photocopier, fax, stationery and file storage.

**b. Where do you look for information about office space?**

You might begin with the bulletin board in the lawyers' lounge at the courthouse. Then look in your local newspaper and the *Advocate*. Ask a real estate agent. If you have found a building you are interested in, call the building's owner. You might send a letter to the tenants of the building, who may be interested in subletting a portion of their space.

**c. Some questions to ask:**

- Will the clients go there?
- Is the building easily accessible?
- Is it on a bus route?
- Is parking available?
- Is there an elevator?
- Will you be able to attract staff?
- Is there someplace nearby to have lunch?
- Is it near the courthouse?
- Is it near a bank?
- Are there other lawyers nearby?
- Is there air-conditioning and is it shut down on the weekends?
- Can you control the thermostat for your own office?
- Can you place a sign on the outside of the building as well as in the lobby?
- Does the space need renovation?
- What term is offered?



**d. Home office**

You may wish to work out of a home office.<sup>8</sup> Some areas of practice may be particularly well-suited to working at home and some clients will prefer the relative informality of a home office. Many small-business people have home offices, which have increased with the advances in office technology. And, if you are working part-time, the advantages of a home office are obvious—no rent, little overhead, and a business deduction for a share of your home expenses.

Consider these issues:

- the image you want to convey
- a separation from personal space in the home
- confidentiality for client files
- the safety of your family

Think about your goals, both short term and long term. Is working at home a short-term plan until you are established enough to afford an office? Does your image of yourself as a lawyer require certain kinds of surroundings? Can you work in the distractions of your home?

Walk through your home as if you were a client. Make sure your designated space for the office is close to the entrance, appears to be (and is) used only for business and is decorated accordingly. Ensure that the office looks professional, is well-defined physically, and is secure and quiet.

You may wish to consider renting a different space in which to meet your clients, while doing the rest of your work from your home.

The primary advantage to setting up your business out of your home is the lower overhead you can expect. Another advantage is the ability to meet family responsibilities while practising law. If you intend to blend child care with the practice of law, you should think about such issues as noise from other parts of the house. You may wish to install solid core doors, for example, and make family rules about telephone lines and privacy.

One of your most important concerns will be whether your local zoning regulations permit you to operate a business from your home. There may be sign restrictions, business telephone restrictions, or parking restrictions in your area. Check with your local authority before making any decisions.

---

<sup>8</sup> See “Home Alone: Part-Time, Home-Based Solo Law Practice,” Erica Pascal, in *Flying Solo*, note 3.

If you do decide on a home office, be sure to discipline yourself to meet regularly with other lawyers in some forum where you can exchange ideas and information. This is advisable for every sole practitioner.

#### **4. Find an accountant.**

To find an accountant, ask your colleagues and your former firm or principal. It is important to find an accountant who is familiar with lawyers' offices, since the Law Society's trust accounting requirements are so specific. The accountant should have experience in monthly trust reconciliations and the inspection of books and records for the Trust Report (replacing the Accountant's Report/Form 47 and Form 48 Statutory Declaration in 2004).

##### **a. Accountant's fees**

Discuss with the accountant approximately what the fees will be for the preparation of year-end financial statements and your tax returns.

##### **b. Accounting system**

Seek the accountant's advice about which accounting system you should use. Obtain the accountant's assistance in setting up that system. You may also obtain advice from the Law Society about computerised<sup>9</sup> and manual accounting systems, about bookkeeping and about compliance with the accounting rules set out in the *Members' Manual*. The second part of "Getting Started" (see accompanying article, Getting Started: Trust Accounting) includes information about accounting systems.

##### **c. Incorporation**

Discuss with your accountant whether you should practise as a law corporation. See *Benchers' Bulletin*, April, 1994 and May-June, 1994 concerning incorporation of law practices.

The *Legal Profession Act*, Part 9, ss. 80-84, allows a law corporation to carry on the business of providing legal services to the public through one or more persons, each of whom is a member of the Law Society. You must first obtain the consent of the Law Society to the proposed name, and after the company is incorporated, apply to the Law Society for a corporate permit. For advice about setting up the law corporation, you may also call the Law Society.

