

PARALEGALS CONNECT

§§§ QUARTERLY MAGAZINE §§§

Fourth Quarter

December 2022

Issue No. 18



Meet our New Affiliate Partner: Weber Legal Nurse Consulting, Inc.



WEBER LEGAL
NURSE CONSULTING INC.



Medical records are frequently complex and time consuming. This is especially true if you do not have a medical background. Personal injury or workers' compensation attorneys likely have specific knowledge of medical conditions as do insurance professionals. However, if a patient faces a rare medical condition or has a complex medical history, hiring a nurse consultant can enhance your understanding and decision-making.

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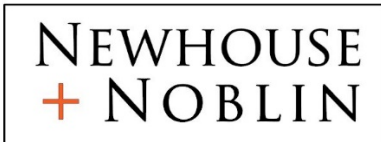
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eTS
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ABOUT AUTHOR

Hi, I'm Holly A. Sheriff, an experienced paralegal, career & life coach. My mission in life is to help legal professionals be more successful and happier, using the quickest, most efficient path possible.

My clients experience amazing improvements in their productivity, time management, motivation, leadership skills, flexibility, goal attainment, creativity, stress reduction, and work/life balance.

Helping attorneys & paralegals scale, grow, & maintain success is my team's goal. If you are an attorney or a paralegal wanting to advance your professional, business, or life development my team & I want to help you.

Connect & chat with me today!

Holly A. Sheriff
MSLS, MCC, CCC, PCC, LPCC, CPP
Founding member of Best Virtual Paralegal LLC

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MEET THE FOUNDER OF PARALEGALS CONNECT

Crystal Cornett is the busy woman behind the scenes at Paralegals Connect. She works hard to keep our groups a professional and helpful social media platform. Crystal is constantly creating ideas to help paralegals, future paralegals, and future attorneys to succeed in the legal industry!

Paralegals Connect was created in 2013 by Crystal Cornett and has grown significantly since that time. Our groups provide information and support at every stage of your legal career.

Crystal Cornett, Founder of Paralegals Connect

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Ccornett@nnlegalsearch.com

[Phone/Text 832-696-9315](tel:832-696-9315)



Crystal is a Paralegal with over 18-years of experience in the legal industry. She earned her Paralegal Certificate from the University of Houston in March 2006. Crystal received her degree from Center for Advanced Legal Studies in 2010. She is a member of the Lambda Epsilon Chi National Honor Society for Paralegal / Legal Assistant Studies (LEX).

Crystal has practiced in Family Law, Elder Law, Probate, Guardianships, Health Law, Social Security, heavy litigation in Intellectual Property and Bankruptcy, and residential and commercial Real Estate. Crystal also serves on the Program Advisory Committee (PAC) for Center for Advanced Legal Studies.

In February 2022, Crystal resigned from her position as a real estate paralegal after working in a law office for 18 years. In March 2022, Crystal started a new career with Newhouse + Noblin as a paralegal recruiter to continue her passion to support paralegals and the legal community.



[Read all Testimonials Here:](#)



MEET THE FOUNDER OF PARALEGALS CONNECT

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Finding the ideal candidate in a legal or executive search isn't just about credentials — it's about chemistry. It's about matching compatible people and companies to make placements that last. At Newhouse + Noblin, we focus on building relationships and are not interested in short-term fixes. Yes, we work fast, but we never cut corners. We're thorough and efficient, putting our expertise to work for you to find the right fit. We give our clients attention, results and value that are unmatched by our competitors.

Testimonials from Recently Placed Candidates

"I came across the Paralegals Connect website via the Texas Paralegals Facebook page. Not really interested in looking for a new job but always curious as to what was out there. I was always interested in working from home and due to the pandemic, I was able to do it part time. Fast forward 6 months and we were required to be in-office full time. There were several job postings on the Paralegals Connect website, but the full-time work-from-home positions were quickly filled. However, there was one hybrid position that was still open. I contacted Crystal because I was interested. We had a pleasant conversation, and she got the wheels turning. The utmost professional, Crystal worked her magic, and I started my new job on the 16th of November. Throughout the whole process from updating my resume to the interview process, she was by my side working with both myself and my new employer. To say that I am thrilled with my new hybrid position is an understatement! Thank you, Crystal!"

- Lavonne K., Litigation Paralegal (November 2022)

"Crystal Cornett and Newhouse + Noblin were beyond supportive in assisting me in my transition out of education. From our initial conversation, Crystal provided me with an abundance of information about the job, firm, and what to expect in the interview process. Throughout the entire interview process, Crystal was the liaison between the firm and myself and even went the extra step of sending me a "Good Luck" message prior to each of the interviews. Upon my acceptance of the position, Crystal continued to stay in contact and ensure I did not have any questions and when I did, she secured the answers for me. I would highly recommend Crystal and Newhouse + Noblin services for anyone looking for a new opportunity and a wonderful experience."

- Jennifer B., Legal Assistant (October 2022)

"I am so grateful to have met Crystal. Had she not reached out to me for this in-house senior paralegal position, through LinkedIn, I would not have had the opportunity to work with them today! I have been in the legal field for over 26 plus years, mostly in downtown Houston. I had applied several different times for an in-house position closer to my home.