Under the *Income Tax Act*, tax advantages may be available in certain circumstances to an individual who derives income through a corporation rather than directly from a law practice operated in his or her name. A law corporation may pay tax at a

---

<sup>9</sup> Dave Bilinsky, Practice Management Advisor, (604) 669-2533, or toll free at 1-800-903-5300, or [dbilinsky@lsbc.org](mailto:dbilinsky@lsbc.org).

preferential rate, and incorporation may be beneficial for income deferral for tax purposes, income-splitting and utilisation of the capital gains exemption, although this latter benefit has been severely restricted.

As the Law Society permits non-voting participating shares of a law corporation to be held by a lawyer's spouse and children, these family members who are not active in the practice are able to share a portion of the corporation's after-tax income by receiving dividends on shares that they directly or indirectly own. If these family members are in a low tax bracket and the corporation is properly structured, the family as a whole will pay less tax than if the lawyer had earned all the income personally.<sup>10</sup>

It should be noted that incorporation does not protect you from claims of solicitor's negligence.

**d. Management company**

You may wish to incorporate a management company, which will be the lessee of the space. A management company may be useful to protect tangible assets of the law practice, such as computers and furniture, from the claims of potential creditors of the practice, and to split income with low tax rate family members.<sup>11</sup> Consult your accountant about whether a management company would be beneficial to you.

**5. Choose your firm's name.**

Your firm name must not mislead or communicate false impressions to clients or the general public. While Rule 10 of Chapter 14 in the *Professional Conduct Handbook* states that only members in good standing may be included on firm letterhead (with exceptions who must be specifically described), there is no rule that limits the firm's name to the surname of a sole proprietor or partner. You may give your firm a name such as "The XYZ Street Law Group," as long as the name does not offend Chapter 14. If you intend to use such a name, you are asked to seek advice from the Law Society to ensure that the name does not breach rules 4 and 4.1 of Chapter 14.

If you intend to incorporate, you must apply to the Law Society for approval of the corporate name (Rule 9-2 of the Law Society Rules).

The Ethics Committee has said a member will be prohibited from using a law corporation name that refers to a geographic location within British Columbia if the name refers to the member's geographical area. . .

---

<sup>10</sup> David R. Davies, "Tax Planning Issues for Law Practices," in *Tax for the Non-Specialist-1996*, Continuing Legal Education, February 1996.

<sup>11</sup> See note 10.

A sole practitioner may refer to his or her firm as “A & Company.”<sup>12</sup>

## **6. Obtain financing.**

Unless you have your own source of funds, you must obtain financing to run your office. Having prepared a budget and a business plan, looked at space, and met with an accountant, you are prepared to approach potential lenders.

Bear in mind that you will need at least two bank accounts: a general account and a trust account. The general account is your account for money belonging to your practice, and the trust account is for money belonging to your clients. Your choice of lender may have a significant impact on where you place your accounts.

You may borrow from any lender you choose, including a bank, trust company, credit union or your family. As far as the Law Society is concerned, a general account may be placed with any bank, trust company or credit union. However, your lender will usually expect your general account to be kept at the lending institution.

Your trust account, on the other hand, must be placed only in a designated savings institution (see Rules 3-49 to 3-52 of the [Law Society Rules](#)).

For the sake of convenience, therefore, you may wish to choose as your lender a designated savings institution, so that you can keep your accounts in the same place. Especially when you are starting a practice, and if you have part-time or no staff, you will find it less time-consuming to do all of your banking in one place.

Consider whether the institution may be a source of business for you. Discuss that possibility with the loans officer or manager.

The type of financing that you may be considering will include, first, a loan at a fixed rate, or a fixed loan at a variable rate (usually to pay for start-up costs) and, second, a line of credit at some percentage over prime rate to cover your monthly operating deficits.

The lender will expect you to provide, in addition to your budget proposal, a statement of your assets and liabilities. If you have no assets, the lender may require a guarantor before agreeing to lend you any money.

## **7. Secure space.**

Once you have obtained financing, you can enter into lease negotiations for the space you have chosen.

When entering into negotiations, be conscious of the following:

---

<sup>12</sup> Professional Standards (now Ethics) Committee minutes, February 23, 1995.

- what is the difference between net and gross rent per foot?
- what services will the landlord provide with the space?
- will the landlord provide a renovation allowance?
- how many parking spaces are included?
- what security is provided and during what hours?
- what arrangements must be made for evening and weekend access?
- is an option available for additional space?
- what is the condition of the carpet and walls, and will the landlord pay for cleaning?
- where are telephone, electrical and computer outlets located and will the landlord pay to move them?
- what is the length of lease and is there an option to renew?
- what quality and frequency of building maintenance is provided?
- is your office included in building maintenance?
- are the partition walls sufficient for privacy?

## **8. Consider the Rules of Conduct.**

You may be offered space in a client's premises or by a landlord who wants to enter into an arrangement that includes referrals between you for some kinds of business.

Exercise great caution when considering potential referrals from your landlord, or from any subtenants you may have, if there is any potential impact on rent payments as the result of referrals.

*The Professional Conduct Handbook*, Chapter 9, Rule 2 says that — A lawyer must not:

- (a) pay any remuneration to a person, other than another lawyer, in exchange for that person referring a client to the lawyer, or
- (b) act for a client if, to the lawyer's knowledge, a person other than another lawyer was paid any remuneration by the client in exchange for being referred to the lawyer.

Rule 6 says "A lawyer must not split, share or divide a client's fee with any person other than another lawyer."

A client may offer you rental or use of an office, perhaps with secretarial time or receptionist services. Again, exercise caution.

Chapter 12, Rule 1 of the *Professional Conduct Handbook* says that a lawyer shall "maintain personal and actual control and management of each of the lawyer's offices" and "maintain direct supervision over each non-lawyer staff member."

This may mean, for example, if you wish to enter into a contract with a client whereby you are in-house counsel for that client for some part of the week, you may not be able to carry on a private practice in that client's office. There must be a confidential environment with regard to clients.

The Ethics Committee has said that the means by which a lawyer complies with the rule are up to the lawyer, but the lawyer must address the issue of physical arrangements, such as supervision over a shared receptionist (Professional Standards (now Ethics) Committee minutes, November 9, 1992).

## **9. Arrange telephone and other communication services.**

### **a. The telephone and fax numbers**

The first call to make, after you are sure you know where your office will be, should be to the telephone company. Order your telephone number immediately and arrange for the installation date.

You will likely want a separate telephone number for your fax machine, and a third number for your computer modem. If you intend to have two functions share a number, it would be preferable to have the modem and the fax on one line and keep a separate office telephone number.

### **b. Long distance carriers and cost recovery systems**

There are a number of long distance carriers and discount packages to explore. If you expect to have a busy practice immediately, you may want to install a cost recovery or client attribution system for your long distance calls.

### **c. Some questions to ask**

When you meet with the telephone company representative, these are some important questions:

- What will your monthly charges be?
- What services and bundles are available?
- Are you in time for the next telephone book?
- If you add bold type or extra names in the white pages listings, what is the cost?
- What is the deadline for yellow pages advertising?
- What is the cost of yellow pages listings?

**d. Marketing**

Before you make any decision about yellow pages advertising, be sure your proposed ad complies with the marketing rules set out in Chapter 14 of The Professional Conduct Handbook:

[www.lawsociety.bc.ca/library/frame\\_resource\\_handbook.html](http://www.lawsociety.bc.ca/library/frame_resource_handbook.html).

**e. Answering the telephone**

While you are thinking about the telephone, consider how you intend to have the telephone answered. If you will not have full-time staff, consider voice mail as an alternative. Even if you have a full-time secretary or assistant, who will answer the phone when the secretary is at lunch or making your bank deposits? Some form of phone answering is essential during every working day, if you wish to have credibility with both existing and prospective clients. For interesting comments on how to manage your voice-mail system, see “Law Office Design and General Office Functions,” Chapter 11 in *Managing Your Law Firm*, ed. J. Vogt, Continuing Legal Education, updated to June 2000. This manual, written specifically for British Columbia lawyers, is full of valuable information and is essential reading for any lawyer planning to open a practice, or participating in the management of an office, large or small. Many of the points made in this article are discussed in considerable detail in the manual.