Although working in-house as a senior paralegal is somewhat different from working as a senior litigation paralegal for law firms for many years, I absolutely love it! I no longer have that stress in billing my time daily to meet my end of the month/year quota, working long stressful hours to prepare my attorneys (4-10 attorneys) for trials, depositions, hearings, etc. Here at my new in-house position, they encourage you not to work long hours and spend quality time with your family. They say, "the work can wait and it will always be here tomorrow to finish." The in-house work environment is a good kind of busy, people come into the office more often and are laidback. As compared to the law firms I worked at, they were more hectic, hardly spoke to their staff, the offices were empty and crazy busy. The people here at my in-house position are so much more friendlier. I currently assist my one in-house attorney in working alongside her on whatever case/project/last minute issues she may need help with. This may include communicating with her and our outside counsels to discuss productions, written discovery, eDiscovery, hearings, trials, and the current status/strategy of each case.

I still manage and maintain all the current active cases, as I did while working at a law firm. I also manage any company files/issues/patents and organize them accordingly for my attorney. I love working for in-house legal counsel!"

- Debbie M., Litigation Paralegal (September 2022)

WHAT IS PARALEGALS CONNECT?

***“Our Groups are
Accelerating Paralegals,
Future Paralegals, and
Future Attorneys
Worldwide”***

Paralegals Connect was established in 2013 and we have grown significantly since that time. We now have four Facebook groups which are all dedicated to providing valuable information and support to succeed in the legal industry. Our groups provide support at every stage of your legal career.

Currently, our groups have approximately **36,500+ combined members worldwide.**



Website www.ParalegalsConnect.com

LinkTree <https://linktr.ee/ParalegalsConnect>

Paralegals Connect (Main Group) **(18,184 Members)**

www.Facebook.com/Groups/ParalegalsConnect

Our first and largest group created for paralegals and paralegals-in-the-making to interact with other paralegals worldwide and provide valuable information to succeed in the paralegal industry.

Paralegals Connect: Employment Board **(9,386 Members)**

www.Facebook.com/Groups/PCEmploymentBoard

A group designed for those seeking legal employment or internships, and for those seeking to hire legal professionals for their firm.

Virtual/Freelance Paralegals Connect **(4,353 Members)**

www.Facebook.com/Groups/Virtual.FreelanceParalegalsConnect

A group designed for Virtual and/or Freelance Paralegals and those intending to break free of their 8-5 to go out on their own.

Paralegals Connect: Study Group **(987 Members)**

www.Facebook.com/Groups/ParalegalsConnectStudyGroup

A group created for those attending a paralegal school or studying for a Paralegal Certification Exam where you can post questions about your legal studies.

Paralegals Connect: Instagram **(1,354 Followers)**

www.Instagram.com/ParalegalsConnect

#ParalegalsConnect

Paralegals Connect: Twitter **(263 Members)**

https://Twitter.com/ParalegalsCnnect

@ParalegalsCnnect

Paralegals Connect: Facebook Page **(1K+ Followers)**

www.Facebook.com/pg/ParalegalsConnect

Paralegals Connect: LinkedIn

Group: **https://www.linkedin.com/groups/9052061/** **(780 Members)**

Company Page: **https://www.linkedin.com/company/paralegals-connect**

Founder/Admin: Crystal Cornett: **https://www.linkedin.com/in/crystalcornett/**

www.ParalegalsConnect.com

MEET OUR AFFILIATE PARTNERS

We would like to thank our Affiliate Partners who make it possible to print and distribute our Magazine to our members, various paralegal schools, and large firms throughout the U.S.

Becoming an Affiliate Partner with our groups offers worldwide visibility to approximately **36,500+ combined group members** in the legal industry.

****Only our Affiliate Partners are permitted to advertise within our Groups.***



Paralegals Connect is always looking for Affiliate Partners that can offer our paralegals, legal assistants, future paralegals, and future attorneys the skills and services to help them succeed in their legal careers. We strive to provide information to the latest resources, education, and cost-effective opportunities that will enhance the skills, knowledge, and competencies of our members.

To become an Affiliate Partner with Paralegals Connect, please contact Crystal@ParalegalsConnect.com for additional information or visit www.ParalegalsConnect.com/Become-an-Affiliate.html

Center for Advanced Legal Studies

Center for Advanced Legal Studies was founded in 1987 to provide education and training for those seeking to enter the legal profession as a paralegal. The **Paralegal Certificate** program provides students with essential paralegal skills and includes courses such as Introduction to Law and Ethics, Legal Research and Writing, Interviewing and Investigation, Corporate and Business Law, Civil Procedure, Computers and the Law, Family Law, and Personal Injury. Students can choose from on-campus morning or Saturday courses or attend 100% online.



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Eunice Colón is the creator and owner of Ever So Creative. Eunice joined Paralegals Connect in May 2017 and since then added customized items to our Paralegals Merchandise Store including shirts, signs, cups, and jewelry.

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www.Lee.edu/Programs/Paralegal



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Paralegals Connect (Main Facebook Group)	18,184 Members
Paralegals Connect: Employment Board Facebook Group	9,386 Members
Virtual / Freelance Paralegals Connect Facebook Group	4,353 Members
Paralegals Connect: Study Group Facebook Group	987 Members
Facebook Page	1,096
Instagram Follower	1,354
Twitter Followers	263
LinkedIn Group	780

Quarterly Magazine Distributed to our 36,500+ Members

20 Ways to Achieve Success as a Paralegal

By: Tami Riggs

Becoming a successful paralegal takes hard work and determination. Here are 20 ways to achieve success as a paralegal. Do you have suggestions for more?