**10. Obtain Internet Service.**

You will need e-mail at the least, and access to the Internet will become more and more important to law practice. You will not only communicate with clients, government registries, and court services by e-mail, but will also use the Internet for legal and general research. See the [Benchers’ Bulletin](#), 2004 No. 2 for recent developments with filing documents on-line, a mandatory requirement in many situations. Lawyers can obtain access to the Internet via cable-modem access or ADSL, (available from Telus). Either is faster than conventional dial-up service.

**11. Notify the Law Society.**

It is now time to notify the Law Society of British Columbia, in writing, of your intended firm name, address, telephone and fax numbers, type of firm, names of partners and employed lawyers, and date of opening. If this is a successor to another firm, include that information. Write to the Member Information Group at the Law Society (see [www.lawsociety.bc.ca/contact/frame\\_contact.html](http://www.lawsociety.bc.ca/contact/frame_contact.html) for further information). If you inform the Law Society of your Trust Report (replacing the Accountant’s Report/Form 47 and Form 48) filing period for the practice, the Member Information Group will send a filing package at least 90 days before yourReport is due. See

[www.lawsociety.bc.ca/library/frame\\_resource\\_forms.html](http://www.lawsociety.bc.ca/library/frame_resource_forms.html) for forms available on the Law Society website.

If you have previously been an employee at a law firm, bear in mind that you will now be responsible to pay your own practice and insurance fees, and that these fees are payable in December and June. For information, contact the Member Information Group at the Law Society.

## **12. Obtain insurance.**

Your insurance needs fall into two categories: professional liability insurance and everything else.

In order to practise in British Columbia, you will pay fees<sup>13</sup> to the Law Society's Captive Insurance Company for the compulsory professional liability insurance, which provides \$1,000,000 insurance for every lawyer.

In addition, you may obtain excess liability insurance, which is not arranged through the Law Society. You may, however, obtain information about excess insurance from Margrett George, the Insurance Department's Program Administrator, or from the Member Information Group.

Other than your professional liability insurance, you should consider having a tenant's policy, disability insurance, business interruption insurance and important papers insurance.

## **13. Comply with local business requirements.**

You may need to obtain a local business licence, which requires payment of a small fee to your local licensing authority. If you are located in an incorporated municipality, obtain a business licence from the municipal business licence office. If you intend to practise out of a space not previously used for professional offices, check with the municipality; if you locate in an unincorporated area, check with the regional district to ensure conformity with zoning regulations.

You do not need to register your business in BC if you operate it in your own personal name as a sole proprietor. If you are going to operate under a business name as a sole proprietorship, partnership or limited company, register with the provincial Registrar of Companies. A registration package may be obtained from any government agent office. Allow at least seven days for your name search and registration (Ministry of Finance,

---

<sup>13</sup> For the 2006 practice year, insurance fees for compulsory professional liability insurance are \$1,500.00 for full-time and \$750.00 for part-time practice, plus GST. Practice fees are \$825.00, plus *Advocate* subscription \$27.50, (equivalent to), BC Courthouse Library Society fee \$160.00, Lawyers Assistance Program fee \$53.00, and Special Compensation Fund Assessment \$600.00, for a total of \$1,665.50, plus GST.



Corporate and Personal Property Registry, 2nd Floor, 940 Blanshard Street, Victoria, BC V8W 3E6; Tel: (250) 387-7848; Fax: (250) 356-8923; direct telephone number to the Incorporation Unit in Victoria from Vancouver is 775-1041; web information is at [www.fin.gov.bc.ca/registries/corppg/](http://www.fin.gov.bc.ca/registries/corppg/)). Effective March 29, 2004, “all customers will be able to file some forms on the Internet using Corporate Online. It will be mandatory that filings that are available online are submitted electronically. This applies to all companies in B.C. regardless of their size.”

#### **14. Open bank accounts.**

##### **a. Cheques and deposit slips**

When you open your general account, your bank, trust company or credit union will provide you with a deposit book where you will keep a record of your deposits. You may receive some cheques from your bank to begin with, but it is generally up to you to obtain cheques for your firm’s use. Some accounting systems require certain specific cheques to be purchased with their systems, e.g., a one-write system will require cheques which fit on to that system’s ledger books and ledger cards. Some computerised systems also use specific kinds of cheques and deposit slips. Your decision about banking documents should be made in conjunction with your decision about your accounting system.