1. **Develop a Plan** – Explore a range of non-lawyer legal positions. Identify specific, short term and long-term goals that will lead you to success. Enroll in school, expand your skills, talk to your college, work with career advisors and recruiters, volunteer, intern, and build relationships with others in the field.
2. **Pursue Credentials** – Take steps to obtain a certificate, diploma, or degree. Convenient options are available, both online and in person. Many firms require a credential as a pre-requisite for interviewing and hiring. Higher education will add value throughout your career.
3. **Continue Learning** – Successful people are students for life. Cultivate a growth mindset. Increase your knowledge. Law is always evolving. Stay current and informed by attending seminars and completing practical, skills-based training and courses created specifically for paralegals yearly.
4. **Seek Opportunities to Enhance Skills** – Raise your hand for additional projects to gain experience. Do more than you are paid to do. Go the extra mile. Eventually, you will be paid more for what you do. The money will come.
5. **Make Connections** – Join local and national paralegal associations. These groups provide information, resources, support, and networking opportunities to new and experienced paralegals.
6. **Embrace Technology** – Formatting and conversion expertise in Adobe and Microsoft Office Suite are pivotal. Skills in e-filing, online research, trial prep, billing, and web conferencing software will also boost your value with any employer.
7. **Build a Bank of Resources** – Include organizations, associations, blogs, podcasts, websites, articles, magazines, abstracts, journals, legal references, databases, etc.
8. **Avoid Excuses** – Never hide a mistake; the sooner you admit to it and take responsibility the better. Do not point fingers. Acknowledge the mistake, learn from it, and then take steps to ensure the same mistake is not repeated.
<https://www.paralegal.edu/blog/work-mistake-fess-up-to-your-mess-up-and-fix-it>
9. **Ask Questions and Be Assertive** – Get a clear picture of the assignment. Most attorneys are more than happy to explain things. The only dumb question is the one not asked. If you do not understand the assignment, seek clarification. Do not guess or make assumptions. Having to re-do work only hinders your ability to accomplish tasks in a timely and efficient manner.
10. **Check Your Product** – Proofread. Use Grammarly to improve your writing. Law firms expect a strong command of English, legal terminology, grammar, sentence structure, and punctuation.
<https://www.paralegal.edu/blog/paralegals-must-have-the-write-stuff>
11. **Increase Typing Speed** – Keyboarding and typing are fundamental computer skills that support document production, email, and other forms of communication. They are considered essential for paralegals.
12. **Document** – Paralegals have an obligation to preserve and track relevant evidence. Whether that data is protected in a template, chart, log, spreadsheet, or simple list, follow your firm's protocols. Start documenting from the beginning of every case.
13. **Stay Organized** – Establish a good filing system. Know where you put files and how to access them quickly.
14. **Remain Composed** – Display professionalism and self-regulate in difficult, highly charged, or stressful situations. Practice empathy. Strive to understand opposing positions without becoming emotionally involved. Face the obstacle, focus on the outcome, and forgive any oversights.
15. **Maintain Confidentiality** – Private and sensitive information should never be shared with third parties. Confidentiality is an ethical duty owed in the lawyer-client relationship. Do not talk about clients, cases, or the attorneys involved outside the workplace.
16. **Avoid Conflicts of Interest** – Identify competing professional and personal matters which may unduly influence a case. Ramifications for failing to disclose conflicts of interest could include lawsuits, loss of business relationships, and employee termination.
17. **Do Not Give Out Legal Advice** – Offering a client, a friend, or a family member any legal information that alters their legal position or legal rights is the unauthorized practice of law. It is a crime.
18. **Avoid Gossip** – Leave your ego at the door. Do not disparage attorneys, paralegals, or other staff verbally, or in email, online forums, or company chats. It makes you look bad. Build rapport with your colleagues. Deal with conflicts personally. Remember, you are on a team working towards a common goal.
19. **Dress Professionally** – Appearance matters. It reflects how others see you and your firm. Avoid attire that is too casual or revealing. Present an image appropriate for a work setting.
20. **Monitor Social Footprint** – Keep it professional. Keep it private. Every online, virtual, or email action leaves a trace. Manage your digital identity and the content you publish, post, and share.
<https://www.paralegal.edu/blog/social-media-keep-it-professional-or-keep-it-private>

Tami's Tip: Happiness Over Money – Career progression may include changing jobs for a better position that includes a higher salary and greater responsibility. However, do not consider an opportunity that offers more money if it sacrifices your happiness. If you enjoy what you do and do it well, your skills will be in demand, and the rewards will follow.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Tami Riggs is Director of Outreach and Career Services at [Center for Advanced Legal Studies](#) in Houston, Texas. She has an extensive and varied professional background that spans criminal justice, paralegal education, and international school marketing and communication. Her career has been guided by a focus on developing strategic partnerships that facilitate school growth and student opportunity. She holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminal Justice from Texas State University. Connect with Tami on [LinkedIn](#).



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Things I Wish Somebody Would Have Told Me About Freelancing

By: Holly A. Sheriff, MSLS, MCC, CCC, PCC, LPCC, CPP
On behalf of Best Virtual Paralegal LLC (BVP)

There are two things I wish somebody had told me 32 years ago about freelancing. I would have been happier and more fulfilled sooner if I understood these two key elements back then. Since becoming an affiliate partner three years ago, I have authored articles about the importance of working with a coach in almost every edition of Paralegals Connect Magazine. Yes, the truth is that I am the founder of a company that sells coaching services. However, mostly I want to share with others the two things I desperately wish someone had told me about freelancing. These two things are related to the work you would do with a coach. Yet, coaching is a discussion for another day. Today, we're going to uncover the two most important things it takes to become and stay a freelancer.