It is a good idea to obtain different coloured cheques for your pooled trust account and your general account, so that there will be less chance of you writing a cheque on the wrong account.

##### **b. Statements**

Discuss with your bank the format of the bank statements you will receive each month. When the bank statement is received, you will be checking off the cleared cheques against those written for the month and the deposits against those recorded in your deposit book. Most bank statements have a simple chart and formula on the back of the statement that will assist you to reconcile the statement. You should plan to review the monthly statements and cancelled cheques and not leave sole responsibility for this task to a staff person.

##### **c. Law Foundation interest**

When you make arrangements to open your trust account, provide the bank, credit union or trust company with a letter directing it to pay all interest from your pooled trust accounts to the Law Foundation, as required by the Law Society Rules. A form of letter can be found in the **accompanying Trust Accounting article**.

## **15. Make your purchases.**

The following is a checklist of equipment you will need to purchase, lease, borrow or make arrangements to have access to. If you intend to become a tenant of an existing firm, you may be able to negotiate use of most of the major equipment listed, to be included as part of your rent. Inquire about all equipment—for example, sometimes a firm will have extra dictating machines, which it may be willing to lend you at no cost.

### **a. Major equipment**

- Telephone system
- Computer(s) and modem
- Word-processing software
- Accounting system
- Office organisation software—your software should include time-keeping and conflict-checking systems, and To Do list capability.
- Consider a dictating machine and transcriber — some people find that machine dictation is often faster than typing or writing, and can provide good use of time and labour. It is very efficient to dictate short memos, original documents, correspondence, and billing information as the need arises, and provide tapes to your secretary as they are completed. If you intend to contract for secretarial services outside your office, ensure that your system is compatible with your secretary's system.
- Photocopier—there is a wide range of options, and the cost varies enormously. Your purchase or lease of a photocopier will require considerable attention—allow yourself enough time to talk with several sales representatives about your choices. Your decision will depend partly on how many copies you make each month, and the features you need in your practice. Many options are available, including copier-printers that can also fax and scan documents to create electronic files.
- Typewriter, possibly—e.g., if your practice requires forms or labels that you do not create on your computer
- Fax—either stand-alone, or as a component of other electronic equipment
- Printer
- Postage meter
- Calculator with paper roll

### **b. Library**

- Law Society Members' Manual
- Practice Checklists Manual
- CLE Practice Manuals ([www.cle.bc.ca/](http://www.cle.bc.ca/))

- TLA Practice Manuals ([www.tlabc.org/](http://www.tlabc.org/))
- Important texts in your practice areas
- Quick Law access ([www.lexisnexis.ca/index.php](http://www.lexisnexis.ca/index.php))
- BC Online access ([www.bconline.gov.bc.ca/](http://www.bconline.gov.bc.ca/))

**c. Furniture**

There are many used furniture stores, auction houses and liquidators where you can purchase furniture and equipment at substantial savings. Check the ads in your local newspaper. When choosing your own desk and chair, look for a large desk with drawers and a chair with good back support on casters to allow you to move around freely.

- Desk
- Executive chair
- Clients' chairs—2 to 4, straight backed
- Credenza
- Secretary's desk with return for computer and space for printer
- Secretary's chair—if possible, your secretary should participate in choosing the chair
- Bookshelves
- Filing cabinet—lateral cabinets cost more but take less space and are more attractive
- Reception chairs—3 or 4
- Reception table—for magazines
- Coat rack or hooks
- Art (there may be some tax advantages to the acquisition of Canadian art—check with your accountant)
- Plants
- Umbrella stand

**d. Office supplies**

The following list is a general guide, and your workstyle will determine some of your choices. For example, instead of a Rolodex you might prefer a system where you have an electronic contacts file available to all those who may need to have access and editing privileges. You may want a paper option available as well.

- Before making any purchases, note that the CBA Member Services has a list of suppliers who offer discounts to lawyers. Check the *BC Lawyers Directory* for the list.