1. Courage. The importance of courage cannot be overstated. The courage it takes to become a freelancer and continue doing it for so long is astounding. Freelancers must overcome a great deal of opposition if they are to succeed. Most opposition comes from within the freelancer themselves, but sometimes it can be traced back to the industry itself. There is nothing worse than self-imposed opposition. Over the past 32 years of freelancing, I've decided to keep moving forward regardless of what my mind tells me. As a freelancer and business owner, I am responsible for both my financial support and my team's performance. It takes courage to take on this responsibility. I wish somebody would have explained how much courage it would take to be responsible for other people's financial support. Yet, having the courage to freelance and operate a successful business isn't the only piece of wisdom I wish I would have discussed with someone before hitting the ground running. Next up, I wish somebody would have said, don't be fake.

2. Don't fake it until you make it. The ole saying "Fake it until you make it" might be popular but it could also be the reason behind why you're not making it. It's nonsense advice. Ok, so on the surface, it might appear as if it is putting you into a position to visualize what you want before you have it, which is what every coach tells you to do. But the reality is, it tricks you into giving up before you even get started.

When you are buying into the "fake it until you make it" mindset, what you are really buying is impostor syndrome. If you fake it until you make it, you're going to be so gosh darn busy hiding your insecurities, shyness, and beliefs that you're inadequate you won't have time for people to invest in your business. It's emotionally and physically exhausting faking it all the time.

What I wish somebody would have told me is simple. What you need to do is: **Make it happen.** You seriously need to face every obstacle, every slammed door, and every failure. Then do it again tomorrow but each new day, do it a little bit better than yesterday. Then fail again and get back up and repeat it every single day. This takes courage, practice, and a little bit of help.

Freelancing is hard work. It's not for the weak. As I reflect on my journey as a freelancer and business owner my only regret is that somebody hadn't told me that we are all human with imperfections. Instead of faking it until I made a profit, I should have spent my time improving my skills, invested in myself by working with a coach to bridge gaps and overcome barriers.

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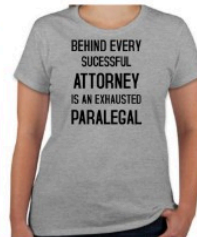
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Created By:
Eunice Colón

The Dangers of DIY Legal Translations

By: eTranslation Services



If you're like most people, you probably think that translating legal documents is a simple task that can be done by anyone. After all, how hard could it be to translate a few words from one language to another? Unfortunately, this is not always the case.

Translating legal documents requires a great deal of knowledge and experience in order to ensure that the translation is accurate and meets all legal requirements. If you attempt to do this yourself, you could end up making costly mistakes that could have severe consequences for your business.

In this article, we will discuss the dangers of DIY legal translations and why you should always leave this task to the experts!

What's the difference between legal translation and ordinary translation?

Most people are not aware of the fact that there is a big difference between legal translation and ordinary translation. Legal translation is much more complex and requires a higher level of expertise. This is because legal documents often contain complicated language and terminology that can be difficult to understand. In addition, they may also include references to specific laws and regulations. As such, it is essential that the translator has a good understanding of the legal system in both the source and target countries.

Another critical factor to consider is that legal documents often have profound implications and can be used in court cases. This means that even a tiny mistake in the translation could have significant consequences. For example, if a contract is not translated correctly, it could lead to disagreements or even legal action. In the worst-case scenario, it could even result in a business losing a lot of money.

When do you need professional legal translations?

There are many situations where you might need to get a legal document translated. For example, if you are entering into a contract with a foreign company, the contract must be translated correctly. Other common examples include birth certificates, marriage certificates, divorce documents, and wills.

It is also worth noting that professional legal translations can be quite expensive. This is because they require a high level of expertise and often take longer to complete. However, the cost of making a mistake can be even higher. As such, it is always worth investing in professional legal translations to avoid any costly mistakes.

What are the dangers of DIY legal translation?

As we mentioned earlier, translating legal documents is a complex task that requires a great deal of knowledge and experience. If you attempt to do this yourself, you could end up making serious mistakes that could have severe consequences for your business.

One of the biggest dangers of DIY legal translation is that you could mistranslate important documents. This could lead to serious disagreements or even legal action.

Another danger of DIY legal translation is that you might not be familiar with the specific laws and regulations in both the source and target countries. This could lead to errors in the translation, which could have significant implications.

Finally, it is also worth noting that professional legal translations may require a budget. However, the cost of making a mistake can be even higher. As such, it is always worth investing in professional legal translations to avoid any costly mistakes.

In conclusion, translating legal documents is a complex task that should always be left to the experts. If you attempt to do this yourself, you could end up making serious mistakes that could have severe consequences for your business. It is always worth investing in professional legal translations to avoid any costly mistakes.

Examples of DIY Legal Translations Gone Wrong

There are many examples of DIY legal translations gone wrong. This is not surprising, given the complexity of legal documents and the fact that most people do not have the necessary expertise to translate them accurately.

One well-known example is the Google Translate tool. In 2015, a contract was translated using Google Translate, resulting in disastrous results. The contract was for the purchase of a house in Spain, and the translation contained numerous errors. As a result, the buyer paid much more than they should have.

Another example occurred in 2016 when a man tried to use Google Translate to translate his will from English to Spanish. Unfortunately, the translation was inaccurate and caused a lot of confusion for his family after he died.

These examples show that even the most sophisticated translation tools are not good enough for legal documents. This is because they cannot always accurately translate the complicated language and terminology used in these documents.

How Professional Translators Can Help

If you need to have a legal document translated, it is always best to use a professional translation service. They will have experienced and qualified translators who can accurately translate your documents. In addition, they will also be familiar with the legal system in both countries and will be able to ensure that the translation meets all legal requirements.

Using a professional translation service is the safest option when it comes to translating legal documents. It will give you peace of mind knowing that the job is being done by experts who can be trusted to get it right.

What do you need to consider when choosing a professional legal translation service provider?

When choosing a professional legal translation service, there are a few things you need to keep in mind. First of all, you need to make sure that the service provider is experienced and qualified. They should have a team of expert translators who are familiar with the legal system in both countries.

In addition, the service provider should also be able to offer you a range of services. For example, they should be able to handle all aspects of the translation process, from start to finish. This includes proofreading and editing the translation to ensure that it is accurate and meets all legal requirements.

Finally, you also need to make sure that the service provider offers competitive rates. After all, you want to get the best value for your money.

By keeping these things in mind, you can be sure that you will choose a professional legal translation service that can provide you with an accurate and reliable translation. eTranslation Services provides top-notch legal translation services at competitive rates. Our team of expert translators is familiar with the legal system in both countries and can handle all aspects of the translation process. Contact us today for a free quote!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: eTranslation Services

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WRITING FOR TWO, THREE, OR MORE

By: Denise M. Blassak



DB Design/Photography

Legal writing is all around us. Whether as correspondence, a memorandum, motion or other. The documents are as varied as the individuals who draft them. Attorneys sometimes ask paralegals to start the process.

There are a number of things to consider when communicating on paper. For starters, you must identify your audience and your message. Writing classes generally cover these areas. Yet other aspects like style are in the hands of the creator. How then do paralegals draft for others when no two writers compose the same?

To capture another's flair, you may be able to shorten sentences, or use choice phrases. Beyond that, it is near impossible to duplicate. Paralegals can bring value in other ways, despite stylistic differences. Here are examples of how.

When assisting with discovery or a motion, check court rules and *Shepardize*, prior to starting. Laws change and your office templates or samples may be out of date. No one wants to waste time writing more than the law allows. We would prefer the court accept filings, not reject them.

Also before you begin, consider asking attorneys if they follow any schools of thought. There are authors they may subscribe to, or not. Stephen King has even published a book on writing¹. Quick review of a favorite, and a peek at office/management policies, may help.

As you commence the drafting process, consult the citation guide applicable in your jurisdiction. Maybe it is the Bluebook or the California Style Manual. The latter contains a section on style mechanics.

While you write, be sure to re-read your document more than once. Pay attention to spelling and grammar. Failing to proofread was a common mistake and pet peeve of partners surveyed about their junior attorney's².

With lawyers as busy as they are, they may not recognize the difficulties we face. When possible, communicate with them how things are going and ask for feedback. Have thick skin when doing so. If it helps, remember, the attorney's name appears on documents filed in court. Lawyers who know your value will appreciate your efforts.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Denise Blassak, AACP

Denise Blassak is a certified paralegal (ACCP through AAPI) and newsletter author. She has over 15 years of experience with research, motions, and appellate writing in California. Her education is ongoing and includes her ABA approved bachelor's paralegal degree. In her spare time, Denise enjoys DIY travel. You can find her at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/deniseblassak>

¹ King, On Writing: A Memoir of The Craft

² *How to Improve Your Legal Writing: Top 10 Tips for Junior Attorneys from Partners*, September 13, 2021 Texas Lawyer, partially readable at <<https://www.law.com/texaslawyer/2021/09/13/how-to-improve-your-legal-writing-top-tips-for-junior-attorneys-from-partners/>> [as of Nov. 1, 2022], or in full for those with access to this resource on Lexis.

Digital Signatures vs. Electronic Signatures: What's the Difference?

By: Sean Heck,
CobbleStone Software



What is a digital signature? Is it not the same thing as an electronic signature?

We inhabit an ever-evolving technological landscape in which new and updated terminology and functionality are constantly presented. It can be confusing to know the differences between terms such as the two mentioned above. However, those differences are actually quite simple!

Familiarize yourself with these two terms. Discover how to utilize both eSignatures and digital signatures to establish a process that is:

- secure.
- user-friendly.
- compliant.
- and rapid.

Electronic Signature

An electronic signature (or eSignature) is an electronic signing process that accepts an agreement or contract. Electronic signing is a generic function that can be accomplished in various forms. These forms include:

- a click-wrap acknowledgment of terms and conditions.
- applying your written signature on a phone or tablet.
- pasting a facsimile of your signature into an electronic document.
- or even applying a signature by using a generic digital certificate.

The most important aspect of electronic signing is it does not require any type of validation of the signer's identity. It is only a means of collecting an acknowledgment. There is no real assurance that the signer is whom they say they are.

Digital Signature

Digital signature solutions leverage certificate-based digital identification for validation of document integrity. These certificates are often issued by a certificate authority (or CA) and provide proof of signing with trusted time stamps. The use of encryption binds a digital certificate associated with a signature to the corresponding document.

The cryptographic operation allows Digital Signatures to verify and assure the following:

1. The document is authentic and comes from a verified source.
2. The document has not been tampered with since being digitally signed.
3. Your identity has been verified by a trusted organization (the CA or trust service providers (TSPs)).

Digital signature solutions providers follow specific and widely accepted, standard formats called private key infrastructure and public key infrastructure (PKI). The process relies on the provider using a mathematical algorithm to create two lengthy number strings – called public and private keys. Private and public key certificates must be handled securely. That is where CAs and TSPs come into the equation.

Why Digital Signatures Are Needed

Organizations from a variety of industries can benefit from replacing manual, paper-based signing processes with electronic signatures. E-signatures support shorter contract lifecycles, reduced costs, and automated contract workflows. Upgrading from an electronic signature to create a digital signature can further improve security, compliance, and signature acceptance.