- Index cards
- Index boxes
- Files, thin
- Files, accordion
- Dividers
- Binders
- Record books
- Acco-fasteners
- Postage stamps
- Dictating tapes
- Stapler
- Staples
- Staple remover
- Mail trays
- Pens, pencils
- Erasers
- White-out
- Wastepaper baskets
- Rubber bands
- Rubber stamps— “DRAFT,” “COPY,” “DEPOSIT TO ACCOUNT,” “ADMISSION OF SERVICE,” “DATE RECEIVED”
- Scissors
- Letter opener
- Paper clips, various
- Rolodex, or other method for quick access to contacts
- 3-hole punch
- 2-hole punch
- Rulers

**e. Stationery**

- Paper for photocopier, fax & printer
- Envelopes, 4” x 9 ½”, 9” x 11½” & 9” x 15”
- Business cards
- 3-ring paper

- Sticky notes (Post-its)
- Desk calendars
- Pocket diaries
- Legal seals
- Adhesive labels
- Telephone memo pads

**f. Miscellaneous**

- *CBA BC Lawyers Directory*
- riefcase
- Coffee machine
- Water pitcher
- Glasses and cups
- Sign. If you intend to put a sign on the outside of your building, order it as soon as possible. If the landlord has a signboard in the lobby, ensure that your name has been added by your opening day.
- Magazine subscriptions for your reception area

**16. Decide on staff.**

**a. Hiring**

While you are preparing to open your office, you may be advertising for and hiring staff. You will have to decide whether you want to begin without an assistant, if you are just starting in practice. If you are moving your practice from a large firm, consider whether your current assistant, if she or he is willing to move with you, understands what the job requirements will be.

In a small firm, assistants will be called upon to do administrative work which they may never have done in large firms. Your assistant should be prepared to deal with suppliers, perhaps do bookkeeping, the photocopying, waiting at the fax machine, walking to the bank, and taking mail to the post office, for example.

For some employees who have not performed these functions previously, this new role may be interesting. Others may find it difficult to take on administrative or less interesting duties than their former responsibilities. Discuss this with potential employees.

When you are considering the work staff—or you—will be doing, do not practise false economy. For example, your time, or an assistant's time, is not well-spent waiting in line at a registry office to file documents. For a relatively small disbursement, registry

agents will file your documents. And, if you begin by doing your own administrative work, be alert to re-examine whether your time is well-spent carrying out these tasks, and when it is time to delegate.

**b. Salaries**

When you plan your budget, consider your obligations to pay employment insurance premiums, Canadian Pension Plan contributions, Workers' Compensation premiums, and vacations (when you will either have to pay temporary staff or operate without a secretary). (See *Managing Your Law Firm*, referred to in point 9 above.)

**17. Start to market your services.**

The opening of your office is a very good time to send announcements to everybody you know. Chapter 14 of the *Professional Conduct Handbook* sets out the rules that govern marketing of legal services.

You may also place a newspaper announcement, but consider whether this is a good use of your marketing dollar.

Do tell everyone you know that you will be opening your office. Plan an opening party. Let your prospective neighbours know about you and invite them to the opening party. Take your bank manager for lunch and invite him or her to the opening.

Join the appropriate sections of the CBA and attend the meetings. Especially if you are starting in practice, you should get to know as many lawyers as possible. Most lawyers from time to time refer out files that fall outside their area of expertise, offer low compensation or present a conflict. As you establish yourself, you will obtain better files from those same lawyers. It is important to remember, however, that when a client who has been referred to you by another lawyer for a single matter asks you to handle additional matters, you should decline, and advise that client to go back to the referring lawyer.

Place your name on the Canadian Bar Association's Lawyer Referral Service list and contact the Legal Services Society office in your area if you would like to do legal aid work.

Several companies will design and launch a website for small firms, and you should consider plans for a website as a marketing option.

**C. Organise Your Office Before Opening the Doors**

**1. Set up your systems.**

You will need the following systems:

- a) **Filing system** – See *Managing Your Law Firm*, chapter 16, “Opening and Maintaining Client Files.” Consider practice management software, which manages the information, people, schedules, communications, and documents on your client files. See, for example, Amicus Attorney, [www.amicusattorney.com](http://www.amicusattorney.com), which schedules appointments, manages to-do lists and limitation reminders, tracks phone calls, and records billable time; or Time-Matters, [www.timematters.com](http://www.timematters.com). Ask for demo CD-ROMS.)
- b) **Bring-forward system** – This may also be called a Limitation System, a Calendaring System, a Diary System or a Reminder System. By whatever name it is called, it is crucial to the proper operation of your practice. A system consists of a main system and at least one secondary system. If you have your main bring-forward system computerised, it is strongly suggested that you also use a manual system. That may be your desk or pocket diary, your secretary’s diary or both. If you do not have your main bring-forward system computerised, then it is suggested that you use an index card system as your main system, and again use your desk or pocket diary as the 2<sup>nd</sup> system.