The Benefits of Digital Signature Software

Some regulations, like the eIDAS, and other international, federal, and state laws may require digital signatures. A digital signature securely provides the highest levels of authenticity and integrity. CobbleStone's Digital Signature provider, Global Sign, is a member of the Adobe Approved Trust List (AATL) and the European Union Trusted Lists (EUTL).

What are the AATL and the EUTL?

The Adobe Approved Trust List (AATL) is a program that enables millions worldwide to sign documents in Adobe Document Cloud solutions. AATL uses the world's most trusted digital signing certificates. The certificate authorities (CAs) and trust service providers (TSPs) on this list issue digital signing certificates and time-stamp services.

These certificates and services are used to comply with legal and regulatory requirements around the world. This is done by verifying that the services and credentials meet the assurance levels imposed by the AATL technical requirements.

Adobe adds the certificate(s) to the Trust List itself. Next, Adobe digitally signs the Trust List with an Adobe corporate digital ID linked to the Adobe Root certificate embedded in Adobe products. Adobe then posts the list to a website hosted by Adobe. A digitally signed document from a signer whose digital certificate can trace its lineage (chain) back to a certificate on the AATL will automatically be trusted.

The European Union Trusted Lists (EUTL) is a public list of over 200 Trust Service Providers (TSPs). These TSPs are accredited to deliver compliance with the EU eIDAS electronic signature regulation. These providers offer certificate-based digital IDs, digital seals, and time-stamping services.

Only qualified signatures are legally and automatically equivalent to handwritten signatures. They are also the only types of signatures automatically recognized in cross-border transactions among EU member states. Each EU member state supervises providers in its own country. However, once a TSP is approved in one country, its services can be sold in other EU countries with the same level of compliance.

Electronic signatures are the virtual equivalent of handwritten signatures for paper documents. Digital signatures can be considered the virtual equivalent of notarized signatures for digital documents. The certificate authority (CA) serves as an electronic "notary" for the verification of document integrity and signatures.

You need digital signature software that offers a security certificate, proof of document content integrity, and a signature timestamp. The solution that you need is CobbleStone Contract Insight® CLM Software.

CobbleStone's digital signatures provide a secure, transparent, user-friendly, and compliant signing process. Your organization can save time, money, and resources with a process that is:

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Sean Heck is the Content Marketing Manager of CobbleStone Software.



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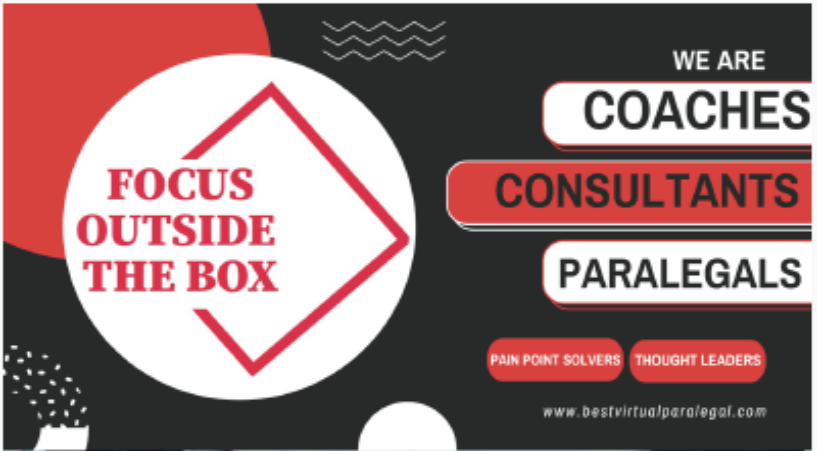
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Up and Coming Roles in the Legal Industry

By: Nicole Kidder-Perry on Behalf of The Court Reporting Academy



As technology transforms the way that the legal industry does business, new roles are emerging in the court reporting and transcript production fields. The Court Reporting Academy (TCRA) offers freelance and virtual paralegals an exciting opportunity to expand their breadth of services with short-term programs in digital reporting, scoping, and digital editing.

With your experience in criminal justice, you'll find that there is a small learning curve when adding these up-and-coming skills to your services, allowing you to easily shift gears and diversify your income streams.

Digital Reporter

Like traditional stenographers and voice writers, a digital reporter's responsibility is to capture the verbatim record of legal proceedings. Rather than using a complicated stenography machine, DRs operate sophisticated recording software to capture the audio, annotate speakers, take notes, and mark exhibits.

Your familiarity with legal terminology, interactions with attorneys, and knowledge of how depositions, trials, and EUOs proceed is a huge asset in this role. Your notary credentials are also put to use to swear in witnesses. While DRs can work in person, most proceedings are held remotely through videoconferencing platforms from the comfort of your home. With an average starting pay rate of \$30 per hour, you have the freedom to choose independent, full-time, and part-time positions to fit your needs.

For Diana Gallegos, a freelance paralegal in Texas, making the transition to digital reporting was a life-changing experience. "Not knowing how to grow my career left me feeling empty, overwhelmed, and tired of the same routine," she explains. "Digital reporting gave me the opportunity to learn a new skill in the legal field that required less stress than my usual paralegal duties. In a matter of weeks, I was accepting reporting jobs, and within a couple of months, I was trained on how to formulate transcripts."

She notes that becoming a digital reporter allowed her to further grow her business due to the flexible schedule and expanding her knowledge in the field. This experience gave Gallegos the confidence to branch out to mentoring aspiring paralegals and providing employee training and administration management to solo practitioners.