Many well-organised offices use three reminder systems, having some combination of the systems referred to here, and in addition a central office calendar, either computerised or manual.

- c) Conflicts system
- d) Time-keeping system
- e) Accounting system

Once you have met with your accountant and chosen your accounting system, you may also need:

- Deposit books
- Cheque books
- Ledger cards
- Client cards, and
- Disbursement books.

## 2. Create letterhead.

Purchasing letterhead from a stationer is expensive. Although your image is important, and you may therefore want colour, raised print or other specialised looks on stationery, there is a good alternative to having letterhead printed. Computers have a wide choice of printing styles

and fonts that allow you to create your own letterhead, letter by letter, which will cost you a fraction of printed stationery. Another advantage is that the letterhead can be changed instantly and you will not have the problem lawyers formerly had of using expensive embossed paper for scrap because names or addresses on the letterhead changed.

**3. Comply with provincial government requirements.<sup>14</sup>**

**a. Provincial Sales Tax (called the Social Service Tax)**

You must register with the Consumer Taxation Branch, Ministry of Provincial Revenue, and collect social service tax on legal services. The Branch will issue you a Certificate of Registration and provide information on your responsibilities. To register, contact the Ministry of Provincial Revenue, Consumer Taxation Branch at (250) 387-0636 or 800-360 West Georgia Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 6B2, Tel: (604) 660-4524, or [www.rev.gov.bc.ca/ctb/](http://www.rev.gov.bc.ca/ctb/). If you are in BC, you may call toll-free to Enquiry BC at 1 800 663-7867.

**b. Workers' Compensation Board**

All law firms that employ any “workers” (which would include associate lawyers, articulated students, legal assistants, and clerical and other support staff) must register with the WCB as an “employer.” An unincorporated sole proprietor or partner of a law firm is not considered to be a worker of the firm for workers’ compensation purposes, but may register voluntarily.

A sole practitioner who is incorporated is considered to be a “worker” and the law corporation is the “employer.” Accordingly, the law corporation must register, and coverage for the sole practitioner is mandatory. (A March 1995 decision of the WCB Appeal Division denied the Law Society’s argument that incorporated sole practitioners and partners should not be subject to mandatory WCB coverage (11 WCR 327, 95-0320).)

**4. Comply with federal government requirements.**

**a. Income Tax**

If you have one or more employees, you will need an employer account number for remitting employees’ federal and provincial income tax deductions, employment insurance premiums and Canada Pension Plan contributions. Contact the Canada

---

<sup>14</sup> For further small business resources, see **Starting Up Your Business** at: [www.cse.gov.bc.ca/ProgramsAndServices/BusinessServices/Business\\_Information\\_&\\_Services/startup.htm](http://www.cse.gov.bc.ca/ProgramsAndServices/BusinessServices/Business_Information_&_Services/startup.htm), Ministry of Small Business and Economic Development; Tel: (604) 775-5525 or toll-free 1-800-667-2272.



Revenue Agency and ask for an Employer's Guide. To obtain an Employer's Guide, to register by phone, or for information, call the Canada Revenue Agency, 1-800-959-5525; or go to [www.ccra-adrc.gc.ca](http://www.ccra-adrc.gc.ca) (general); [www.ccra-adrc.gc.ca/E/pub/tg/t4001/README.html](http://www.ccra-adrc.gc.ca/E/pub/tg/t4001/README.html) (Employer's Guide).

**b. Federal Goods and Services Tax (GST)**

If your annual revenue will exceed \$30,000, you are required to register for the GST. If you do not register, you may not charge GST to your clients, nor can you receive a refund for the GST paid on your business purchases. The Law Society published "The GST Update" with the *Benchers' Bulletin*, in 1990 and 1991. For more details and a registration kit, contact the Canada Revenue Agency ([www.ccra-adrc.gc.ca](http://www.ccra-adrc.gc.ca).)