"Having the ability to grow in the legal field and enjoy the process is not common for most, but it has been for me since I joined the digital reporting world. Having a paralegal background makes the job a lot more enjoyable. Being familiar with legal terms and court procedures is what allowed me to learn so quickly and grow in this field. November marked my ninth anniversary in the legal field, and so far it's been the most enjoyable because I joined the digital reporting career."

TCRA offers a two-part program that includes learning how to operate the Reporter Studio PRO software, perform playbacks, and conduct confidence monitoring as well as preparing to pass the AAERT Certified Electronic Reporter (CER) exam, job shadowing, and internship engagement. Most students are able to complete the course within three months if they commit to studying 15-20 hours per week. Tuition for the bundled package is \$1,390, but the Academy is currently offering scholarships to qualified candidates.

Scopist

Scopists play a critical role in producing the official transcripts from legal proceedings that are captured by court reporters. They are responsible for turning rough drafts into final transcripts, including editing spelling errors and punctuation, cross-checking for missing words or mistakes, and researching the proper spelling of names and technical terms. Additionally, they properly format the transcript with the title, index, and exhibits pages.

Typically, it takes six to eight months to become a scopist because you need to learn how to translate the reporter's shorthand steno notes. However, new speech-to-text (STT) technology is bringing a new face to scoping that makes it easier to transition into this role. Since many court reporters now capture audio electronically, those files can be processed through automated speech recognition (ASR) software to produce the initial rough draft.

DRs do not normally manage their own transcripts, so agencies or independent contractors hire digital scopists to quickly turn around the work product, which then keeps the reporters free to cover the next proceeding. The essential responsibilities remain the same, but digital scopists use the reporter's notes to ensure the computer-aided transcription of the proceeding is accurate.

TCRA offers a streamlined Scopist program that takes three to six months to complete. Along with learning the latest software systems, course modules cover reading steno notes and working with CAT applications, but you do not need to learn how to use a steno machine.

Digital Editor

In December, TCRA is launching a free Digital Editor program that utilizes AutoScript, the industry's latest software solution for generating transcripts. Once testimony is captured in a digital file, the audio is uploaded to the speech-to-text platform to produce an AI-generated rough draft transcript. As a digital editor, you will leverage your strong grammar, editing, and research skills, along with your legal background, to edit the raw first draft to prepare to pass it on to a digital scopist.

With the Digital Editor program, you do not have to learn transcription from scratch. The TCRA course will teach you how to use AutoScript Desktop to apply proper formatting and edit the text file against the captured audio to produce a verbatim record.

"This technology is the transformation that the transcription industry has been longing for," says Patricia Falls, CCR, CRI, who serves as the managing director of The Court Reporting Academy. "We are hearing so many success stories about how much quicker it is to produce rough and final transcripts, which allows scopists and editors to maximize their productivity and boost their income potential. With this new course, we are opening doors for more people to enter the industry."



Learning with The Court Reporting Academy

Each of these self-paced, online programs can easily fit into your current working schedule. All classes also have live, instructor-led sessions and group interactions to support your skill development. TCRA is sponsored by VoiceScript, a legal technology company delivering solutions for capture and transcript production for legal professionals, so all students are trained in the newest technology and receive ongoing technical support throughout their career.

The Court Reporting Academy is currently offering a Scholarship Program that covers enrollment fees, which means that you can get started on your new journey right away. More details on the TCRA courses and scholarships are available at www.thecourtreportingacademy.com.

You can also join our expert instructors and alumni for a virtual TCRA Open House on December 13, 2022, to learn how we can support you in launching a new career that will help you find the flexibility, fulfillment, and financial freedom that you have been seeking in this next year.

FOR MORE INFORMATION



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Nicole Kidder-Perry is the director of content management for The Court Reporting Academy and its sponsor, VoiceScript, Inc. In 2020, she leveraged her 20 years of experience in journalism, business marketing, and workforce development to transition into a successful digital reporter and scopist role. When she isn't bouncing between football fields, basketball courts, and camping spots, she now spends her time empowering others to build fulfilling careers in the court reporting industry.

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Frustrated Paralegals Listen Up *4 Tips for Reclaiming Your Focus*

By Holly A. Sheriff, MSLS, MCC, CCC, PCC, LPCC, CPP,
On behalf of Best Virtual Paralegal LLC (BVP)



If you're a frustrated paralegal, listen up. There is something you should have been told years ago. Your frustration is likely not with the paralegal profession but with the legal professionals you work with or the area of law you practice. For this article, we'll focus on working with people.

1. KEEP EVERYTHING IN PERSPECTIVE

Lawyers are only human, and their legal education does not teach them how to lead, run a law practice, or know what type of unlicensed assistance they need. A frustrated paralegal is usually frustrated by working with people for one of two reasons: A lack of confidence in themselves; or the paralegal works with a bad boss. The phrase "bad boss" refers to many different types of bosses. Some bosses don't know how to be influential leaders, some don't know what they want from their support staff, and others use poor communication skills to lead their teams. It is typical for this type of boss to appear self-centered. The list of bad bosses could continue forever.

So, how do you emerge as a positive paralegal, who goes to work every day and enjoys helping people navigate through the legal system?

1. Work on building confidence within yourself.
2. Take control of your workspace.
3. Don't try to multitask. Multitasking is a myth. It is more harmful to your productivity than helpful.

The foregoing three areas is only the tip of the iceberg. Many things help you transform how you think about working for lawyers.

Building confidence is an ongoing process for lawyers and paralegals. Your confidence level is the core foundation of your professional satisfaction. Improving your well-being and strengthening your mental stamina starts with working with a coach. With a coach, you are not alone. You can strategize the best ways to live better and work more efficiently.