**5. Train your staff.**

A good source of information on training staff is the chapter on Human Resources in *Managing Your Law Firm* published by CLE.

**D. Where to Find Help**

There are a number of sources available to assist you in your practice.

Felicia S. Folk (the author of these materials) was a Practice Advisor at the time of writing. Contact a current Practice Advisor if you have questions. Phone (604) 669-2533, or toll free (BC only) at 1-800-903-5300.

The Canadian Bar Association, BC Branch, also offers a Practice Advisory service—lists of lawyers around the province with expertise in certain areas of law who are prepared to assist other lawyers as a service to the profession. The Practice Advisory Panels are listed in the *BC Lawyers Telephone, Fax & Services Directory*, published by the BC Branch. For further information, call the CBA at (604) 687-3404, or go to [www.bccba.org](http://www.bccba.org). The Law Office Management Section of the CBA meets regularly.

The Continuing Legal Education Society of British Columbia offers law office management courses. Call Continuing Legal Education at 1-800-663-0437, or go to [www.cle.bc.ca](http://www.cle.bc.ca).

Perhaps the best source of help when you are planning to open your own office is other lawyers who have been through the experience. You will find many lawyers not only willing but happy to talk with you about their experiences, and it is recommended that you spend some time having those conversations before embarking on your own venture.

In addition, prepare yourself by consulting other publications written for the lawyer opening a practice.

## Suggested reading list

**Flying Solo**, Canadian Bar Association Young Lawyers' Conference, 1999, available from the CBA, 500 - 865 Carling Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5S8, 1-800-267-8860, [info@cba.org](mailto:info@cba.org), [www.cba.org](http://www.cba.org)

**Going it Alone—A Start up Guide for the Sole Practitioner**, Wendy E. Oughtred, Canada Law Book Inc., Ontario, 1995

**How to Manage Your Law Office**, Altman, Weil, Pensa Inc., New York: Matthew Bender & Co., 1996

*Managing Your Law Firm*, Jonathan Vogt, ed., Continuing Legal Education Society of BC, 2000; written by and for British Columbia lawyers and legal administrators, includes a lengthy reading list

**So You've Been Invited to Become a Partner! A Canadian Bar Association Guide to Legal Partnership in Canada**, Canadian Bar Association, 1997, available from the CBA, 500 - 865 Carling Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5S8, 1-800-267-8860, [info@cba.org](mailto:info@cba.org), [www.cba.org](http://www.cba.org)

The following are published by the American Bar Association, Section of Law Practice Management, and available from ABA Publishing, 750 N. Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60611, [www.abanet.org/abapubs](http://www.abanet.org/abapubs):

**Flying Solo—A Survival Guide for the Solo Lawyer**, Joel Bennet, ed., 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1994

**Getting Started: Basics for a Successful Law Firm—a Law Firm Partnership Guide**, Arthur G. Greene, ed., 1996

**How to Start & Build a Law Practice**, Jay G. Foonberg, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., 1999

**Law Office Staff Manual for Solos and Small Law Firms**, Demetrios Dimitriou, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2000

**Running a Law Practice on a Shoestring**, Theda C. Snyder, 1997

**Survival Skills for Practicing Lawyers—Best Articles from Law Practice Management Magazine**, Theodore P. Orenstein, ed., 1993

## Online Resources

American Bar Association Publishing Index, Law Office Management and Technology: [www.abanet.org/abapubs/lawoffice.html](http://www.abanet.org/abapubs/lawoffice.html)

Altman, Weil, Inc. website: [www.altmanweil.com](http://www.altmanweil.com)

## Opening Your Law Office

Judith Bowers' Law List—an excellent resource from a British Columbia lawyer:  
[www.cugini.net/law/bowers.html](http://www.cugini.net/law/bowers.html)

ABA's Law Practice Management website: [www.abanet.org/lpm/](http://www.abanet.org/lpm/).

Lawyers' Professional Indemnity Company (LPIC) (Ontario) website: [www.lawpro.ca](http://www.lawpro.ca) and  
[www.practicepro.ca/practice](http://www.practicepro.ca/practice)