2. OPTIMIZE YOUR WORKSPACE

Optimize your workspace to help minimize distractions. Taking control of your workspace can be achieved with the help of a coach. Paralegals often make the mistake of allowing lawyers to control their workspace. Let me explain. Many lawyers have the terrible habit of constantly interrupting their staff, pulling them away from one task to start another. Or worse yet forcing their paralegals to use antiquated time management methods. By the end of the day, the paralegal has accomplished nothing worth noting, and the lawyer is more frustrated than ever. Okay, so you probably think that lawyers are the bosses and leaders. It's up to them. Processes, workflows, and time management methods are determined by the lawyers. In terms of the relationship between lawyers and paralegals, this is an antiquated notion. Paralegals should be empowered to control their own processes and methods if the work gets done by a realistic agreed upon deadline.

Keeping control of your workspace starts with your computer. Some best practices include:

- Skip your desktop. Never store things on your desktop.
- Keep your downloads folder empty.
- Each week organize and clear the clutter from your computer.
- Don't let others organize your computer. So, you're an employee and you must file documents, and things in the order the firm wants you to. That's fine. But you should not be afraid to develop a system of keeping working files organized on your own computer, whenever possible.
- Use descriptive naming conventions for your files. Use the same naming conventions throughout the firm.
- Don't use too many folders. Having too many nested folders gets annoying. Each folder should have a minimum of about 10 files in it. If you only have two or three files in each folder, you need to reconsider your structure.

3. MULTITASKING IS A MYTH.

The next tip is the one many Best Virtual Paralegal's clients struggle with the most. Wrapping their head around the idea multitasking is a myth. Legal professionals think they can split their attention between several tasks at once and aren't getting any more done than someone tasking. Multitasking is setting the stage for stress. The one thing that can improve your productivity the most and set yourself up for success is normalizing tasking.

4. RECLAIM YOUR FOCUS.

Sure, your boss must have a say in setting the priorities for the firm, this is true? But you should keep control of your daily schedule. If you don't think of your daily schedule as your map of the day, you are missing out on a beneficial defense against multitasking. Intentionally setting up time for work and interruptions so you can focus on work is truly energizing. This is truly the easiest way to reduce multitasking. The biggest chunk of your daily schedule should include organizing and controlling communications, such as emails, text messages, and phone messages. Try only checking your email, text messages and phone messages three times a day. And don't forget to schedule time to handle the related tasks. The goal is simply to rebuild your ability to focus on a task at hand without distraction.

Hopefully, this article has helped give you empowering tips to reclaim your focus and reduce your frustration. Do you want to learn more productivity and time management tips? Contact Best Virtual Paralegal to get started!

ABOUT AUTHOR



Hi, I'm Holly A. Sheriff, an experienced paralegal, career & life coach. My mission in life is to help legal professional be more successful and happier, using the quickest, most efficient path possible.

My clients experience amazing improvements in their productivity, time management, motivation, leadership skills, flexibility, goal attainment, creativity, stress reduction, and work/life balance.

Helping attorneys & paralegals scale, grow, & maintain success is my team's goal. If you are an attorney or a paralegal wanting to advance your professional, business, or life development my team & I want to help you.

Connect & chat with me today!

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 Founding member of Best Virtual Paralegal LLC

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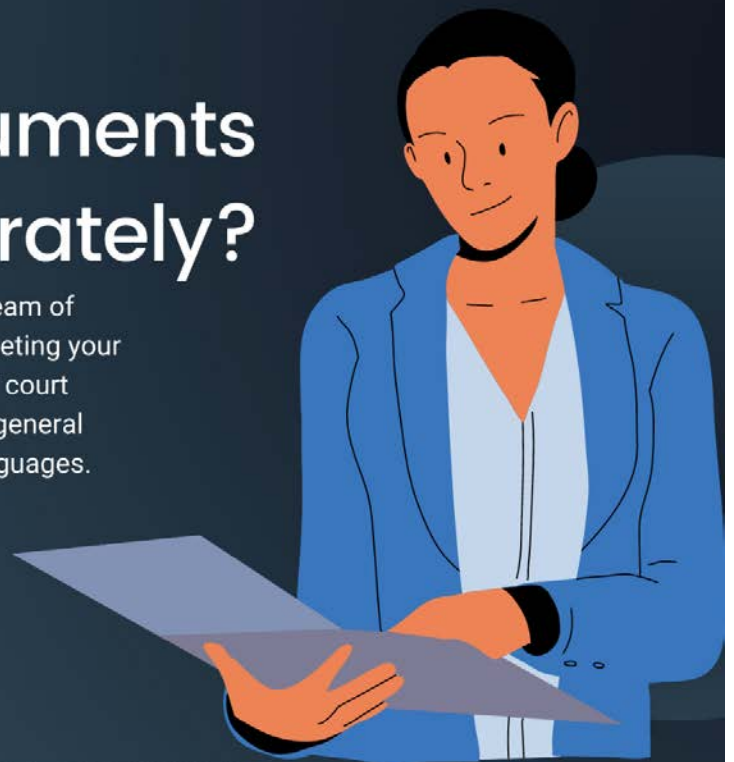


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My skill-set and industry expertise are comprehensive and up-to-date. I make it my top priority to see that all jobs are done well and efficiently. My career has also seen its share of achievements; while working as a Legal Nurse Consultant at Weber Legal Nurse Consulting Inc., I have helped a lot of attorneys find testifying experts for different specialties to help support their individual cases.



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